

# Proverbs 24:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Wisdom is too high for a fool: he openeth not his mouth in the gate.

## Analysis

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This proverb observes the fool's incompetence in public settings. 'Wisdom is too high for a fool' (חַכְמוֹת לְאֵוִיל רָמוֹת/ramot le'evil chakhmot, corals/high things to a fool are wisdom)—the Hebrew רָמוֹת is debated; some translate 'corals' (rare, expensive, unattainable), others 'heights' (unreachable). Either way, wisdom exceeds the fool's grasp. 'He openeth not his mouth in the gate' (לֹא־יִפְתָּח פִּיהוּ/basha'ar lo-yiftach pihu, in the gate he does not open his mouth) describes inability to participate in community deliberation. The 'gate' was where elders conducted business, judged cases, and made community decisions (Ruth 4:1-11; Proverbs 31:23). The fool either lacks wisdom to contribute or lacks credibility for anyone to listen. This reflects the principle that folly disqualifies from leadership. Paul lists qualifications for elders emphasizing wisdom, self-control, and good reputation (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9).

## Historical Context

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Ancient Israelite cities centered on the gate—the fortified entrance where community gathered. Legal proceedings occurred there (Deuteronomy 21:19; 25:7; Amos 5:15). Elders sat at the gate to judge disputes and conduct business (Ruth 4:1-11). Respected men participated in deliberations; fools were ignored or excluded. Boaz conducted Ruth's redemption publicly at the gate with ten elders as witnesses (Ruth 4:2). Absalom attempted to usurp David by standing at the gate, intercepting citizens, and winning their favor through flattery (2 Samuel 15:2-6). Job reminisced: 'When I went out to the gate through the city... The young

men saw me, and hid themselves: and the aged arose, and stood up' (Job 29:7-8)—indicating his respected position. In the Greco-Roman world, the agora (marketplace) functioned similarly. Paul reasoned there (Acts 17:17). Christian leaders needed similar qualifications: wisdom, character, reputation.

## Related Passages

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**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

## Study Questions

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1. In what areas of your life—work, church, family—do you lack wisdom to contribute meaningfully?
2. How can you grow in wisdom so you're equipped to serve and lead when opportunities arise?
3. Are there 'gates'—spheres of influence—where you should be serving but aren't prepared?

## Interlinear Text

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כָּאֵם וְת	לְאִיל	חֶכְמָה וְת	בַּשַּׁעַר	לֹא	יִפְתָּח	פִּיהוּ:
is too high	for a fool	Wisdom	in the gate	H3808	he openeth	not his mouth
H7311	H191	H2454	H8179		H6605	H6310

## Additional Cross-References

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**Proverbs 14:6** (Parallel theme): A scorner seeketh wisdom, and findeth it not: but knowledge is easy unto him that understandeth.

**Psalms 10:5** (Parallel theme): His ways are always grievous; thy judgments are far above out of his sight: as for all his enemies, he puffeth at them.

