

**At Home with Wisdom**  
**Proverbs 14:1-11**  
**Berean Baptist Church**  
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**INTRODUCTION**

Proverbs 14:1-11 opens and closes with homes being established or destroyed. Between these two bookends, the Doctrine of Life has much to teach us about domestic health and domestic destruction.

*Live in wisdom so that your house will be built and your family will flourish!*

**Proverbs 14:1-2 Where the Home and the Heavens Meet**

**Vs 1** This is not the first time we have seen woman building houses in Proverbs; see 9:1-6. Woman in Proverbs are very dynamic; they are capable of the greatest good or the greatest harm, but almost never passive!

**Vs 2** The Doctrine of Life constantly reminds us that this is no mere collection of good ideas. No, these practical tips reflect eternal truths about being with God or against God.

*The wise woman actively builds up her house (the dwelling, family, production, etc) though Godliness, but foolish woman actively destroys her house through selfishness!*

**Proverbs 14:3 Words Come Home**

**Vs 3** We have seen this before: a fool calls down his own destruction with foolish words, but the words of the wise are protection and life for many. But there is an element of humor to this verse.

The word “rod” is not the normal word for a stick used as a tool. This word means a shoot that is still growing, as in Isa 11:1. The picture is that a tool of punishment is growing in the mouth of the fool.

One day, the fool will be beaten by the stick that is growing out of their own proud mouth!

*Speak knowing that your words will come home!*

**Proverbs 14:4 Getting Stuff Done**

**Vs 4** “Crib” is manger where you put food (not normally babies!) for your ox. This proverb is difficult (and fun) to translate because of one word: “clean.” This term can have two meanings: either “clean in a good way” (as in “a pure heart” Psalm 24:4) or “high-quality grain” (as in “full of wheat” Jol 2:24).

So, the verse is either saying that “when you don’t have strong livestock your manger is already clean (you don’t have to sweep it out), but when you do have strong livestock you will make a profit” The idea would be that work which is profitable is also sometimes messy.

The other way to read it would be “when you don’t have strong livestock your manager always full (you don’t have anything eating the food), but when you do have strong livestock you will make a profit.” The idea would be that in profitable work takes some initial investment; if you want your ox to do quality work don’t withhold quality food.

Some translations try to force one of the two interpretations, but “clean” is a good translation because the apparent double meaning may be intentional; you get two lessons in one proverb.

Profitable work is often messy. And also, profitable work requires investment. *If you want growth of any kind, make the investment and expect things to be a little messy!*

## **Proverbs 14:5-10 The Depth of Character Problems**

**Vs 5 & 8** Foolish and deceit go together as do wisdom and honesty. Liars tell lies leading to foolishness and honest people speak truth leading to wisdom – it's pretty straight forward. It also sets us up for larger teachings on character...

**Vs 6 “scorner”** is someone who talks big and has no patience for instruction. He can say smart things and might be funny or popular, but there is little substance to his words. The same basic word will be used for "mock" in Vs 9.

**Vs 7** This is the main application of Vs 5-9: be wary of foolish people! Don't think you need to correct them (Prov 26:4), and don't yourself immune from their power to hurt (Prov 13:20). We have a responsibility to preach the Gospel and work to see fools saved. But when someone is not teachable (the definition of "fool" in Proverbs) their needs, and their perversion, are profound!

*Understand that liars, scorns and fools will do harm!*

Why is the fool's situation so desperate? Vs 9 answers this question by linking with Vs 6. “Scorn” in Vs 6 and “mock” in Vs 9 are the same basic word. A scorner can't find wisdom because he scorns restoration with God.

**Vs 9 “Sin”** This is not the normal word for “sin,” about 3/4ths of the time this word is used in the Bible it means trespass offering; the sacrifice to make restitution after sinning. Either the fool thinks that sin funny, or the fool thinks that the opportunity to be restored back into God's favor is funny.

Thinking about sin in this verse in the terms of guilt offering is appropriate because "favor" means acceptance with goodwill in the KJV and sometimes comes up in the context of sacrifice being accepted ( "accepted" - Exd 28:38).

So, this one line paints a powerful picture! A fool proudly laughs at the chance of being made right with God, but the righteous receive God's goodwill when he gives the guilt offering.

*Godly humility is needed to heal the harm done by fools!*

**Vs 10** This reminds us that outward appearance does not always match the inward state. A fool might appear bright with irreverent mirth, but inside they could be drab and dull. A wise person might appear overly serious, but inside they could have great joy.

This is a useful concluding thought for a section on character because the path of foolishness is often sold as “fun” when really it is a living misery.

*Don't judge a person's inner state based on appearances!*

## **CONCLUSION**

**Proverbs 14:11** We end where Vs 1 began. The house of the wicked and the righteous. The picture is sticking. The fool's house will be overthrown despite it being brick and mortar, but the humble tent of the wise will endure and grow.

*Live in wisdom so that your house will be built and your family will flourish!*