

Studies in the Book of Proverbs by [John T Polk II](#)
For [The Fellowship Room](#)

(#124) The Proverbs of Solomon 17:12- Which is Worse: A Savage Bear or A Stupid Fool?

Since God Created humans, only God can provide specific understanding of human behavior. God gave Solomon Divine Wisdom (**1 Kings Chapters 3 and 10**) to explain what and why behavior is as it is, and **Proverbs 10:1 - 24:34** are randomly written, as if they were Judgments Solomon made about individual cases brought to him for Divine Wisdom (**1 Kings Chapters 3 and 10**), or simply God-given explanations about life. New Testament passages may help see the continuation of Wisdom offered through Jesus Christ.

Proverbs 17:12:

Let a man meet a bear robbed of her cubs, rather than a fool in his folly.

Never, ever, come between a mama bear and her cubs! Instant outrage, savage aggression, and violent attack is sure to be the swift, certain, and deadly outcome. The explosion of fury could not be more clearly illustrated than by this image. King David's friend, Hushai, described David's fierceness in war to David's son with this parallel:

You know your father and his men, that they are mighty men, and they are enraged in their minds, like a bear robbed of her cubs in the field. (**2 Samuel 17:8**)

When Israel forgot God, He promised, "I will meet them like a bear deprived of her cubs" (**Hosea 13:8**). With this simple depiction, there is no doubt about the ferocity being described.

Never, ever, expect normal attitude from "a fool in his folly," for all rules are off! First, "a fool" is anyone who doesn't follow God's Word; and, secondly, "folly" is any behavior that doesn't conform to God's Wisdom! "Every prudent *man* acts with knowledge, But a fool lays open *his* folly" (**Proverbs 13:16**). Folly is "the foolishness of fools" (**Proverbs 14:24**); and so "*he who is* impulsive exalts folly" (**Proverbs 14:29**). And a fool never learns better from his "folly," for, "As a dog returns to his own vomit, so a fool repeats his folly" (**Proverbs 26:11**). Expect a "fool" to erupt in "folly" with passion associated with outbursts of anger!

- Because one man raped their sister, Simeon and Levi murdered and plundered a whole city (**Genesis 34:24-29,30**);



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- Because the wise men did not return and tell him where the young child Jesus was, King Herod was “exceedingly angry” and murdered all boys in Bethlehem under the age of two (**Matthew 2:16**);
- While he was ignorant of Jesus Christ, Saul of Tarsus was “still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord” (**Acts 9:1**).

Every mother who rips apart her son or daughter; every father who abruptly punishes his children; every husband or wife who verbally, or otherwise, abuses his/ her spouse; every intoxicated user of drugs or alcohol; and every short-fused person is, or will be, acting the “fool.”

An angry man stirs up strife, and a furious man abounds in transgression. (**Proverbs 29:22**)

Never, ever, stand between “a fool” and his/ her “folly,” lest we are torn apart by sin!

