



Two Kinds of Fool

Everyone does foolish things. I do, you do, we all do. The only person who perhaps never did a foolish thing is Jesus. And who knows, even He may have done a foolish thing once or twice. He was human, like us.

Doing something foolish does not make you a fool. But when you stubbornly persist in doing the same foolish wrong thing, and you even believe that it's right—then, according to my definition, you have become a fool.

There are foolish actions, foolish words, and foolish thoughts. All of them can be recognized, dealt with, and corrected—but if you're truly a fool, you won't do that.

In other words, it's hard to be a fool accidentally. It takes ignorance or stupidity, plus a pretty large measure of stubbornness, to be a fool.



Here's an example: "road rage." Just this week a young fool tailgated an older man for eight miles, then pulled him out of his car and beat him up severely. Now that

young fool is in jail, as he should be.

Can there be anything stupider than getting all bent out of shape because of traffic frustration, or simple impatience, or the fact that some other driver did something you didn't like? I can't imagine a worse fool than the person who thinks that his or her "road rage" reactions are justified.

Here's another example, maybe closer to home for many of us—an argument that becomes ugly, with accusations and insults that have nothing to do with the original difference of opinion. Foolish words spoken in anger can do tremendous damage to a relationship and even to a person's psyche. Anyone who believes that such verbal abuse is justified is, in my opinion, a fool.



And have you ever heard the classic joking statement, "Don't confuse me with the facts; my mind is made up"? There are many fools who do not want to know the truth; they prefer to believe what they have always believed, even if it's a lie. For example, those who stubbornly believe that their own race is somehow superior to others are this kind of fool.



The Bible has a lot to say about fools.

One who is wise is cautious and turns away from evil, but a fool is reckless and careless. (Proverbs 14:16)

A fool takes no pleasure in understanding, but only in expressing his opinion. (Proverbs 18:2)

It is an honor for a man to keep aloof from strife, but every fool will be quarreling. (Proverbs 20:3)

Do not speak in the hearing of a fool, for he will despise the good sense of your words. (Proverbs 23:9)

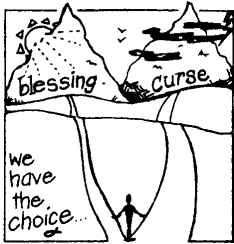
These verses and several others tell us that a person who is reckless, opinionated, quarrelsome, and self-centered is a fool. Don't be like that. Instead, be the opposite. Be someone who knows right from wrong, and who does actions that are right but steers clear of actions that are wrong. Be a person who uses words to bless people, rather than to cut them down. Always be willing to learn from others. You do not have to win every argument.

It's one thing to act like a fool, so that everyone can see that you are one. It's another thing to behave more or less responsibly and yet to miss out on all of the blessings that God longs to give you, simply because you won't let Him do it.

Are you the kind of fool who doesn't have time for God? Are you a person who plans to "get right with God" someday before you die, but not right now? If you are, then pay attention now, because this is important.

The most awesome blessing any human being can ever receive is to be together with God in eternity, sharing in His glory, His joy, His peace—this is called "Heaven." The worst, most awful, most agonizing punishment that any human can have is to be eternally separated from God—this is called "Hell."

And the most important fact you will ever face in your life is this: you get to choose. No, let me rephrase that: you have to choose.



As God said to the ancient Israelites, so He says to each of us, *"Today I set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you may live."* (see Deuteronomy 30:19)

The bad news is that you have to choose. By putting it off, you simply choose death. Only by choosing life can you have life.

The good news is that you don't have to earn it. You don't have to become "good enough"—in fact, you can't. Nobody can. As Paul the Apostle wrote to the Romans, *"The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."* (Romans 6:23)

If you're the kind of fool who has not wanted to make that choice; who has put it off until "someday," that someday you've been counting on may come too late or not at all—do it now.

If you're the kind of fool who has given up on having a right relationship with God, and simply resigned yourself to going to Hell, then repent, turn around, and choose life today, because God has not given up on you.

And here's the rest of the good news: by saying "yes" to God, you don't have to give up anything that's worth keeping. He may urge you and help you to change some of your ways, but every such change will do you good and give you peace.

Think about Jacob and Esau, the twin sons of Isaac and grandsons of Abraham. (I have included that Bible passage on page 3.)

Esau was the older of the two, and thus he was entitled to the "birthright"—the inheritance that went to the first-born son. But he did not value it highly, and he sold his birthright to his brother for a mere bowl of stew, which was quickly eaten and gone!

In the matter of his birthright, Esau was a fool.

Those who put off "choosing life" are Esau's kind of fool. They are trading the certainty of eternal life with God for the fleeting, worthless pleasures of this brief earthly life. They are choosing death.

So, how do you "choose life"? Really, it's just a simple matter of telling God, and convincing yourself, that you're now willing to let Him be in charge of your life. He's smarter than you are, he's better than you in every way, and He loves you unconditionally in spite of your past sins and current faults. Turning your life over to Him is the very best thing you can possibly do for yourself.

That's a beginning. The next part is to start letting Him teach you how to live the victorious life He intends for you. Start reading and studying the Bible, perhaps starting with the book of John. Even if you don't "get it" at first, in time the Holy Spirit will make it clear to you.

Get into a good Christian church, or at least a group of real believers in Jesus. They will help you grow in the Lord, and you will do the same for them.

And pray a lot—not with fancy words; they don't impress God and don't accomplish much. Just tell God your needs, and the needs of others you know—He will take it from there. And tell Jesus you love Him, and you're thankful for His sacrifice on the cross that saves you. And spend some time just waiting for the Holy Spirit to bring comfort to your spirit, in spite of circumstances that are troubling you



Now a word for those of you who are saved, and who are concerned for a loved one or a neighbor who is not saved. Just this: ask the Lord to save that person. Ask Him to do whatever it takes to bring that person into the Kingdom.

And guess what—He will. It may take time, so don't you give up. Keep on asking. And God will do it. How do I know? Jesus said, if we ask for anything that is in agreement with God's will, we will get it. And of course we know that God wants that loved one or that neighbor to be saved, right? He wants everyone to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth. So it will happen. So while you're asking for that person's salvation, add a prayer of thanks that it is already happening even if you don't see it yet.

God bless your walk with Jesus.

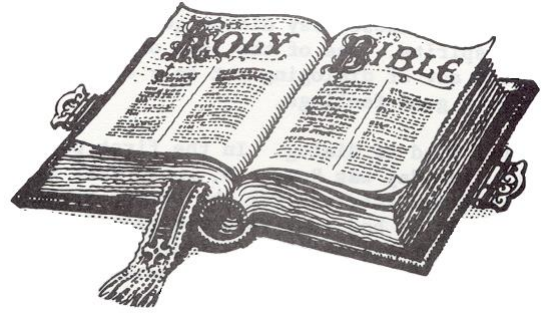
Brother Roland

Jacob and Esau

This is the account of the family line of Abraham's son Isaac.

Abraham became the father of Isaac, and Isaac was forty years old when he married Rebekah daughter of Bethuel the Aramean from Paddan Aram and sister of Laban the Aramean.

Isaac prayed to the Lord on behalf of his wife, because she was childless. The Lord answered his prayer, and his wife Rebekah became pregnant. The babies jostled each other within her, and she said, "Why is this happening to me?" So she went to inquire of the Lord.



The Lord said to her,
"Two nations are in your womb,
and two peoples from within you will be separated;
one people will be stronger than the other,
and the older will serve the younger."

When the time came for her to give birth, there were twin boys in her womb. The first to come out was red, and his whole body was like a hairy garment; so they named him Esau. After this, his brother came out, with his hand grasping Esau's heel; so he was named Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when Rebekah gave birth to them.

The boys grew up, and Esau became a skillful hunter, a man of the open country, while Jacob was content to stay at home among the tents. Isaac, who had a taste for wild game, loved Esau, but Rebekah loved Jacob.

Once when Jacob was cooking some stew, Esau came in from the open country, famished. He said to Jacob, "Quick, let me have some of that red stew! I'm famished!" (That is why he was also called Edom [which means "red"].)

Jacob replied, "First sell me your birthright."

"Look, I am about to die," Esau said. "What good is the birthright to me?"

But Jacob said, "Swear to me first." So he swore an oath to him, selling his birthright to Jacob.

Then Jacob gave Esau some bread and some lentil stew. He ate and drank, and then got up and left.

So Esau despised his birthright.

From time to time I get letters from inmates asking for Bible studies, Bibles, and other Christian materials. I don't have any, but I can refer you to a ministry that does have good Bible studies:

Mount Hope Prison Ministry
25 Summit Ave
Hagerstown MD 21740

If you're an inmate and you need a Bible, your chaplain should be able to help you get one.

Comments and questions may be sent to
Brother Roland
PO Box 14
Fayetteville PA 17222

Discipline

After we choose life, we often find that one thing we have been missing is self-discipline, and the Lord wants to help us develop some. Maybe this puzzle will be instructive.

Puzzle:

C G J V L H W Y R E S P E C T F O R G O D I C S I N P U J P
J H N P U H M L H B Y B B W M G B T L V G K M K W P F O Q N
G P H I Q E V S F R I D T U O T N W E G R U I K U D N M E R
K C I Q N T P U T K F E J O F E X C U V S J C T T N E N V F
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V G W W D I I S S K N T E P C I P E I I K L Z S V S L T O K
I D B R O T T M E U D P A Q O C P C N S T T Y D C O U X R D
L O A C A A F I P U E C M N Y A Q S S D S H J D V Y M A T C
L H O P O P F H G R R I I D D R E S E J U E F E B V O F N D
U D E N E H T G N E R T S G N I E B F H S R N U K S X C O E
F I Z Q Q M R N P V L B G U K N N F O S T S A T L R X H C Q
E Q S Y G E F I F P Q L U P I G W G R F T Y E N I N N G F P
C I F I B P L K K U V J I L I F V O G N N G B N C W E N L Q
A I Y U E K I A F M P K O J T O Q F E E O O N D E E Z S E P
E Z K A D V T T G G U H D N Z R N H T W C I I B E L R I S H
P E C H E L P S A V E T H E L O S T B K A N S S K L T B N Z
S E Y Z M D V U O O X K P J C T G O I P U G A S U O E N A Z
A C B M O M X J W N I I P Z O H S Q T W A S C T I F F B E J
T N E M E G A R U O C N E N L E U D T Z C T H S P M N V R G
P V J Q Q S C V L C M D J I A R T E E Q K R D E F E B O Y W
V O U L V Q G R N M P N F U F S S R R B K A A R A O C U C X
Y N V M D A V O I D D E F I L E M E N T W I V P A L J C S C
R N Z D G Z Z A B U D S J R F W G R E A I G L U U M I B A X
R X Z P F K O I Z O V S A H I H D X S D G H N R S V D N S X
F R G X F P M Y I T Z Y O A X E Q N S H H T P J F B W O G N

Words:

* Without discipline we have:

CONFUSION
ILLEGITIMACY
NO STANDING

* With discipline we have:

REBUKES
PUNISHMENT
HARDSHIP
PAIN

* We also have:

LOTS OF COMPANY
ENCOURAGEMENT
TRUE SONSHIP
ACCEPTANCE
TRAINING

HEALING
RIGHTEOUSNESS
PEACEFUL LIVES
HOLINESS
LIFE

* God requires of us:

RESPECT FOR GOD
TAKING HIM SERIOUSLY
SUBMISSION
REPENTANCE
GOING STRAIGHT
BEING STRENGTHENED
ENDURANCE
CARING FOR OTHERS
WITNESSING

* Fruit produced in us:

LOVE
JOY
PEACE
PATIENCE
KINDNESS
GOODNESS
FAITHFULNESS
GENTLENESS
SELF-CONTROL

* Enabling us to:

FORGET BITTERNESS
AVOID DEFILEMENT
BE LED BY THE SPIRIT
HELP SAVE THE LOST