

THE EXERCISE OF FOOLISHNESS

By Steve Schmutzer

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A new trend among teens is snorting condoms. It's their latest "challenge."

They insert a condom up one nostril, they inhale it, and then they pull it out from the back of their throat through their mouth. It gets them attention from "friends" they don't need.

But it's dangerous to do. It has caused choking, allergic reactions, infections, appendicitis, and pneumonia. Chances are it can also kill a person by blocking their breathing - and it almost did.

"Stupid is as stupid does." I guess eating Tide Pod laundry detergent packets wasn't gratifying enough for this forward-thinking crowd. That was *so 2017*.

Together with the earlier "cinnamon challenge," the "bath-salt challenge" and the "douse-myself-in-rubbing-alcohol-and-set-myself-on-fire-challenge," these latest antics confirm to everyone that many of today's young people have the IQ of a fencepost.

When I was a kid, our "challenge" was to build a ramp and see who could get their banana-seat bike to jump the highest. We had watermelon seed spitting contests, and we dared each other to drink a full can of Coca-Cola without stopping. My buddy could burp the alphabet all the way to "T" when he drank one.

But times have changed, and a corrupt form of foolishness is now on full display. It has overrun our culture, it has entered our churches, it has invaded our legal system, it has hijacked our nation's universities, and it has conquered our politics. Virtue is mostly absent, and common sense isn't very common anymore.

Consider the recent Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School shooting travesty in Parkland, Florida as one qualified case in point. Here are the *facts* about what happened:

- The FBI received two tips about Nickolas Cruz, with one caller specifying Cruz had a "desire to kill people" and "potential" to shoot up a school.
- The Broward County sheriff's office had been called to Nickolas Cruz's home 39 times since 2010.
- Administrators at the school had considered Nickolas Cruz to be a threat, and they had sent out an email warning about their concerns to other school staff.
- Nickolas Cruz had menaced students, and had threatened to "...bring guns to school."
- The other students at the school had talked about Nickolas Cruz's potential to attack the school. They had filed complaints against him, and Cruz had been suspended for behavioral issues.
- Nickolas Cruz himself had proudly bragged, "I'm going to be a professional school shooter."
- Four sheriffs from Broward County stayed outside the school building while the shooting was going on inside.

I could add more facts to that list, but the picture is already clear. Nobody in a position of responsibility acted responsibly.

Law enforcers didn't enforce anything and the intelligence community flunked. Social services didn't provide the proper follow-up, and crisis experts allowed a disaster. To top it all off "Broward's cowards" didn't even *try* to act brave. Basically - if *just one person* in the whole equation had done their job well, this tragedy could have been prevented!

But the left concluded the problem was "guns." Give me a break!

Liberals serve their progressive agenda above all else. It's Rahm Emanuel's "You-never-let-a-serious-crisis-go-to-waste" routine. The left saw an opportunity in this shooting tragedy - so damn the facts!

In the weeks after the Parkland shooting, high school students across the country have staged protests in support of stricter gun laws, and college students have rioted to shut down basic free speech. Intoxicated by their "fifteen minutes of fame," our intellectually-anemic youth have become eager tools of the globalist's agenda.

These kids are publicly raising clenched fists in their aversion to constitutional liberties, common sense, and personal responsibility. In their zealous pursuit of limited rights and less freedom, they've become the perfect poster children for absurdity.

There are so many displays of ridiculous behavior and irrational thinking in our world these days. Just when I think I've seen it all, we descend a few more steps into our pit of depravity and foolishness. Rank stupidity is now mainstream.

Perhaps we don't think about it much, but it's important to understand the Biblical definition of a "fool." The Bible has a lot to say about them. We tend to think of a fool as being someone that lacks basic common sense, but God's Word declares in Psalms 14:1, "*The fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God.'*"

That statement is less the *result* of foolishness and more the *cause* of it.

In all the various ways it's possible to say it, today's fools have already concluded, "There is no God." If they have any shred of regard for Him, they've confined Him to a box that permits them to measure Him, and to decide how and when He's of any use. Some fools of this latter sort are in our churches. A partial belief in God is no better than a wrong one as Matthew 7:21-23 makes frightfully clear.

Because fools disregard God and dismiss His divine Word, they lack a moral compass and the wisdom that results from a proper view of sin. Their senseless behaviors across a wide range of life's verticals stem from refusing God His rightful place.

This is why Proverbs 9:10 says, "*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.*" A shortage of wisdom and good judgement are hallmarks of those who choose an improper relationship with their Creator.

One's descent into personal depravity is directly proportional to their display of public foolishness. As the first element becomes more obvious, so does the second one. As the first one gains acceptance, the second one is more welcome too. Because both emerge from spiritual darkness, they are inextricably linked.

When I read the prophetic Scriptures, I am struck by the fabric of foolish thinking and irrational behavior that clothes the final chapters of human history. We're seeing the early threads of it already - but this is only the beginning. Foolish behavior of astonishing dimension will become the "norm" in due time as mankind distances himself further and further from God.

Here's a brief outline to illustrate a little of where our foolish world is now and where it's going:

THEY MISS THE MESSAGE

Romans 1:18-32 outlines the character and choices of those who have rejected God, including the plain message about Him that is contained within His Creation. It reads like today's news.

There is sufficient testimony all around us to argue that a glorious and sovereign God exists (Psalm 19:1). That is supplemented by the instinctive knowledge of right and wrong which God designed each of us to be born with (Romans 2:15).

This situation sets up a dilemma for folks like Dr. Richard Dawkins, a devout atheist and prominent evolutionist. In his book, *The Blind Watchmaker*, Dawkins states, "Biology is the study of complicated things that give the appearance of having been designed for a purpose." Even Dawkins reluctantly admits the fingerprints of God are contained within the tiniest details of His creation.

The Scriptures make it clear that "missing" God's message is a much more active process than a passive one. This dynamic is happening now with all those who choose to oppose God and His standards. This irresponsible decision inevitably results in their foolish views and behaviors.

THEY MISS THE MOMENT

The message of the Bible is about - among other things - getting ready to face God. It's the most significant moment in anyone's life. This is the essence of the parable of ten virgins in Matt. 25:1-13.

Whether this parable is specific to Christ's return in the Rapture or His return to set up the Millennial Kingdom is another matter altogether. I'm not seeking to address that debate here. Regardless of which return it is, the basic lesson I am concerned with is relevant to both.

Five of the ten virgins are ready to meet the bridegroom, and the other five are not. It's the latter group which many Bible scholars have called "foolish," and they earn this distinction because they miss their most critical moment. They were not ready for it.

It didn't need to be this way for these five foolish virgins, but their calamity was precipitated by dismissing the issues that were most important. They were not focused on waiting and watching as they needed to be. They were absorbed in the present, and they found "*....pleasure in unrighteousness,*" (2 Thess. 2:12).

The sad fact about these five unfortunate ladies is they had the chance to change their ways and do the right thing - much like the foolish people in our world today have the same opportunity. But, these five *stayed foolish* - just like many stay today. Their foolishness coddled a different agenda which made them miss their most important moment.

THEY MISS THE MARK

There are few demonstrations of foolishness more telling than missing the obvious mark and assigning the fault where it's not supposed to be. This is what liberals did with the shooting tragedy in Parkland, Florida. Facts there conflicted with what the left wanted to blame.

It is the very same genus of foolishness that will be on display when some people refuse to enter a right relationship with God after enduring His Tribulation judgments (Rev. 9:20-21; 16:9; et al). The Bible makes it clear that unsaved humanity at this time will *know* the truth. The facts of the situation will be very clear.

Mankind will know who is behind these judgments and why they are taking place. They will know they should repent and get right with God (Rev. 14:6), but they will choose to serve their own agenda instead. So – damn the truth!

Their greatest desire will be to stay in their sin, so they will choose to curse God instead. They will blame Him and they won't get right with Him. They will miss the mark and find fault with God.

THEY MISS THE MEANING

The most effective way to explain an important matter is to state it plainly. The best way to assure it's remembered is to deliver it uniquely.

Both communication strategies come together in Revelation 14:9-10 where the wicked masses of the Tribulation are warned against worshipping the beast and his image, and against taking his mark. The message is important since eternal fates are at stake. There is no room for its meaning to be left unclear.

God uses a *loud* angel to get His point across. It's not every day that folks get an angel hollering at them; it's fair to think this leaves an impression! The angel is timely and straight to the point – “If you take the mark and worship the antichrist, you're automatically condemned to unending fiery torture in front of God and in front of angels just like me.”

I'm paraphrasing, but I'm making a point here. Every detail of the warning ensures the meaning is clear. Nobody can claim, “Hey, I didn't understand,” or, “But, I don't believe in angels.” No one can ask, “What was he saying?” Excuses won't work here since every base is thoroughly covered.

But it makes little difference to a lot of people. The greater context of Revelation underscores the fact that masses of foolish humanity will still miss the meaning of the angel's warning. Fools “*take no pleasure in understanding*” (Prov. 18:2), and as we learned earlier, they disregard God and His divine Word.

Fools face the same problem at the end of human history as they've faced up to it. Fools don't change.

THEY MISS THE MESSIAH

As mankind comes to the end of human history, he reaches the bottom of the staircase that descends into depravity. His foolish notions reach maximum absurdity as his sinful deeds reach maximum expression.

This is the moment of the Messiah's physical return. This sets up the climactic occasion when Jesus Christ returns to earth “*with power and great glory*” (Matt. 24:30) to conquer the antichrist and his hordes. The King of kings and Lord of lords returns with the armies of heaven to put an end to the most traumatic and terrible time on human record (Matt. 24:21).

The good guys win! Everyone will be happy – right? Wrong.

In one of the most tragic commentaries in all of Scripture, we read instead that “...*all the nations of the earth will mourn*” (Matt. 24:30). The foolish people of the earth will “*wail*” (Rev.1:7) when they see Christ returning because he is returning in judgment and they will realize too late that they are unprepared for it. They missed receiving Him as they should have done, and now they are doomed.

They will miss the Messiah because – going all the way back, they’d missed His message. In their foolishness, they’d missed all the key moments they’d been given to repent. They’d missed the mark and blamed God when they should have assumed responsibility for their choices. The meaning of their foolish decisions had been made very clear to them, but they’d missed all of those opportunities to change their ways.

The Bible teaches that the exercise of foolishness places one’s soul at risk (James 5:20). For many, it’s a process that starts simply enough - but left unchecked, foolishness demands one pay the highest price.

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