***“Acting A Fool”***

Were you aware of the fact that the Bible catalogs people and separates them into two separate groups – the wise and the foolish? I want to talk to you today about the topic **Acting A Fool**. The phrase “Acting A Fool” is basically slang language that’s sometimes used to describe a person who is a bit out of sorts – someone that’s saying or doing something foolish, joking, clowning around, or acting silly or strange. In our study today I’d like to capitalize on that phrase **Acting A Fool** to direct your minds to some things that the foolish person says or does. And I’ll leave it up to you to decide which one of these categories you fall under.

**(1) The Fool Says There Is No God:** Number one, the first thing that the foolish person says is that “There is no God!” The story is told of an individual that came to town one time and boasted about being an atheist. He said, “I don’t think there’s a God, I don’t believe in God!” And then somebody said, “You know what, I’ve been reading the Bible and I’ve been reading about you!” The psalmist said in Psalm 10:4, **“The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts.”** Can you imagine an individual not believing in God? You can’t live in our society, you can’t even look outside the window and think for a minute that there is no God! The Bible describes you in detail when you say there is no God! The psalmist said in Psalm 14:1, **“The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.”** The Bible classifies people as being foolish who say and think that sort of thing. By the way, you can’t be a Bible reader and think that! The Bible says in the very first verse, **“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”** (Gen. 1:1) and scattered throughout this entire book (from Genesis to Revelation) God is upheld as being in existence. If you don’t believe in God let me ask you a question: How would you like to try getting along without Him? For example, try breathing without His air! Try eating and drinking without the food and water He provides if you think there’s no God! People need to think about that. It’s no wonder that Paul said what he did about God when he talked to those people in Athens when he preached, **“For in him we live, and move, and have our being.”** (Acts 17:28) Without God there is no way you could exist – no way at all. If you don’t think that’s true just try it for awhile and let me know how that works out for you (if you’re still around)! So the fool has said in his heart there is no God. Surely there is! The psalmist said in Psalm 19:1, **“The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.”** Paul told the Romans, **“For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.”** (Rom. 1:20) Look at the sky above you – the Sun, the Moon, and the Stars if you think there’s no God. Look at how this world operates – everything working in harmony, with absolute precision, and accuracy if you think there’s no God. Do you honestly think all of this just happened by chance? I don’t think so. The so-called science community would have us believe that all of this is the result of a giant explosion called the Big Bang. Just a random explosion of particles (which arose out of nothing, by the way) that resulted in the intricate beauty that we observe all around us. Do you honestly think that’s true? Let me ask you a question: How did you get here? Are you the result of something arising out of nothing? Surely not! In Genesis 2:7 the Bible tells us exactly how you got here: **“And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.”** That’s how we got here! In fact, the Bible says that man is created in the very image of God. Let me read to you this time from Genesis 1:26-27: **“26And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. 27So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.”** That’s how we got here! We didn't evolve from something that flopped out of the water 4 million years ago and eventually grew into a man and a woman. But not only does God tell us how we got here, He also tells us why we’re here. Have you ever thought about that? That’s important, that’s significant! The Bible tells we’re here for two simple reasons and that’s recorded for us in the book of Ecclesiastes chapter 12 and verse 13. A wise man wrote this and he tried everything you could think of (he tried wealth, he tried wisdom, you name it he tried it) and he said I’ve come to this conclusion (Solomon, let me ask you, to what conclusion did you come?): **“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.”** That’s what you’re here for – to respect God and keep His commandments! So the Bible tells us how we got here, why we’re here, and one other thing (Care to guess?) – where you’re going! There are two places where you can spend all eternity – just two, not three. In Matthew 25:46 when the Lord described the Judgment scene and the verdict was read. People that did not believe, who were not obedient, were cast into eternal punishment; but the righteous went into eternal life. Listen to it: **“And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.”** That’s where we’re all going, that’s where we’re headed – to stand before God in Judgment and be judged there according to our works (Eccl. 12:14; Rom. 2:6; 2 Cor. 5:10; Rev. 20:13) and that’s when the separation will begin. And, let me tell you something, you are **Acting A Fool** if you say otherwise – if you say there is no God! Where did you learn that from? You didn’t learn that from reading this book and you certainly didn’t learn that by observing things round about you. Look at the category the Lord puts you in when you say “There is no God.” But let me give you another example of **Acting A Fool**…

**(2) The Fool Leaves God Out Of His Plans:** Another thing that the foolish say and do is to make plans, but leave God out of their plans. Have you ever done anything like that? Let me call your attention to the book of Luke chapter 12. Remember the story in Luke 12? It’s a story of an individual who did all kinds of planning, but left God completely out of it. The reason the Lord gave this story is because people thought that a man’s life consisted in the abundance of the things which he possessed. But it doesn’t! On that particular occasion one of His disciple’s came to Him and requested that Jesus speak to his brother that he divide the inheritance between the two. Jesus refused his request and then gave this story as an illustration of one who trusted in his riches, but left God completely out of his plans. Notice what He said, **“15And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. 16And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: 17And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?** (Look at the personal pronouns. Look at how selfish this man was!) **18And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. 19And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. 20But God said unto him** (Do you know what God said to this fella who did all his planning and not one time thought about God?)**, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?”** (Lk. 12:15-20) The Lord said we are a fool when we think that our life consists of the abundance of the things which we possess. You can’t trust in your possessions! They can become corrupted, burned down, stolen, and gone forever! Matthew 6:19-21 says, **“19Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: 20But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: 21For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”** Somebody said, “That guy was in bad shape, wasn’t he?” Yeah, he sure was! But what about you and me? I need to read one more verse. Verse 21 says, **“So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”** Think about that – the Lord says an individual is foolish if he does his life’s planning and leaves God out of his plans. Let me ask you: Have you left God out of your plans? Or have you made arrangements to include God in your activities (since there is a God, by the way)? Have you been **Acting A Fool** in regards to your life’s planning? If you haven’t included God then you have! Don’t make that mistake. But let me show you something else…

**(3) The Fool Does Not Study The Bible:** You know, the Scriptures place a lot of emphasis on us studying the Bible in order to understand it. In Ephesians 5:17 Paul says, **“Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.”** Point number 3: You are a fool if you make no effort to read and study this book! And there are a lot of people who fall in that category – maybe even some of us who are here. I don’t know. But if that’s true it doesn’t change what I’m saying. We need to have the desire to study and understand this book or else we are in the category of being foolish! In Proverbs 3:13 the wise man says, **“Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding.”** In Proverbs 18:2 listen to what Solomon had to say about this: **“A fool** (There’s my subject!) **hath no delight in understanding, but that his heart may discover itself.”** He doesn’t care – he has the attitude that it doesn’t make any difference. In Jeremiah 4:22 the weeping prophet penned these words: **“For my people** (He’s talking about the Israelites of the Old Testament) **is foolish,** (Jeremiah, what made you say that?) **they have not known me; they have none understanding: they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge.”** Think about that. If you have the attitude of “I don’t care what this book says. I’m not going to spend any time studying it!” Yet, the Bible says in 2 Timothy 2:15, **“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”** Do you have any desire to do that? By the way, that’s the reason we have Bible study. A lot of members of the church miss out on that. We all need to spend more time reading and studying the Sacred Pages! If you don’t, do you know what category the Lord puts you in? The category of being **A FOOL**! But let me tell you about somebody else who the Lord puts in that category of being foolish. Number four…

**(4) The Fool Despises His Father’s Instructions:** The Bible says that a person is **Acting A Fool** when they despise their father’s instructions. You know, a lot of boys and girls think they know a lot more than their parents know. Do you know anybody like that? It was said of Mark Twain when he was 17 years old that he had this to say about his father: “My daddy is the dumbest man I’ve ever seen!” When he was 21 he said, “I don’t know how my dad learned so much in four short years!” But you know who did the learning, don’t you?! And the Bible gives some valuable instruction to children who have a bad attitude toward their parents. In Proverbs 15:5 Solomon, also known as the wise man, had this to say about children and their parents: **“A fool despiseth his father's instruction: but he that regardeth reproof is prudent.”** You might say, “My dad doesn’t know anything, I’m smarter than he is!” Really?! Let me tell you something: Don’t underestimate the wisdom of your parents! After all, they’ve been around awhile! They’ve had a lot experience that you haven’t even thought about! They’ve probably forgotten more than you know! And you don’t want to be classified as being a fool, do you? So don’t despise your father’s instructions! Listen to them. You might not always agree – that’s okay. But you don’t have to be disrespectful toward your parents. Paul said in Ephesians 6:1-3 (when he pointed out the responsibility of children toward their parents): **“1Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. 2Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) 3That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.”** Do you want to live a long time? Sure, we all do! But did you know that a lot of young people cut their lives short because of this very thing – showing disrespect for their mother and father. So it’s important that you’re not guilty of that. But again, what the foolish say and do…

**(5) The Fool Trusts In His Own Heart:** You know, sometimes folks trust in their own heart rather than the word of God. If you trust in your own heart rather than the word of God the Bible says you are (Would you like to guess?) a fool! Again, in the book of Proverbs 28:26 the wise man says: **“He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool: but whoso walketh wisely, he shall be delivered.”** That means you think more of your own thinking than you do of God’s! You really think that’s true? Do you really think you’re smarter than God? Proverbs 21:2 says, **“Every way of a man is right in his own eyes: but the Lord pondereth the hearts.”** You see, it’s the Lord who knows what’s right! Over and over again the Scriptures emphasize the fact that God’s thoughts are higher than man’s thoughts. Like in Isaiah 55:8-9 – **“8For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. 9For as the heavens are higher than the earth** (That’s a pretty good distance, isn’t it!)**?, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.”** So the next time you get to thinking about how smart you are just remember the Lord said you’re a fool when you get to thinking that way! In fact, the Bible says, **“There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.”** (Prov. 14:12) No wonder the weeping prophet Jeremiah said, **“O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.”** (Jer. 10:23) The next time you get to thinking “I’ll just direct my steps” remember that it’s not in man that walketh to do that! You know, I could do an entire lesson called **I Thought**. Did you that almost every time someone said that in the Bible they ended being wrong? Like Naaman the leper in 2 Kings 5 when he said, *“Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the Lord his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper.”* (2 Kings 5:11) Or when the Rich Man in Luke 12 thought within himself to pull down his barns and builder greater? Or maybe Saul of Tarsus before he was a Christian thought to do many things contrary of the name of Jesus of Nazareth (Acts 26:9)? When Paul gave his defense before King Agrippa he basically said he was **Acting A Fool** when he did that! And guess what – so are you if you trust in your own heart! You might as well mark that down in whatever book you mark things down in. So the next you get to thinking, “I know the Bible says such and such, but…” – Hold it right there! Don’t be foolish! But instead be wise like the Scriptures emphasize that we must. But again, what the foolish say and do…

**(6) The Fool Gets Angry Too Easily:** Do you have trouble controlling your temper? You know, most of us have had problems with that at one time or another. Point number 6, the Bible says we are foolish when we let anger get the best of us – when we fly off the handle. In Ecclesiastes 7:9 the Lord talked about that a little bit. The passage says, **“Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry** (By the way, do you know where anger resides?)**: for anger resteth in the bosom of fools.”** You know, there are some people that just fly off the handle at the drop of a hat. But the Lord says you are a fool when you do that! But why is that true? Well, first of all, it’s true because the Lord said it. It’s also true because anger makes you do foolish things. There’s no telling what you might do if you get angry enough. You might curse, or sin with your tongue, you might break something you didn’t intend to break, you might hurt yourself, or somebody else, you might even kill somebody! There are folks who’ll get so angry that they’ll do that, right?! It happens all the time. So you need to be careful when you get angry. James says, **“19Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath. 20For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.”** (Jas. 1:19-20) Paul said in Ephesians 4:26-31, **“26Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath…31Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice.”** He says, “Get it out of you system!” Don’t let anger stay inside of you, get rid of it, because if you don’t (if you let it reside in your bosom as he puts it) you’re a fool! And you don’t want to be foolish, do you? Sometimes it’s easier said than done, but we have to learn how to do that – we need to learn to control our anger. By the way, have you learned how to control your temper? Number 7…

**(7) The Fool Talks Too Much:** Next, the Scriptures point out that a person who talks all the time, but doesn’t listen is a fool. You know, some people talk so much that they must like hearing the sound of their own voice. Do you know anybody like that? The wise man said, **“2Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few. 3For a dream cometh through the multitude of business; and a fool's voice is known by multitude of words.”** (Eccl. 5:2-3) Some folks just like to talk, and talk, and talk. Well, the Bible says if you do that you’re **Acting A Fool**! You need to learn to listen once in awhile. Listening is under-rated these days! You can learn a lot by just listening. By the way, when a person doesn’t talk do you know what people think of him? Proverbs 17:27-28 says, **“27He that hath knowledge spareth his words: and a man of understanding is of an excellent spirit. 28Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise: and he that shutteth his lips is esteemed a man of understanding.”** If you want people to think you’re wise, don’t talk so much, especially if you’re a young person! Let those who are older do most of the talking. One of Job’s friends, Elihu, said in Job 32:7, *“Days should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom.”* Why? Because they know more than you do, they’ve been around longer, they’ve had more life experiences. That’s why Elihu waited until the end of the book to share his opinion because he was the youngest. Job 12:12-13 says, *“12With the ancient is wisdom; and in length of days understanding. 13With him is wisdom and strength, he hath counsel and understanding.”* At the very least, you need to learn to think before you speak! Better to be thought a fool than to open your mouth and remove all doubt! One more point and the lesson’s yours…

**(8) The Fool Hears The Word But Does It Not:** Last but not least – The Bible classifies an individual as being a fool when they hear the word of God, but do nothing about it. Did you know you’re **Acting A Fool** when you hear the word of God, but fail to obey?! How do I know that somebody asked? Well, there’s a little story that Jesus gives in Matthew 7 that shows us how this works. He gave a story of two men – one wise and one foolish. It begins in verse 24: **“24Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them** (You ought to underscore that word doeth)**, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock** (That’s a good way to build, right?)**: 25And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. 26And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a** (Care to guess?) **foolish man, which built his house upon the sand** (What would you think of a builder who’s going to build your house and he just builds on sand – no foundation at all? Would you be happy with that? When the rains come and the winds blow you’re not going to be too happy!)**: 27And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.”** (Matt. 7:24-27) Do you know what that story’s about? It’s about when you hear the word of God you need to do something about it! If you hear the word of God and go on your way and forget what you’ve heard it’s like building a house on sand. And didn’t James talk about that in James 1? Remember how he talked about people looking into the perfect law of liberty which is the mirror of the soul: He said, **“23For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: 24For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.”** By the way, am I talking about you? You don’t want to be guilty of that, do you? You don’t want to be foolish about your soul – the soul is made in the image of God, it’s eternal, and it’s the most valuable possession you have, and one day you’ll have to give an account for it! That’s why Jesus said in Matthew 16:26 – *“For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”*Now look at verse 25: **“But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.”** (Jas. 1:23-25) So when you hear the word of God don’t hesitate to obey! Don’t be a fool!

Thanks for listening so well and should you be in this audience and you’ve never obeyed the gospel…you’ve heard it. Do you believe it? Have you obeyed it? That’s what our last point was all about, right? (That belief has to be coupled with obedience.) That involves repenting of your sins, confessing your faith, and being baptized into Christ. Jesus said, *“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”* (Mk. 16:16) If you’ll do that the Lord will pardon you of your past sins and add you to His church (Acts 2:47). If you’ve done that in times past, but have since fallen away (Maybe you’ve been **Acting A Fool**) the Bible says that you can again have forgiveness through repentance, confession, and prayer (Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:9). If we can help you in obeying the commandments of the Lord please let us know as together we stand and sing!