

LETTERS FROM GRANDPA
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Dearest grandchild,

Today's letter will deal with Ps. 14:1: **"The fool says in his heart 'There is no God.' They are corrupt, their deeds are vile; there is no one who does good"**.

The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia lists eight different Hebrew words that are all translated as "fool" in the Bible. Recognizing which word is used in our text will provide insight into precisely what kind of a "fool" we are talking about. The eight Hebrew words for "fool" are:

1. Nabal – shamelessly immoral.
2. Ewil – hasty, impatient, self sufficient.
3. Kesil – thickness, sluggishness.
4. Sakhil – thickheaded.
5. Pethi – simple.
6. Baar – brutish.
7. Taphel – insipid, untempered.
8. Toholah – folly, error.

The word in our text is # 1 "Nabal" which means "shamelessly immoral". "They are corrupt and their deeds are vile". "Nabal" is used in Is. 32:6 to describe a man who is "busy with evil". It was the name of Abigail's husband who was "surly and mean" (1 Sam. 25:4). It is used in Gen., 37:4 to describe Shechem who raped Dinah, the daughter of Jacob and Leah. It is used in Deut. 22:21 to describe a woman who would "play the whore in her father's house". It is used in Judges 19:23-24 to describe the men of Benjamin who raped a Levite's concubine to death. It is used in II Samuel 13:12 to describe Amnon who raped Tamar the sister of Absalom.

The point of Ps. 14:1 is that the shamelessly immoral person does not believe in God and therefore thinks they will suffer no consequences from their "shameless immorality". Their evil actions testify to what they "believe". They "believe" they can do whatever they want to do because they "believe" there is no God. Because they refuse to face reality and say in their heart that there is no God, the Bible calls them a "fool".

President John Adams once said: *"Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other."* A moral and religious person fears God. When called upon to be a witness in court, for example, they will place their hand on the Bible and "swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth". The God fearing witness believes in judgement. The Scriptures warn that all liars will have their place in the lake of fire and brimstone (Rev. 21:8). Godly people tend to tell the truth because they fear God and believe in judgement. The "fool", however, brazenly tells lies because in his heart he "believes" there is no God. His evil actions prove that he has no fear of judgement.

Solomon said: **"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Prov. 9:10)**. God fearing people consistently try to be good. Mass murderers and cruel dictators do not fear God and therefore make no effort to be good. Jesus was crucified between two thieves. They symbolize the difference we are talking about. One thief feared God and the other didn't. The foolish thief hurled insults at Jesus. He sarcastically said: **"Aren't you the Christ? Save yourself and us" (Lk. 23:39)**. His words and

actions prove that he didn't believe in God. Sadly, in only a short time he would be dead and find out how "foolish" he really was.

The other thief, however, rebuked him: **"Don't you fear God, he said, since you are under the same sentence? We are punished justly for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong. Then he said, 'Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom'" (Lk. 23:40-43).** Then we are treated to some of the most beautiful words in the Bible: **"Jesus answered him, I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise" (Lk. 23:43).** Solomon said it like this: **"The wise of heart will receive commandments, but a babbling fool will come to ruin" (Prov. 10:8).**

One reason God established families is to teach children the consequences of bad behavior. Solomon said: **"He who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is careful to discipline him" (Prov. 13:24).** A little pain properly applied in childhood can prevent a lot of pain later in life. The Lord also disciplines those whom He loves (Heb. 12:6). In fact, **"God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in His holiness" (Heb. 12:10).**

Eli, the priest, had sons who were wicked and had no regard for the Lord (1 Sam. 2:12). They even slept with the women who served at the entrance of the tent of meeting (1 Sam. 2:22). The Lord revealed to young Samuel the severe judgement He would inflict upon Eli and his family: **"And the Lord said to Samuel: "See, I am about to do something in Israel that will make the ears of everyone who hears about it tingle. At that time I will carry out against Eli everything I spoke against his family—from beginning to end. For I told him that I would judge his family forever because of the sin he knew about; his sons blasphemed God, and he failed to restrain them. Therefore I swore to the house of Eli, 'The guilt of Eli's house will never be atoned for by sacrifice or offering.'" (1 Sam. 3:11-14).**

The name of Cathleen Calloway is well know in our family. She and your Aunt Mary were in pre-school together at four years of age. When Cathleen's baby sitter told her it was getting cold and she needed to put on a sweater, Cathleen refused to do so. She fled from the baby-sitter, running between two parked cars into the path of oncoming traffic. Her funeral had a profound influence on me. It impressed on me in an unforgettable way the importance of teaching children to be obedient! These "Letters from Grandpa" are one feeble attempt to pass this important lesson on to you.

Remember! It is the "fool" who says in his heart there is no God!

I love you,

Grandpa Boyce