**Ecclesiastes 10**

**“Not Cool to Be a Fool”**

**Scripture:** Ecclesiastes 9:16-10:10

**Memory Verse:** Psalm 14:1a “*The fool has said in his heart, ‘There is no God.’”*

**Lesson Focus:** The book of Ecclesiastes has a lot to say about the benefits of being wise. It also has a lot to say about the pitfalls of pursuing folly. This Scripture will give us a deeper look at what it means to be a fool and we will emphasize how the beginning of foolishness is ignoring God.

**Activities and Crafts:** Coloring Picture of memory verse. Word Search of different terms from lesson, Bring It Home Discussion for 3rd – 5th.

Craft for 1st & 2nd: Wise vs. Fool

**Introduction/Starter Activity:**

We will have all of the kids stay in the Summit Room for the starter activity.

Ecclesiastes is a book that challenges us to THINK. (Matthew 22:37, Romans 12:2)

A couple of riddles to get the kids thinking:

1. What gets wetter and wetter the more it dries? A towel!
2. Which weighs more, a pound of feathers or a pound of bricks? Neither!

While riddles and brain teasers like the above cause us to use the minds that God has given us, now we will watch a video that demonstrates NOT thinking!

Q: What are some words you would use to describe these people?

A: How about FOOLISH!

Definition of foolish: lacking good sense or judgment; unwise

Q: Why do you think people do these things?

A: To be cool? To get attention?

The Bible teaches us it is **not cool to be a fool**!

**Proverbs 12:1** says that he who loves instruction is wise, but he who hates correction is **stupid**! Yes, the Bible actually calls someone stupid! God sometimes just tells it like it is (that doesn’t mean we should). God wants us to be teachable! Let’s get into our lesson, but let’s be WISE, LISTEN and LEARN!

**Bible Study:**

We will actually start our study in v. 16 of chapter 9 to get the context for the start of chapter 10.

**Eccl 9:16-18**: Solomon is expressing the benefits of wisdom. This has been a common theme throughout the book of Ecclesiastes.

Q: How would you define wisdom?

A: It is the opposite of foolishness. Wisdom involves not only using your mind (thinking), but also applying it in every day decisions.

**Read Proverbs 9:10**. The fear of the Lord (awe of God) is the BEGINNING of wisdom. This is where it all starts! The wise person recognizes that he has a Master greater than him and all of his daily decisions consider that truth.

Q: What do you think is more important: brains (wisdom) or brawn (strength)? Why?  
A: Solomon appears to give us the answer in these verses. Think of David and Goliath or Moses and Pharaoh. In both cases the winners won not because of strength, but because they feared God and had Him on their side (remember where wisdom begins!).

**Eccl 10:1**: This is another one of those verses that just tells it like it is! Wisdom is like a sweet and pleasant-smelling ointment. But all it takes is a little bit of foolishness and it is ruined!

Q: How many of you guys like chocolate brownies? What if I brought in some chocolate brownies but told you that there was a little bit of dog poop baked into the batter?

In the same way, all it takes is a little bit of foolishness, a little bit of sin, and our lives can take a sudden turn for the worse.

Notice in this verse it is just a little bit of folly that can bring down the person of wisdom and honor. I wonder if Solomon is actually writing about himself in this verse as he started off well, but let sin creep in and did not finish well.

**Eccl 10:2**: Here we have a striking contrast between the wise man and the fool. The right vs. the left was an ancient way of expressing correct/wise and wrong/foolish. Notice that it is the HEART that is the subject of this verse! This is not talking about our physical heart beating inside of our bodies, but the center of our being, the core of who we are.

Remember it is the fear of the Lord that is the beginning of wisdom. That person welcomes God into his/her heart: his emotions, her desires, his/her everything!

Read our memory verse, **Psalm 14:1a**.

Q: Who says that there is no God?

A: The fool! If the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom, then ignoring God or denying God is the beginning of foolishness and sin. The fool has a heart problem. He keeps God out so that he can live life his way rather than God’s way.

Everything in life follows the heart! It doesn’t matter how smart you are! Which way is your heart leaning? Toward God like the wise man or away from Him like the fool?

**Eccl 10:3**: Even when the foolish person is going about his/her daily activities, it is obvious to everyone that he/she is a fool by their behavior.

**Teachers:** Show the picture of Anastasia and Drizella at the end of the lesson.

Q: Who knows who these two are? Would you consider them wise or fools? Why?

They have a heart problem. They only think about themselves, they think they can do whatever they want, they don’t listen to advice, etc. And everybody knows it! (remember how embarrassing they are when they walk in to meet the prince?)

If we go back to the video we showed at the beginning, what is at the heart of a lot of the silly things those people did? Love of self, wanting to be a YouTube video star….a heart problem. Remember, it’s not cool to be a fool!

**Eccl 10:4-7:** While our study so far has shown us what it means to be foolish, these verses give us some advice for dealing with foolish people in our lives, particularly in authority.

When this is the case, sometimes we need the wisdom and courage to act like Corrie ten Boom’s family did in the movie we watched last week. In their situation, everything was turned upside-down with error and folly proceeding from the Nazi rulers (v. 5). But most of the time we need to do what Solomon says in v. 4: respond with calm and gentle wisdom.

Q: What do you think is better, one angry person or two?

A: **Read Proverbs 15:1**. A soft and gentle answer calms anger! Patience and staying calm is God’s winning strategy for dealing with foolish anger.

**Eccl 10:8-9:** Considering the overall context of this section, Solomon seems to say that the fool who closes his eyes to all wisdom and instruction will fall into his own pit or be poisoned by his own dumb choices.

This reminds me of several of the clips from the video. Most of the time people were simply making dumb choices and suffering the consequences of those dumb choices.

v. 9 seems to advise caution in the heavy hands-on work that we can do.

Q: Who likes helping or watching their parents use power tools?

Sometimes people do just get hurt doing this kind of work and using these tools. But certainly being careful will help us avoid foolish injury and there is a wise approach to using them. This is the reason you don’t give a toddler access to a chainsaw or golf carts to pre-teens (remember from the video?).

**Eccl 10:10:** Continuing in this illustration, Solomon shows the wisdom in being better prepared for the work we have to do. The fool appears to be trying to cut down the tree with a blunt axe.

Q: How many of you enjoy steak? Have you ever tried cutting your steak with a butter knife? You have to apply a lot more strength! How much better to have a sharper knife, though also how much more caution and wisdom is necessary to use the steak knife!

The last several verses used building and working as teaching illustrations for wisdom and folly. Let’s see what Jesus has to say about this.

Read **Matthew 7:24-27**. Jesus certainly recognized the difference between being wise and being a fool.

Q: What was the difference between the wise builder and the foolish builder?

A: They both actually HEARD Jesus’s words, but only the wise builder LISTENED and RESPONDED. The foolish person ignored His words!

**Key Point:** You all are hearing Jesus words right now! How will you respond?

1. Will you be the wise person who, in awe of Jesus, opens his heart to God’s Word and responds with faith and obedience?
2. Will you be the foolish person who, like the fool who says in his heart, ‘there is no God’, closes his heart to God’s Word and ignores God?

There are only two kinds of people in the world! Choose wisely, because the Bible is clear that it is “not cool to be a fool”! In fact, you can be sure that is “literally true” for all eternity in hell!

But you can also be sure that it doesn’t matter how foolish you are or have been, you are never beyond the reach of Jesus! He will ALWAYS welcome you in, once you welcome Him in! (Luke 5:31-32)

Bring It Home

**Scripture from Lesson**: Ecclesiastes 9:16-10:10

**Lesson Theme**: Not Cool to Be a Fool

**Memory Verse:** Psalm 14:1a “*The fool has said in his heart, ‘There is no God.’”*

**Teachers/Parents:** The theme of our lesson was that “It is Not Cool to Be a Fool”. Before our lesson we watched a quick “fail” video showing people doing some really dumb things. In most cases it is pretty clear they were trying to be cool or show off, but ended up looking pretty foolish! Can you share any stories where you tried to be cool, but ended up doing something really dumb and foolish? What wisdom did you learn from that experience?

**Discussion Questions:**

1. The Bible uses the word fool or foolish about 100 times in the books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes alone and not in a positive light. Our memory verse (Psalm 14:1a) gets to the heart of foolishness: saying “no” to God. Why do you think this is the beginning of foolishness?
2. On the contrary, read **Proverbs 9:10**. The Bible says that the beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord or saying “yes” to God. Why do you think this is the beginning of wisdom?
3. **Eccl 10:1** teaches that it only takes a little bit of foolishness and sin to spoil something good. Can you think of anything really good that becomes ruined by just a little bit of something bad? What does this teach us about sin?
4. **Eccl 10:2** teaches that the leanings of our heart indicate whether we are wise or foolish. This brings us back to whether we fear God or we ignore God. Read **Proverbs 4:23**. Which way is your heart leaning – toward God or away from Him?
5. Read **Proverbs 12:15** and **Proverbs 18:2**. What do these verses teach is a common problem of the fool?
6. Read **Galatians 3:1-3** which is one of the apostle Paul’s sharpest criticisms of the church. Notice he calls them foolish! What were they doing that was so foolish? (see full context in Galatians 2 as well)

