

Proverbs 14:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The wisdom of the prudent is to understand his way: but the folly of fools is deceit.

Analysis

The wisdom of the prudent is 'to understand his way'—self-knowledge and discernment about one's path. The Hebrew 'biyn' (understand) implies distinguishing and discerning. In contrast, 'the folly of fools is deceit'—they deceive themselves about their condition. This reflects the Reformed emphasis on self-examination and the deceitfulness of the human heart (Jeremiah 17:9). True wisdom requires honest assessment of our motives, capabilities, and spiritual state. The fool lives in delusion, while the wise person pursues truth about themselves before God.

Historical Context

Ancient wisdom literature emphasized know-thyself principles. The examined life, understanding one's limitations and calling, was foundational to navigating life successfully in Israel's covenant community.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. Do you practice regular, honest self-examination before God?
2. In what ways might you be deceiving yourself about your spiritual condition or motives?
3. How does understanding your own weaknesses and sinful tendencies help you walk wisely?

Interlinear Text

חֲכָמָה	עַ רוֹם	הֵבִי יֵן	דִּרְכּוֹ	וְאֵל לֵת	כְּסִיל יֵם
The wisdom	of the prudent	is to understand	his way	but the folly	of fools
H2451	H6175	H995	H1870	H200	H3684

מְרִמָּה:
is deceit
H4820

Additional Cross-References

Ephesians 5:17 (Parallel theme): Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.

2 Timothy 3:13 (Parallel theme): But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.

James 3:13 (Parallel theme): Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.

Psalms 111:10 (Parallel theme): The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth for ever.

Psalms 119:5 (Parallel theme): O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes!

Psalms 119:73 (Parallel theme): Thy hands have made me and fashioned me: give me understanding, that I may learn thy commandments.

Proverbs 11:18 (Parallel theme): The wicked worketh a deceitful work: but to him that soweth righteousness shall be a sure reward.

Proverbs 2:9 (Parallel theme): Then shalt thou understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity; yea, every good path.

Proverbs 8:20 (Parallel theme): I lead in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment:

Ephesians 4:22 (Parallel theme): That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;

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