

Article 5

The four dimensions of the love of Christ

Luke Pomery

We come to the knowledge of the four dimensions of the love of Christ - the width, the length, the depth, and the height - through agape fellowship at the tree of life. In his letter to the Ephesian church, the apostle Paul urged each person to apprehend with vigour *all four* dimensions of Christ's love; for it is all four aspects that describe the *fullness* of each person's sonship. He wrote, 'That you, being rooted and grounded in love [agape], may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height - to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God'. Eph 3:17-19.

Christ traversed and accomplished the full extent of all four of these dimensions for each person, in His one offering. The Scriptures describe this as Jesus 'filling all in all'. Eph 1:23. Eph 4:10. Each dimension of the love of Christ then becomes substantial in our life through our personal participation in the offering and sufferings of Christ. Heb 10:14. It is by

this means that we grow up into the full stature of Christ's sonship. Eph 4:13. We will consider the nature of our participation by which we can lay hold of these four dimensions of the love of Christ.

The width and length

The *width* and *length* of the love of Christ encompasses the reality of our *human experience* as 'sons of men' on this earth. Solomon described these parameters as our existence 'under the sun'. Ecc 1:9. Even though we are born as sons of God and are citizens of the heavenly city, our works, day by day, are done 'under the sun'. The books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes bring a truthful reality to our human experience. Said simply, life is not 'a fairy tale' that is played out in accordance with one's own imagination. The width and length of the love of Christ includes a person's natural name; the reality of life 'under the sun'; and the madness and wickedness in the heart of every person.

A person's 'natural name'

The *width* and *length* of the love of Christ defines the reality of a person's natural name and their relational impact, or sphere. A person's natural name includes their abilities, intellect, temperament, as well as the unique frailties of their identity. The limits, or boundaries, for every person are already known; for these limits have been set by God. Act 17:26-27. For this reason, we are not to contend with God by pushing against these boundaries. Solomon wrote, 'Whatever one is, he has been *named already*, for it is known that he is man; and he cannot contend with Him who is mightier than he'. Ecc 6:10. As we embrace this reality by the love of God, our confession becomes, 'The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places; yes, I have a good inheritance.' Psa 16:6.

Our relational sphere has also been determined by God the Father. 1Co 12:18. We choose, by faith, these relationships, and accept that we have a substantial impact upon others - both positive and negative - in our day to day life. It is also important that we do not seek a relational context that is *beyond* that which is given to us by God. As Paul testified, 'We, however, will not boast beyond measure, but within the limits of the sphere which God appointed us - a sphere which especially includes you!' 2Co 10:13.

For us to truly fellowship together, we need to accept the reality of the *width* and *length* of the love of Christ toward us. It is helpful for us to realise, that, 'just because we are talking' does not automatically mean

that we are participating in *fellowship*. Our discussion must firstly be sensible and genuinely connected with reality. Solomon explained it this way, 'Better is the sight of the eyes than the wandering of desire.' Ecc 6:9. It will be impossible to truly meet a person who continually *projects* an image of themselves, which they desire others to affirm. Likewise, it will be impossible to meet a person who continually *controls* the interaction through relational manipulation, flattery, conquering techniques or their emotions. In contrast, we are able to properly meet when we accept the reality of our natural name and converse without projection or control.

Under the sun

Solomon began the book of Ecclesiastes by asking the question, 'What *profit* has a man for all his labour in which he toils under the sun?' Ecc 1:3. In other words, 'What is the outcome of seeking identity validation through the many works of our hands which are all done under the sun?' Solomon answered his own question by saying, 'There is *no profit* under the sun for all the works that my hands have done and the labour in which I have toiled.' Ecc 2:11. He then described the work of man as being vanity and grasping for the wind. 'Vanity' means emptiness, or meaninglessness, and 'grasping for the wind' describes the experience of never being able to obtain the goal or advantage for which you strive; like the wind, it can never be caught!

Solomon summarised everything under the sun as 'vanity of vanities' – literally meaning 'the absolute emptiness of meaninglessness'! Ecc 1:2. In the end, what happens to the fool also happens to the wise. Ecc 2:15-16. *Time and chance* happen them all. Ecc 9:11. And, for all the works that a person does on the earth, there is no remembrance of it after they pass away. Ecc 1:11. People take nothing with them to the grave. Ecc 5:15. After all their hard work, people leave their hard-earned riches to their children, who have not laboured for it and could foolishly squander it all! Ecc 2:18-21. Indeed, for all their labour and the striving of their hearts, mankind can never truly find satisfaction. Ecc 4:7.

How do we cope with such harsh realities under the sun? Shall we, then, in the light of Solomon's teaching, become a recluse in order to minimise the risks of being harmed? Of course not! The fear of the Lord and the love of God poured into our heart by the Holy Spirit is indeed *something new* under the sun! Ecc 1:10. We don't have to live according to the carnal drive of our 'familiar', whereby we seek *personal gain* from the works that we do under the sun. Rather, the proceeding word exposes this fundamental fleshly motivation, or drive, within us. Ecc 12:11.

YOU ARE THE ELECT!

What's more, we come to learn that the culture of agape is giving! Hence, in Solomon's closing statement, we read, 'Fear God and keep His commandments [which is *to love our neighbour* as ourselves], for this is man's all'. Ecc 12:13. Mar 12:29-31.

Madness and wickedness

Solomon explained the reality that *madness* and *wickedness* are two fundamental elements that are in the heart of every person! Psa 53:2-3. Ecc 9:3. The Scriptures define *madness* as 'believing in the veracity of a complete unreality'. Simply, we are *mad* to choose anything less than what God has chosen for us. Solomon explained that madness causes a person 'to try anything' in order to know its outcome, even if it causes themselves or others injury. Madness is insane or irrational thinking, and it incorporates every kind of psychological condition and spectrum that is identified by modern medicine.

The prophet Jeremiah explained that *wickedness* is the evil that is bound in one's heart. It is each person's incorrigible opposition to the will and nature of God. He wrote, 'The heart [of man] is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?' Jer 17:9. It is the Lord who searches our heart and tests us to expose our wickedness as being the cause of our aberrations. Jer 17:10. For this reason, it is important to recognise that it is not *our* work to 'stamp out' the wickedness that we perceive in others. Such a pursuit is a self-righteous crusade that results only in harm.

Solomon wrote, 'And I set my heart to know wisdom and to know *madness* and *folly* [or wickedness]. I perceived that this also is grasping for the wind. For in much wisdom is much grief, and he who increases knowledge increases sorrow.' Ecc 1:17-18. Ecc 7:25. Every person must interface with the grief and sorrow of this reality in themselves and in others. However, like trying to grasp for the wind, this is a difficult task, and it is beyond the wherewithal of our natural perception. Christ, however, was fully acquainted with the grief and sorrow of *our madness and wickedness* that was a sin against the Father. Isa 53:4. We must meet Jesus to obtain insight, healing, and deliverance from these two realities.

The depths

The *depths* of the love of Christ describes the descending journey of His offering from the garden of Gethsemane to Calvary. Eph 4:9-10. By midday, Christ had descended to the depths of our fallen

human condition. Our iniquity, which is our helpless addiction to going our own way, had been fully laid upon Him. Isa 53:6. Solomon described our iniquity as walking in the ways of our heart and according to the sight of our eyes. Ecc 11:9. Walking in this manner causes us to become unclean and to commit abominable deeds. Rev 21:8. Rev 22:15. An abomination is a practice or attitude which is detestable to God, for it is a violation of the culture of fellowship.

Christ then took us, in our fallen condition, with Him, into the depths of Sheol. During the next three hours, Christ endured the interminable judgement and wrath of God upon our sin and iniquity. He suffered the anguish of Sheol that awaits all those who forget God. Psa 116:3. Psa 9:17. He constrained our sin at the bottom of the sea of God's forgetfulness. Mic 7:19. Psa 88:12. Unless we are joined to the four dimensions of His love, so that we are cleansed of our sin and iniquity, this is the certain expectation that awaits us. Heb 10:27. Hence Jesus said, 'Fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.' Mat 10:28.

Through fellowship in the light of the word, we are illuminated to the depths of Christ's love for us, personally. We receive a love of the truth and allow the word to expose our evil deeds. 2Th 2:10. Joh 3:19. The fear of the Lord enables us to *not draw back* from the depths of Christ's journey; nor do we look for someone else to touch these depths on our behalf. Rom 10:6-7. Having been illuminated to the depths of Christ's love, Christ's confession then becomes our own, and we pray, with Him, 'Lord, I have called daily upon You [from the depths]; I have stretched out my hands to You. Will You work wonders for the dead? Shall the dead arise and praise You?' Psa 88:9-10. Our deliverance comes as we are joined with Christ in the extent of His descending journey for us, personally. Psa 86:13.

The heights

Having descended to the lowest parts of the earth, Jesus learned the obedience of our sonship, and fulfilled all the works of our sonship - both for this lifetime and also for all of eternity. Isa 26:12. Psa 138:8. Furthermore, He has fashioned our resurrection bodies and has perfected the days that have been written for us. Psa 139:15-16. In so doing, *He has filled the heights of our sonship*. At the conclusion of His offering, Christ was raised to sit at the right hand of the Father. Heb 1:3. The Father highly exalted Christ by giving Him the name which is above every name. Php 2:9.

YOU ARE THE ELECT!

The *heights* of Christ's love refers to the glory of our names as sons of God. When Christ ascended to the Father's right hand, He took all our names with Him, saying, 'Here am I and the children whom the Lord has given me!' Isa 8:18. The implication is that our names are written in the book of life, in heaven. We recall that Jesus said to the seventy-two disciples, 'Do not rejoice [in your works which are done under the sun] ... but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.' Luk 10:20.

The expression of our new creation sonship is reflected to us in the face of Christ as we abide in the fellowship of the agape meal. We are being progressively changed into the substance of this sonship. 2Co 3:18. Jesus explained that we are not to come to the agape meal presumptuously, by defining our own expression. Rather, we are to come humbly to receive, from Christ, the nature of our participation. Luk 14:10. We come to 'learn from Him' the heights of our sonship which He has learned for us, in His offering journey. Mat 11:28-29.

The heights of the love of Christ also describes the culture of Yahweh's *fellowship* and the nature of our *participation* in the heavenly city. Having been born of God and baptised into the fellowship of Christ's death, we have been made citizens of the New Jerusalem. Eph 2:6. We participate in agape fellowship at the tree of life, with God, and with one another. These are 'the heights' to which the presbytery of Ephesus was being recovered, by Christ, as we read in His letter to the seven churches. Rev 2:5.

The experience of Jonah

As we shall consider, the prophet Jonah touched all four dimensions of the love of Christ. During the storm, on the boat, Jonah acknowledged his sin and made confession before the Lord and in the presence of others, regarding his own disobedience. Jon 1:9. However, despite his confession of repentance, Jonah was not delivered from touching the *depths* of Christ's offering journey. In the belly of the great fish, Jonah cried out to the Lord, acknowledging that he was joined to Christ's descending journey to the bottom of Sheol. Jon 2:2-6. It was from this place that Jonah offered a sacrifice of thanksgiving to the Lord. Jon 2:9.

The Lord delivered Jonah from the depths of Sheol and commissioned him a second time. Psa 86:13. Jon 3:1. Jonah touched the *heights* by proclaiming God's call to the sons of men in Nineveh. Amazingly, the Ninevites heeded Jonah's word which proclaimed God's judgement upon

their evil way, and they began to mourn and repent! Jon 3:5. Luk 11:32. God saw their repentance and did not bring calamity upon them.

Jonah, however, was greatly displeased that God did not bring about His judgement upon them. Despite their repentance, Jonah still personally viewed the Ninevites as being a wicked group of people who were worthy of God's judgement. Jonah's personal irritation and anger were even further aroused, in the heat of the day, when a worm came and destroyed the very plant that had previously been Jonah's provision for shade from the sun. The troubles of 'time and chance' were pressing in on Jonah as he was left to experience reality, quite literally, 'under the sun'! Jon 4:6-9.

We note that although Jonah had genuinely connected with the depths and heights of the love of Christ, at this point, he still struggled to cope with the realities of life under the sun! Jonah needed to continue to meet the Lord to also know the *width* and *length* of the love of Christ - so that he could accept the *everyday realities* and *relational circumstances* of his life. He was learning to meet the Lord in all four dimensions of His love.

Conclusion

As we considered at the beginning, all four dimensions of Christ's love - the width and length and depths and heights - belong to the fullness of our sonship. Our baptism as a new creation son of God is our immersion into these four dimensions of Christ's offering journey. New creation sonship touches all four dimensions of Christ's offering journey (not *only* the heights!). For this reason, we do not endeavour to escape from some aspects of our participation, while happily embracing others. Rather, as sons of God, we are learning to meet Christ in the reality of *all four dimensions* of His love for us.

Article 6

Profiles of carnality

Luke Pomery

The books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes identify various *types of people*. In these books, Solomon, along with the other collectors of wise sayings, presented an ongoing narrative of a set of definitive ‘characters’, giving vivid descriptions of their typical kinds of behaviour. Ecc 12:10-11. These descriptions are a collection of ‘riddles’ that have been given so that the reader will learn and grow in understanding. Pro 1:5-6. We are invited to consider each character, looking at their *behaviour*, considering the *endpoint* of their way of living; and understanding the specific point of *recovery* that applies uniquely to each of them.

Seven distinct characters are introduced in the books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. We can describe them this way: the *proud*, the *naive*, the *fool*, the *mocker*, the *lazy*, the *scoffer* and the *wicked*. Each character represents a particular ‘profile of carnality’. Each is a specific expression that is the result of setting our mind on the flesh. As we read, ‘For to be *carnally minded* is death, but to be *spiritually minded* is life and peace’. Rom 8:6. The apostle Paul explained that when we function according to our carnality, we are behaving ‘like mere men’. 1Co 3:3. In this regard,

these profiles of carnality are descriptive of the natural responses of *all* mankind.

Solomon explained the blunt truth that mankind has always functioned this way since the Fall. In this way, we recognise that these profiles are part of our everyday reality and relational interactions that occur 'under the sun'. And, without a connection to the offering and sufferings of Christ, mankind will *continue* to function in this way. Solomon stated, 'That which has been is what will be, that which is done will be done, and there is nothing new under the sun. Is there anything of which it may be said, "See, this is new?" It has already been in ancient times before us.' Ecc 1:9-10.

It is helpful to understand that these profiles are not a product of the society, nor the era, in which a person lives. Rather, the nature of mankind has *always been this way*; and it continues to be so within in our current day society. For example, in Solomon's time, there was no social media as it exists today. However, the Scriptures written by Solomon teach us how mankind, in his own day, equally sought to project an image of themselves to be verified by others. Pro 20:6. Pro 25:14. Thus, the Scriptures teach us, in a timeless manner, how we are to overcome within the society and times in which we live. There is nothing that is not contained in the Scriptures.

Understanding your propensity

As we read about these various characters that Solomon described, we find it very easy to agree with his observations. This is because all of these descriptions, at first glance, appear to be *external* to us - we assume Solomon was describing 'someone else'. Thus, we quickly agree and concur with Solomon, thinking of all of the other people we know who exemplify these principles. However, Solomon is not, firstly, teaching us about how we are to interface with *everyone else*. He is firstly teaching us about *ourselves*. We *are* those seven profiles! And the key point is that we need *illumination and fellowship* to see and understand how these profiles uniquely appear in our own life.

All seven different profiles of carnality apply to *every* person, to varying degrees, due to 'the other law' that is within each of us. All seven profiles are a description of how we operate when the motivation of our heart is 'other than' the Law of the love of God. For this reason, everyone needs to overcome all seven of these profiles of carnality.

Our particular temperament, or personality, will cause us to *polarise* to some profiles more heavily than others. For this reason, every individual will find that a couple of the profiles are *more* applicable to them than others. For example, a person might be more of a lazy person, but somewhat less of a scoffer.

Even further still, certain profiles of carnality will become *galvanised* in our responses due to the familiar uncleanness that has been cultivated within our own family. This uncleanness provides a 'food source' upon which familiar spirits feed, causing us oppression. This galvanised carnality manifests as an *habitual and ingrained response*, which has an *emotive* weight to it. Initially, we are blind to the fact that we even have these responses, because they are *so* familiar to us! Furthermore, even when these responses are brought to our attention, we are still unaware of our complete inability, at this point, to respond in any other way! They have become innate, and are heavily entrenched within us.

The word of the cross exposes the darkness of our familiar uncleanness, and enables us to be delivered from the bondage of our ingrained, carnal responses. We learn to pray with Christ concerning the carnality of our heart - that which is earthly, sensual (or emotive) and demonic. Jas 3:15. These responses are progressively circumcised from us through our ongoing participation in the offering of Christ.

A man called Jabez is a good example of such deliverance. His family, and in particular his mother, viewed themselves as *being victims* of their sufferings. As a result, Jabez was literally named according to this familiar uncleanness. His mother named him Jabez, meaning 'He who causes pain'. As Jabez grew, he called upon the Lord because he desired a change of nature from this ingrained, victim response which had been nurtured within him from his birth. 1Ch 4:9-10. The Lord answered his prayer and Jabez was honoured among the families of the scribes. 1Ch 2:55.

It is important for us to recognise, however, that even if a person is delivered from the oppression of a familiar spirit, if they do not *continue* in the fellowship of Christ's offering, their carnality will become seven times worse. Pro 26:16,25. The endpoint of all carnality is demonically energised expressions of the other law. Jas 3:15. Jesus explained this principle, saying, 'The unclean spirit takes with him *seven other spirits more wicked than himself*, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first. So shall it also be with this

wicked generation.’ Mat 12:45. The ‘seven other spirits’ are *all seven profiles* of carnality that are energised by the demonic host.

Seven pillars of wisdom

For each of the seven profiles of carnality, we are given the opportunity to obtain ‘the wisdom from above’. Wisdom herself calls out, ‘Turn at my rebuke; surely I will pour out my spirit on you; I will make my words known to you ... whoever listens to me will dwell safely, and will be secure, without fear of evil.’ Pro 1:23,33. The prophet Jeremiah explained that it is by the mercies of the Lord that we are not consumed by our carnality. Lam 3:22. ‘The mercy of the Lord’ directly refers to our connection to the offering of Christ.

If we *continually* choose to live by these carnal propensities, then, quite simply, *that* is the kind of person we will become! Every person eats the fruit of their own ways. This is an inescapable reality. Gal 6:7-8. As we read, ‘Therefore they shall eat the fruit of their own way, and be filled to the full with their own fancies’. Pro 1:31. For example, the person who continually scorns others will inherit scorn for themselves. As Solomon stated, ‘Surely He [the Lord] scorns the scornful.’ Pro 3:34.

The Proverbs speak of *seven pillars* of wisdom. As we read, ‘Wisdom has built her house, she has hewn out her seven pillars’. Pro 9:1. These pillars are the foundation upon which we build our life. These seven pillars belong to the wisdom from above and refer to our participation in the seven wounding events of Christ’s offering. On His offering journey, Christ’s blood was sprinkled seven times as the full provision to deal with all carnality. The seven profiles of carnality can equally be understood as being the seven aspects of ‘an evil conscience’. Heb 10:22.

The seven pillars of wisdom also refer to the sevenfold Spirit of God. ‘The seven Spirits of God’ are descriptive of the *full* expression of the one Spirit in which Yahweh *Elohim* lives. Rev 4:5. The prophet Isaiah nominated the seven Spirits of God in this way: ‘*The Spirit of the Lord* [Yahweh] shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of *wisdom* and *understanding*, the Spirit of *counsel* and *might*, the Spirit of *knowledge* and of *the fear of the Lord*.’ Isa 11:2. Each unique expression of the sevenfold Spirit of God is essential in our overcoming a particular profile of carnality.

Seven profiles of carnality

In the attached chart, 'The seven profiles of carnality', we consider each of the profiles that Solomon described. We identify some examples of how these profiles are expressed and what is the endpoint of living by this mode of carnality. We also consider the specific point of recovery for each profile. This is by no means an exhaustive statement of what Solomon and the other writers have taught us; however, it is a helpful orientation in how to read and understand their proverbs. Pro 1:5-6.

Solomon also described the seven profiles of carnality as seven abominations. He wrote, 'These six things the Lord hates, yes, seven are an abomination to Him: A proud look, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that are swift in running to evil, a false witness who speaks lies, and one who sows discord among brethren.' Pro 6:16-19.

We can describe the abominations in this way:

- A proud look - this is obviously the *proud* person. Pro 15:25.
- A lying tongue - describes the *fool* whose complacency is deceit in their mouth. Pro 1:32. Pro 14:8.
- Hands that shed innocent blood - describes the *lazy* man who accuses the integrity of others. Pro 26:13-16.
- A heart that devises wicked plans - describes the *wicked* man. Pro 15:9,26. Pro 21:27.
- Feet that are swift in running to evil - describes the *naive* person who rushes into situations and inherits foolishness. Pro 14:18.
- A false witness who speaks lies - describes the *mock*er who uses slander and flattery to gain power over others. Pro 26:24-25.
- One who sows discord among brethren - describes the *scoffer* who creates contention within the group. Pro 22:10.

The 'elect' are those who *accept* the Lord's initiative to cleanse them of the filth of their abominations. Isa 4:4. Rev 21:27. The elect remain in the city! The apostle John explained that any person who causes an abomination eventually forfeits their right to enter the gates of the New Jerusalem and to eat of the tree of life. Rev 21:27. Rev 22:14. As a result of refusing the ongoing cleansing process of Christ's offering and sufferings, their rejection of the word progressively causes their departure from the heavenly city. At this point, the seven abominations listed by Solomon becomes the full expression of a person given over to their carnality.

The seven profiles of carnality

A spiritual person is enabled by the sevenfold Spirit of God, given to them by the Holy Spirit, to *overcome* all seven aspects of carnality – pride, naivety, foolishness, mockery, laziness, scoffing and wickedness – as they participate each day in the fellowship of Christ’s offering and sufferings. Pro 24:16. Solomon described a spiritual person who is overcoming carnality as a **wise person**. He wrote, ‘A *wise man* will hear and increase learning, and a *man of understanding* will attain wise counsel ... Rebuke a *wise man*, and he will love you. Give instruction to a *wise man*, and he will still be wiser; teach a *just man*, and he will increase learning.’ Pro 1:5. Pro 9:8-9. As spiritual sons of God, we are overcoming all seven profiles of carnality as we heed and obey what the Spirit says to the churches. Rev 2-3.

<p>P The proud, or arrogant, are haughty in spirit – they exalt themselves in the same manner as Satan, and are only concerned about themselves. Pro 30:13. They are self-focused and <i>self-obsessed</i>, often consumed with their own appearance. Pro 6:17.</p> <p>The proud are <i>greedy for gain</i> – whether it be financial, possessions, reputation, etc – using ‘bribes’ to advance their own purpose; joining themselves to like-minded, successful people. Their passion for success often draws others to themselves because they project an image which others idolise.</p> <p>The proud person is also the <i>depressive person</i> – self-pitying or self-loathing. Instead of taking accountability for their life, others are always to blame for their predicament. Solomon described this self-pity as ‘a broken spirit’. Pro 18:14.</p>	<p>Examples: The narcissist, the beauty queen, the influencer, the executive, the aspirer, the judge-and-executioner.</p> <p>Destruction: Solomon explained that the Lord will destroy the house of the proud, for they are an abomination to Him. Pro 15:25. Though they join forces with others, and their success appears to flourish, their unquenchable desire for gain becomes their own destruction. Solomon stated, ‘Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall. Better to be of a humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud [and be caught in their destruction].’ Pro 16:18-19.</p> <p>Recovery: We overcome the propensity to pride by obtaining the Spirit of Yahweh, which is Their oneness – granting to us the capacity to humble ourselves under the hand of God. Yahweh <i>Elohim</i> is the full expression of humility. For this reason, the apostle Paul stated, ‘I say to everyone ... not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.’ Rom 12:3.</p>
<p>N The naive, or simple, is one who lacks insight and understanding. They are immature and <i>refuse to ‘grow up’</i>. Pro 1:22.</p> <p>The naive are deliberately ‘gullible’; they intrinsically <i>want</i> to believe ‘the best’ in everyone. Without discernment, they automatically believe everything they hear! Pro 14:15. They rush into situations, and do not consider their course of action. Pro 22:3.</p> <p>The naive is <i>not grounded in reality</i>. They are captivated by their imagination and by their optimistic perception of various possibilities. In a group setting, they are <i>swift</i> to run with others’ ideas; enthusiastically desiring to ‘go with the flow’. Pro 6:18.</p>	<p>Examples: The dreamer, the befriender, the must-be-nice, the happy-go-lucky, the hippie, the entrepreneur.</p> <p>Destruction: The naive are destroyed by their waywardness, and because of <i>the length of time</i> in which they remain naive. Pro 1:32. They are unstable – tossed here and there by every ‘good idea’.</p> <p>Recovery: We overcome our propensity towards naivety by obtaining the Spirit of wisdom in the fellowship of the <i>agape</i> meal. Pro 9:4-5. The wisdom from above teaches us <i>prudence</i> – that is, the spiritual skills that are required for us to ‘navigate’ through our day to day life. Pro 14:8,14. Furthermore, we accept the reality of the <i>grief</i> that we will unavoidably encounter as we engage the cross of Christ in every relationship.</p>
<p>F The fool is an <i>undisciplined</i> character who hates instruction because they have no heart for it. Pro 1:7. Pro 17:16. As a result, the fool lacks understanding because they <i>would not ask</i> for it. Pro 8:5-6.</p> <p>The fool does not learn from their own mistakes and, instead, <i>repeats their folly</i>. Pro 26:11. The fool is incorrigible – and will in no way apply themselves to understanding their own behaviour. Pro 14:8.</p> <p>For a fool, their <i>own way seems right</i> in their own eyes. Pro 12:15. The presumption that their way is right before the Lord is described as ‘the sacrifice of fools’. Ecc 5:1. The fool is so enamoured with <i>their own way</i> that they love every opportunity to tell you about it! Pro 12:23.</p>	<p>Examples: The daredevil, the ‘she’ll-be-right’, the unteachable, the ‘idiot’, the rebel, the show-off, the self-confident.</p> <p>Destruction: The complacency, or self-approval, of the fool, and their rejection of instruction, will destroy them. Pro 1:32. They are <i>deceived</i> by their own folly, which inevitably causes them harm. Pro 14:8. However, the fool considers it an abomination to leave their own evil way; and thus, they remain committed to it. Pro 13:19. Pro 26:11.</p> <p>Recovery: We overcome our propensity to foolishness by obtaining the Spirit of understanding. This grants us the capacity to be <i>teachable</i>. We <i>intreat</i> fellowship, instead of presuming to know the answer. We are quick to hear, instead of being quick to speak from our own understanding.</p>

M A **mock**er puts others down for the sake of their own personal validity and power. Mockery is jesting at others and treating them with contempt or disapproval. One example of mockery is the use of derisive *humour* as a means of putting others down.

Flattery, however, is another expression of mocking; equally motivated by hatred. Pro 26:24-26. Those who flatter others do so to *gain an advantage* over them. Jud 1:16.

The mocker also uses *gossip* to disclose secret knowledge about others for the purpose of 'trading' and control. Gossip is *to talk or listen unaccountably*. Gossip is carnal, and becomes increasingly wanton and demonic. Pro 11:13. Pro 26:22.

Examples: The joker, the school yard bully, the politician, the teaser, the 'teacher's pet', the flirt, the critic, the overly-positive-affirmer.

Destruction: The mocker will be destroyed by their own schemes to gain advantage over others. Pro 26:27. Their wickedness and deceit will be exposed before all. Pro 26:26. And those who mock their father and mother will be consumed by the familiar spirit. Pro 30:17.

Recovery: We overcome our propensity for mocking and flattering by obtaining the Spirit of counsel. This grants us the capacity to offer ourselves to *truly meet and appreciate others*, without selfish intent.

L The **lazy**, or sluggard, person *lacks diligence*. Pro 12:27. Even though they might be very busy and industrious, they do not apply themselves with diligence to *the works of their sonship*.

The lazy person does not nourish their own sonship through prayer and devotions but, rather, seeks to 'feed off' the conversation of others. Pro 19:24. The lazy person is hesitant to offer themselves relationally; preferring, rather, to *avoid* the toil and perseverance that relational fruitfulness entails.

The lazy person is quick to accuse the integrity of the person from whom they receive work - such as their boss. Pro 26:13-16. They are like the man who hid his one talent, *instead of multiplying it*; claiming that his master was 'a hard man'. Mat 25:24-26.

Examples: The procrastinator, the perfectionist, the opinion-maker, the beggar, the couch potato, the gamer, the window shopper.

Destruction: The *covetousness* of the lazy person is their destruction. Pro 21:25-26. Furthermore, their lack of application causes them poverty and neediness. Pro 6:9-11.

Recovery: We overcome our propensity for laziness by obtaining the Spirit of might. This grants us the capacity to courageously set our mind on the works belonging to our sonship. We are enabled to *finish* the works that are set before us! 1Ch 28:20. Eph 2:10.

S The **scoffer**, or scorner, loves *self-based knowledge* for the purpose of *debate and argument*. Self-based knowledge is a leaven which causes a person to become puffed up. 1Co 8:1.

The scoffer is a proud and inflated person who does not like to be corrected. Pro 21:24. They lack submission, and refrain from seeking out wisdom. Pro 15:12. They express disregard or contempt towards others, particularly the messengers of God's word.

There is no benefit gained in correcting a scoffer, for they will simply 'feed off' the argument. Pro 9:7. They hate the one trying to correct them. Pro 9:8. Their only validity is in proving themselves to be 'right'.

Examples: The debater, the expert, the professor, the pedantic, the know-it-all, the disputer, the contradictor.

Destruction: In the end, the scoffer inherits scorn for himself. Pro 3:34. Having shown a prolonged disdain for correction, they are removed from the group, as a means of remedying contention and strife. Pro 22:10. Furthermore, those who are spiritual will shun the scoffer's gangrenous conversation. 2Ti 2:16-17.

Recovery: We overcome our propensity for scoffing by obtaining the Spirit of knowledge. This is the true knowledge of who God is. With this knowledge, we are illuminated to know our own name and the names of others.

W The **wicked**, or violent, person *rejoices in devising and doing evil*. They continually scheme in their heart as to how they can further their wicked plans. Psa 36:4. Pro 4:14-17. They lack sleep due to their continual scheming or because of anxious over-thinking. Pro 4:16.

The wicked person seeks to gain an advantage over others through *control, manipulation and relational game-playing*. They speak perverse things in order to *draw others* after themselves. Pro 23:33. Act 20:30. They gain validity through the support they are able to procure from others. Pro 1:11,14.

The wicked give themselves over to their own wickedness; it becomes their whole way of life. Pro 4:14. They are *quick to point the finger in blame*. Pro 6:13.

Examples: The sleezy businessman, the victim, the manipulator, the gang leader, the schemer, the lobbyist, the troublemaker, the scoundrel.

Destruction: The way of the wicked is like darkness that causes them to stumble. Pro 4:19. Their violence and increasing transgressions cause their destruction. Pro 29:16. Their capacity for spiritual illumination is progressively removed until they are *suddenly uprooted*, and are cut off from the land of their inheritance. Pro 24:20. Pro 2:22. Pro 6:14-15.

Recovery: We overcome our propensity toward wickedness by obtaining the Spirit of the fear of the Lord. This grants us the capacity to heed the word of the cross, and to cease from our wicked ways. Our transgressions are removed from us as we learn the way of blamelessness.