



## Sermon Discussion Questions

Wise as Serpents, Innocent as Doves...and Watch Out for Fools (Proverbs 26)

February 15th, 2026

Proverbs: The Wisdom of God as a Way of Life

Drew Hunter

### Sermon Overview

---

#### Main Idea

Proverbs is framed as a father giving wisdom to his royal sons. He is giving them wisdom to live well in God's world. And we've seen that Jesus is the true royal and wise Son. He navigated the world with perfect wisdom. And then he died to give his salvation to foolish sinners who trust him. But he doesn't just forgive our sin and folly—he also begins to make us wise. He sends us into the world to live with wisdom. And he often gave us wisdom that matched Proverbs.

Here is one of his well-known sayings that matches what we'll see in Proverbs today. Jesus said, "Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves" (Matthew 10:16). Doves were viewed as innocent, but also easily deceived and ensnared in a trap. So Jesus calls us to be innocent like doves, but not naïve like them. Instead, we are to be wise as serpents. We are to be shrewd with people so that we are not ensnared in traps. Innocent, but not ignorant. Watch out for certain kinds of people—and navigate relationships wisely.

Proverbs 26 is part of a section we're calling *Advanced Wisdom*. As we've seen, Proverbs moves from *beginning* to *elementary* to *intermediate* to *advanced* wisdom. The poetry and lessons get increasingly complex as the book progresses. Earlier on, it gave simple contrasts of the wise and foolish, the righteous and wicked. Proverbs 26 now teaches us to identify seven types of foolish people. The goal is not for us to judgmentally condemn others—but to be discerning.

We need to identify these seven types of foolish people for two reasons. First, so we can learn to navigate our encounters with them wisely. And second, so we can identify and repent of tendencies in our own lives that are like them.

**Jesus sends us out to be innocent as doves, yet wise as serpents. Proverbs 26 helps us do this by identifying seven character-types to wisely navigate.**

#### Sermon Outline

1. The Fool (v. 1-11)
2. The Sluggard (v. 12-16)
3. The Meddler (v. 17)
4. The Scoffing Joker (v. 18-19)
5. The Division-Creator (v. 20-22)
6. The Deceitful Glazer (v. 23-26)
7. The Schemer (v. 27-28)



## Sermon Discussion Questions

### Discussion Questions

---

#### Initial Engagement

- What is the main idea of the text, or what did the sermon focus on?
- What insight from the text or sermon stood out to you most? Why?

#### Deeper Reflection

1. Drew highlighted six marks of a fool in the first 11 verses of Prov 26: honor doesn't fit them, they aren't motivated by reason, they require a discerning response, they can't be trusted with important tasks, they can quote wisdom but don't live it, and they don't learn from mistakes. Find examples of these 6 marks in the first 11 verses and discuss them. In what ways can knowing these marks of a fool help you to navigate relationships wisely and with discernment?
2. In v. 12-16, we see the sluggard character type. What characteristics of the sluggard do you see in these verses? In what way(s) might the sluggard be even worse than the fool described in the first 11 verses?
3. The division-creator is described in v. 20-22. How does this type of person create chaos and disunity through gossip and quarreling? Even if not overtly gossiping, what are some subtle ways we might be participating in this? Is there also an issue with being a person that listens to gossip? How do we discuss concerns with others without gossiping?
4. Drew recommended three appropriate responses to the seven different character types of foolish people in Proverbs 26: humility, trust, and discernment. Discuss how each of these strategies can be a helpful tool. How do we protect against prideful judgmentalism of others?
5. As you were listening to Drew's sermon on Proverbs 26, were you primarily thinking of people in your life that fit the various character types of foolish people? Or were you more thinking of ways that these character types were reminding you of yourself?

#### Final Response

- What is one thing you want to remember or one way you hope to change in light of this sermon or discussion?