



SIMPLETON

1. A simpleton (*peti*) is an open-minded person who is easily deceived and easily enticed to sin (Prov. 1:4, 22, 32; 7:7; 8:5; 9:4, 6, 16; 14:15, 18; 19:25; 21:11; 22:3; 27:12). *Peti* comes from the verb *patah* whose root meaning is "to be spacious, wide, open" (BDB)—to be open-minded. The verb is used of being deceived by a lie (2 Sam. 3:25; 1 Kings 22:20–22), enticed by sin (Prov. 1:10), enticed by a woman (Judg. 14:15; 16:5), seducing a virgin (Exod. 2:16), and persuading or luring Israel into the wilderness (Hos. 2:14). The simple are the naïve, gullible people Lady Wisdom cries to in the busy streets, bustling intersections, and crowded markets (Prov. 1:20–22; 8:1–5; 9:3–4). They are the majority of mankind. They lack wisdom but are, however, still capable of change: It's much easier for a simpleton to become wise than for a fool (Prov. 27:22).
2. Identification:
 - a. Youth are often simple (Prov. 7:7). A *na'ar* is not a child but a teenager or young adult since he is capable of sexual activity (7:6–23).
 - b. Loose women are simple (Prov. 9:13).
 - c. A nation (Ephraim) that rejects God is like a simple dove lacking sense (Hosea 7:11).
To paraphrase: the people in a nation who reject God are bird-brains.
3. Characteristics of the simple:
 - a. They lack heart (sense) (Prov. 7:7; 9:4). This is an exaggeration meaning "They have no mind!"
 - b. They believe everything (Prov. 14:15).
 - c. They lack prudence (Prov. 1:4).
 - d. They have not chosen the fear of the Lord (comp. Prov. 1:29 with 1:22).
 - e. They hate knowledge (Prov. 1:29).
 - f. They reject wisdom (Prov. 1:30).
 - g. They lack wisdom (Psa. 19:7).
 - h. They spurn rebuke (Prov. 1:30).
 - i. They love their simplicity (Prov. 1:22). They don't want to become wise.
4. Results of simplicity:
 - a. They inherit folly (Prov. 14:18). Folly comes to them easily without work—like an inheritance.
 - b. They will be stuffed with the grievous consequences of their simplicity (Prov. 1:31).
 - c. They do evil and are punished (Prov. 22:3=27:12; cf. 1:31).
 - d. Their anger (Job 5:2) and apostasy (*meshuvah* "faithlessness") will kill them (Prov. 1:32; cf. 9:11).
5. Relationship with the simple:
 - a. Separate from the simple (Prov. 9:6).
 - b. Entreat them to change—to get wisdom and become wise (Prov. 8:5; 9:4).
 - c. They may gain wisdom from seeing the scoffer punished (Prov. 21:11; cf. 19:25).
 - d. God's Word will give them understanding (119:130) and make them wise (Psa. 19:7).
 - e. They can gain prudence from the Book of Proverbs (Prov. 1:4).
6. God may deliver the righteous from the results of their own simplicity (Psa. 116:6). On occasion we are deceived and enticed to do acts of folly like the simple (cf. "in my dismay I said, 'All men are liars'" 116:11). Prayer is the means of deliverance (116:1–4).