

## FOOLS, FOOLS, FOOLS

A study of what God has to say in Proverbs about “Fools.”

Our present focus is on the person Solomon addressed when he said that he wanted **“To give subtlety to the simple”** (Proverbs 1:4). **“The simple”** is a description of the person who constitutes the first stage of becoming a **“fool.”** To better understand the word **“simple”** we consult the Enhanced Strong’s Lexicon Definition and the definition found in The Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament. Minor editing was made to each of these definitions to make each of them more reader-friendly.

### The Enhanced Strong’s Lexicon Definition of 6612

The Hebrew word designated **6612** is translated **“simple”** and is from the Hebrew word with Strong’s number 6601; There are 19 occurrences; the AV or KJV translates this Hebrew word as **“simple”** 15 times, **“simple ones”** twice, **“foolish”** once, and **“simplicity”** once. It normally means one who is **“naive”** or **“simple, foolish, open-minded.”**

### The Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament Definition

This Hebrew word appears twenty-seven times in various verbal forms. The basic verb idea is **“be open, spacious, wide,”** and **might relate to the immature or simple one who is open to all kinds of enticement, not having developed a discriminating judgment as to what is right or wrong.**

The verb usage is seen in the tactics of Samson’s bride-to-be in wrangling the secret of his riddle, although in the end she lost her husband, Judges 14:15–16. Enticement is described in terms of a man seducing a woman (Exodus 22:16). **The immature are warned not be enticed by sinners (Proverbs 1:10). Another arresting usage of enticement is what happens when a man refuses to follow God’s direction. He is enticed to do wrong to his ultimate hurt, a discipline or judgment for rejecting the Lord (II Chronicles 18:19–21).**

The word can also be related **“to deceive”** or **“to entice.”** Israel is warned not to be deceived by turning to other gods in the midst of plenty (Deuteronomy 11:16). To be a witness against a neighbor without cause is to deceive with one’s lips (Proverbs 24:28). Jeremiah in the depths of despair complained that God had deceived him when his ministry seemed so fruitless. In His response, the Lord was gracious with him, as he is with all who serve him, but Jeremiah could not escape his commission (Jeremiah 20:7–9). Even a prophet who is double-minded can deceive himself when he asks God for guidance (Ezekiel 14:9).

When the Hebrew word is a noun and translated **“simple”** or **“foolish,”** it generally describes not the mentally deficient, but the naive, who is spiritually or morally immature in Proverbs who must be well taught, since an immature person believes anything (Proverbs 14:15). Something worse than immaturity is implied when the word is associated with or translated **“mockers”** (Proverbs 1:22) who are said to have **“rejected me,” “ignored my advice”** and **“not to have accepted my rebuke”** (Proverbs 1:22-26). If the **“simple”** refuses to learn he will go on to inherit folly, meaning **the impairment of moral and spiritual values.** (Proverbs 14:18). To achieve moral and spiritual maturity, **“the naive”** are encouraged to receive discretion (Proverbs 1:4), to understand wisdom (Proverbs 8:5), and to dwell where wisdom makes her home (Proverbs 9:4). Otherwise, he may drift into temptation and then sin, immorality (Proverbs 7:7-27), robbery and murder (Proverbs 1:10–14). Apart from Godly tutelage, he is on the road to death (Proverbs 7:7,27; 22:3).

Having now considered the definitions of the Hebrew word translated **“simple”** we must now examine the use and meaning of each verse in which that Hebrew word is used. In doing so we will venture outside of Proverbs to study four verses in the Psalms and in the book of Ezekiel. As we acquire some understanding of what God is telling us in those statements we will enable ourselves to apply those understandings to our own lives. In so doing it is important for us to remember that, while Solomon was the wisest man on the earth as well as the writer of most of these proverbs and certainly understood their meanings, it seems that he did not do what he knew to do. Apparently he was not guided by what he knew because he did not live according to his knowledge. **So that our lives will not end up like Solomon’s (Ecclesiastes 2:11,20-26; 5:10-16), let us resolve to live what we learn by applying these truths to our own lives.**

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A sample organization of the verses using the Hebrew word 6612 most often translated “*simple*.”

### STARTING VERSE

Proverbs 1:4 To give **subtily**<sup>6195</sup> to the **simple**<sup>6612</sup>, to the young man **knowledge**<sup>1847</sup> and **discretion**<sup>4209</sup>.

### BEING “SIMPLE” IS A SIN AND REQUIRES RECONCILIATION WITH GOD

Ezekiel 45:18 Thus saith the Lord GOD; In the first month, in the first day of the month, thou shalt take a young bullock without blemish, and cleanse the sanctuary:

Ezekiel 45:19 And the priest shall take of the blood of the sin offering, and put it upon the posts of the house, and upon the four corners of the settle of the altar, and upon the posts of the gate of the inner court.

Ezekiel 45:20 And so thou shalt do the seventh day of the month for every one that erreth, and for him that is **simple**<sup>6612</sup>: so shall ye reconcile the house.

### DEFINITIONS

Proverbs 14:15 The **simple**<sup>6612</sup> believeth every word: but the **prudent**<sup>6175</sup> man looketh well to his going.

Proverbs 7:7 And beheld among the **simple ones**<sup>6612</sup>, I discerned among the youths, a young man void of **understanding**<sup>3820</sup>,

Proverbs 1:22 How long, ye **simple ones**<sup>6612</sup>, will ye love **simplicity**<sup>6612</sup>? and the scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate **knowledge**<sup>1847</sup>?

### ACTIONS AND DANGERS ASSOCIATED WITH THE “SIMPLE”

Proverbs 14:18 The **simple**<sup>6612</sup> inherit folly: but the **prudent**<sup>6175</sup> are crowned with **knowledge**<sup>1847</sup>.

Proverbs 22:3 A **prudent**<sup>6175</sup> man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the **simple**<sup>6612</sup> pass on, and are punished.

Proverbs 27:12 A **prudent**<sup>6175</sup> man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself; but the **simple**<sup>6612</sup> pass on, and are punished.

Proverbs 1:32 For the turning away of the **simple**<sup>6612</sup> shall slay them, and the prosperity of **fools**<sup>3684</sup> shall destroy them.

### STEPS OF CORRECTION WHICH NEED TO BE TAKEN

Psalms 116:6 The LORD preserveth the **simple**<sup>6612</sup>: I was brought low, and he helped me.

Proverbs 8:5 O ye **simple**<sup>6612</sup>, **understand**<sup>995</sup> **wisdom**<sup>6195</sup>: and, ye fools, be ye of an **understanding**<sup>995</sup> heart.

Proverbs 9:4 Whoso is **simple**<sup>6612</sup>, let him turn in hither: as for him that wanteth **understanding**<sup>3820</sup>, she saith to him,

Proverbs 9:6 Forsake the **foolish**<sup>6612</sup>, and live; and go in the way of **understanding**<sup>998</sup>.

Proverbs 9:16 Whoso is **simple**<sup>6612</sup>, let him turn in hither: and as for him that wanteth **understanding**<sup>3820</sup>, she saith to him,

### WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE “SIMPLE” LEARNS AND OBEYS THE WORD OF GOD

Psalms 19:7 The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making **wise**<sup>2449</sup> the **simple**<sup>6612</sup>.

Psalms 119:130 The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth **understanding**<sup>995</sup> unto the **simple**<sup>6612</sup>.

### LESSONS LEARNED FROM OBSERVING THE PUNISHMENT OF “SCORNERS” AND “FOOLS”

Proverbs 19:25 Smite a **scorner**<sup>3887</sup>, and the **simple**<sup>6612</sup> will beware: and reprove one that hath **understanding**<sup>995</sup>, and he will **understand**<sup>995</sup> **knowledge**<sup>1847</sup>.

Proverbs 21:11 When the **scorner**<sup>3887</sup> is punished, the **simple**<sup>6612</sup> is made **wise**<sup>2449</sup>: and when the **wise**<sup>2450</sup> is **instructed**<sup>7919</sup>, he receiveth **knowledge**<sup>1847</sup>.

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1. “What does this statement say?”
2. “How does this statement relate to the other statements I have located pertaining to this topic?”
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Proverbs 27:12 A **prudent**<sup>6175</sup> man foreseeeth the evil, and hideth himself; but the **simple**<sup>6612</sup> pass on, and are punished.

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Ezekiel 45:20 And so thou shalt do the seventh day of the month for every one that erreth, and for him that is **simple**<sup>6612</sup>: so shall ye reconcile the house.

1. “What does this statement say in this passage?”
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