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YAHTZEE!
Proverbs 12:15

Laurie and I had a remarkably smooth experience traveling on our recent vacation. On our trip away nothing went wrong. Our flights were on time, our seats were pretty good, and we even had an empty seat next to us, which is like a miracle these days. A blessed miracle. We had no problem with renting a car, and checking into our hotel was not just smooth, they had actually upgraded us. I've heard from several people that they always look forward to hearing about our travels because they know something bad always happens. This was almost disorienting for us, because everything went so smoothly. Right up to the moment we got into our hotel room. That was when I realized I didn't have my back pack. We had our suitcases, but I had started the day with a back pack, and it wasn't there.

This was a big problem, because the back pack had my iPad in it, and it had a couple of sermons I'd been working on stored on it. If I lost it, my work was lost, along with some other valuable work. Plus, my glasses were in it. I wear contact lenses, but at the end of the day I take them out and need my glasses in the evening. Without my glasses I was going to have a problem. There were also a couple of books I planned to read in the back pack. I needed that stuff. I thought through our travels. I had it on the plane. I put it in the rental car, but I couldn't remember seeing it after that. Maybe I left it in the rental car. There was a hotel bellman there, and he offered to go locate the car and check for the back pack. I prayed and hoped he would find it. At this point I was feeling really stupid. That was because I had been really stupid. I don't like that feeling of doing something dumb like losing an important piece of luggage. It makes me feel like an idiot. I guess if the shoe fits, wear it.

I don't want to leave you in suspense. The bellman came back and told me that no, the back pack was not in the rental car. My heart sank. But then he smiled and pulled it out from behind him and said, "But it was downstairs in the lobby. Apparently you put it down by the front desk and left it there." It was a huge relief, but it also left me with that sense of embarrassment that I was that dumb. I am not real fond of looking that stupid. And that discomfort over appearing dumb, even knowing that no one else gives a rip how I look, is more revealing about me than I like to acknowledge. I don't want people to think I am a fool, even though I sometimes do foolish things. But the concern with appearing foolish in fact means

there is real possibility of being a fool as the book of Proverbs defines it. Being a fool is way worse than merely appearing dumb. It is something none of us wants. Let's see what Proverbs says about fools, a prominent theme in the book.

FOOLS CAN NEVER MASTER LIFE

Remember that wisdom is the ability to master life. It is the key to making the most of life and truly succeeding. What is the opposite of wisdom? It is foolishness. The opposite of a wise person is a fool. There is a lot about the fool in the book of Proverbs. But the most obvious piece of logic is, if wisdom is mastering life and the opposite of being wise is being a fool, what is going to happen to a fool? He will never master life.

A fool is doomed by his foolishness to never experience what life ought to be. He is condemned to always end up frustrated, finding all of his efforts to make life work end up in futility. The reason for this is spelled out in Proverbs 1:7. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction." If you despise wisdom, you despise what is necessary to master life. You doom yourself to a life of frustration, futility, disappointment, bitterness and emptiness.

Proverbs 1:32 says, "The waywardness of the simple will kill them, and the complacency of fools will destroy them." You will see in a moment that a fool is complacent because he sees no need to change. The result of his complacency, which is an inevitable product of his foolishness, is that he will be destroyed. This doesn't mean that every person who is a fool dies immediately. It does mean that they will ruin their lives. They might actually have success in the eyes of the world, but they won't have life as we long for it. They will not have the joy, the peace and the love that make up what life really is about. And in the end they will be separate from God and experience the awful consequences of that. Is the life of a person really a success if they have all the trappings of success as the world sees it, but don't have peace, joy, meaning and fulfillment? Clearly that is not mastering life. It is not really succeeding at all.

Proverbs 10:8 says much the same. "The wise in heart accept commands, but a chattering fool comes to ruin." Psalm 1:4-5 says of the wicked, which is almost synonymous with being a fool in Proverbs, "They are like chaff that the wind blows away. Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous."

THE ROOT OF FOOLISHNESS IS PRIDE

People often think of pride as a good thing. You need to have a little pride in what you do. But the pride I refer to is a bit different than that. Proverbs 12:15 gives us a glimpse of the kind of pride I refer to. “The way of fools seems right to them, but the wise listen to advice.”

We all think our way is right. If we didn’t we’d go another way. So does this mean we are all fools? Not really. We need to pay attention to the contrast in that verse. The fool is compared to the wise person. That person listens to advice from others. The problem that this implies with the fool is that he doesn’t listen to others. He keeps his own counsel because he is sure he is right. He doesn’t need to listen to anyone else, because he’s the smartest person in the room.

This is a common theme in Proverbs. Proverbs 17:10 says, “A rebuke impresses a discerning person more than a hundred lashes a fool.” Show a wise person the error of his ways with one comment, and he gratefully learns and changes. It has more effect on him than being whipped with 100 lashes would have on a fool, because he absolutely refuses to listen. Proverbs 18:2 says, “Fools take no pleasure in understanding but delight in airing their own opinions.” They don’t want to hear what someone else says, they just love to hear themselves talk. They won’t even listen to parents. Proverbs 15:5 says, “A fool spurns a parent’s discipline.” Proverbs 28:26 says “Those who trust in themselves are fools, but those who walk in wisdom are kept safe.”

In his book, *Perilous Pursuits*, Joe Stowell wrote, “Pride is the assumption that I am the most important person in my world.” In other words, I am the center of everything, I am what it is all about. He’s right, but there’s more to it than that, according to Proverbs. Pride also says, “I know more than anyone else. I know what is right and what is best and don’t need to listen to anyone about anything. Including God!”

We don’t often say that out loud, and maybe don’t even say it to ourselves. But that mindset is quite common among us. While we were on vacation Laurie and I went out to dinner one night. We had a waiter who was in his early 20’s. He was a nice kid who was almost over the top friendly. He did his job, but in the course of it he spent a lot of time talking to us. We like talking to people and asking about themselves, and it turned out this was a subject he loved to discuss. I suspect he’s

not aware of how much he revealed about himself to us. One of the things that became apparent was this poor young man is really lost. He spouted some of his philosophy of life, and it was very shallow. I don't think he has a clue what he's talking about. I found the situation ironic. Here he is, a very young man who has little experience and whose life is quite empty and going nowhere, expounding on his own great wisdom to two people who are now toward the other end of life, who have lives full of joy, peace, love, happiness and meaning. Honestly, he was a fool. If he was wise he would have been pumping us for wisdom. He would have been asking how we have navigated through life and found so much joy and happiness and peace. I'm not saying we have all the answers to life, but I am saying that it is not hard to see that he likely would have profited a great deal more from listening than he would from talking and spouting his own specious "wisdom." That's what the kind of pride that makes for fools does to people. It is what made Eve think she knew better than God what was good for her. This pride is insidious, for it is difficult for us to see it.

This pride is really obsession with self, and that is an obsession that can be found in every human being. It would be wise if we listened to Proverbs 3:34, which says God, "mocks proud mockers but shows favor to the humble and oppressed." In the New Testament that message comes out "God is opposed to the proud."

FOOLISHNESS IS DANGEROUS FOR ALL

Pay attention to Proverbs 1:32 and 10:8. They say that foolishness, which begins with pride, will destroy us. It will lead us to ruin. So it is a danger to ourselves. In a lot of ways. In his classic book, *Mere Christianity*, C. S. Lewis wrote, "There is one vice of which no man in the world is free; which every one in the world loathes when he sees it in someone else, and of which hardly any people, except Christians, hardly ever imagine they are guilty themselves...There is...no fault which we are more unconscious of in ourselves...The vice I am talking about is Pride...The essential vice, the utmost evil, is Pride. Unchastity, anger, greed, drunkenness, and all that, are mere flea bites in comparison; it was through pride that the devil became the devil; pride leads to every other vice. It is the complete anti-God state of mind."

The pride that makes us foolish is the root of all the evil that exists in this world. Lewis says it is the complete anti-God state of mind. In other words, it makes us enemies of God, and nothing is more deadly than that. When we are at war with God we are fighting the author and source of life. That's like trying to injure an enemy by shooting ourselves. Lewis goes on to say, "each person's pride is in

competition with every one else's pride...Pride is essentially competition...It is pride which has been the chief cause of misery in every nation and every family since the world began...Pride always means enmity." So our pride puts us at war with God and cuts off the ability to experience real life since it comes from him, and it destroys our relationships to other people.

Our pride and our foolishness cause us to be at war with God and with other people. It means we do damage to ourselves and to others. Proverbs 13:20 says, "Walk with the wise and become wise, for a companion of fools suffers harm." Being around a fool is dangerous. That verse claims that being with fools will inevitably cause us harm.

Suppose that someone you know catches a virulent and highly contagious flu. They are miserable. They've got a high fever and their body aches all over, plus they have roaring upper respiratory symptoms. Would you want to go hang out with that person? Would you want to be with them as much as possible? No way. You might feel bad for them and feel you should go visit them, but you'd probably want to wear a bio containment suit when you do it. You don't want to catch what they've got. Well all around us are people with the fool flu, and if we hang with them we stand a good chance of getting what they've got and paying a price for it.

Proverbs 12:1 says, "Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but whoever hates correction is stupid." Our pride and foolishness make us stupid and cause us to live in idiotic and dumb ways that end with destruction. Let me give you a few examples. We can start in 1 Samuel 25. David was doing everything he could to avoid King Saul and his forces, because Saul had identified him as the top national security risk and issued a "terminate with extreme prejudice" order on David. David, by this time, had been joined by hundreds of men. But this caused him a problem. How was he going to feed them? His solution was to form what was essentially a private security company. The primary source of wealth in those days was agriculture, and especially livestock. Unfortunately there was little in the way of law enforcement, so people's flocks and herds were vulnerable to being raided by groups of armed men, since they were typically only watched over by a few shepherds armed with a stick.

So David's plan was he would have his men guard the flocks of people against bandits and predators, then he would ask the wealthy ones to pay him. One of the people he provided this service for was a man named Nabal. The David Security

Company did a good job guarding Nabal's animals. In 1 Samuel 25:15-16 one of Nabal's employees told Abigail, the gorgeous wife of Nabal, "these men were very good to us, and the whole time we were out in the fields near them nothing was missing. Night and day they were a wall around us the whole time we were herding our sheep near them." David's men had protected the men and the sheep. They'd done a good job and Nabal's employees were grateful for them.

David sent representatives to Nabal to politely ask him to pay for the service they had provided him. Nabal not only flatly refused, he intentionally insulted David in the process, accusing him of being nothing more than an outlaw. This was unacceptable for David. His men had put in the time and effort and deserved to be rewarded for their work. But Nabal put David in a bad spot. What if all the other wealthy landowners followed suit and refused to pay? If they followed Nabal's example David and his men would have no food, plus there was a veiled threat that Nabal might try to get King Saul to come after him. David's response to Nabal's affront was succinct. In verse 13 he said to his men, "Each of you strap on your sword.' So they did, and David strapped on his as well. About 400 men went up with David."

So what was the plan? David was not going to reopen negotiations. He wasn't even going to make Nabal an offer he couldn't refuse. David was going to wipe out Nabal and every man associated with him, and probably just take his flocks in payment. When Nabal's employee told Abigail about what had happened he said, "Disaster is hanging over our master and his whole household." It wasn't just Nabal who would suffer the consequences, it was everyone.

By the standards of our world Nabal was a highly successful man. He was one of the richest in the area, he was a man of great influence, and he was married to a woman who is described in this chapter as intelligent and beautiful. But he had not mastered life. He was not a man of wisdom. In fact, his name, Nabal, is one of the words used in Proverbs for "fool." We know he was a fool not only because of his name but because of what his employee said about him in verse 17. "He is such a wicked man that no one can talk to him." He is not interested in any opinion other than his own. Whatever someone else might have to say, he didn't want to hear it. According to Proverbs that is the definition of a fool. Remember in Proverbs to be righteous is to be wise, and to be wicked is to be a fool. Nabal was a fool. His foolishness did not just endanger himself. It certainly did that, but it put everyone around him at risk. Fortunately his wife, Abigail intervened and saved the day. Had

she not there would have been a blood bath. Being associated with a fool is dangerous.

Proverbs 17:12 is a classic. It says, “better to meet a bear robbed of her cubs than a fool bent on folly.” Imagine what it would be like to run into a mama bear whose cubs have somehow been stolen from her. That’s going to be a really bad day for you. You’ll be lucky to survive the encounter, and even if you do your survival will be extremely painful. Years ago when we had a dog one Sunday afternoon Laurie and I took our dog for a walk. We were about a half mile from our house when a dog came tearing across the street right at house like a missile. He was a pit bull, and he wasn’t coming to greet us with love and affection. His ardent desire was to eat our dog, Luke. It was a scary moment, because if we did nothing Luke would shortly be nothing but bloody remains, but if we tried to stop that beast he would turn on us and we’d be the bloody remains. Laurie’s quick thinking saved the day. She grabbed Luke and set him up on top of a hedge we were next to where the pit bull couldn’t reach him. Before he could do any mayhem his owner came running and corralled him. But I will never forget that snarling, barking face with those fangs out. It was scary, but that was trivial compared to what would happen if you should encounter an angry bear. That would be terrifying. But it would not be the worst thing that could happen to you. Proverbs 17:12 tells us you are better off having that run in with angry mama bear that you would be running into a fool going about his foolishness. That was certainly the case with Nabal.

Here’s a more modern example of the danger of being a fool. A young American man and woman named Jay Austin and Lauren Geoghagen, both aged 29, quit their jobs late last year so they could travel around the world on bicycles. Their planned route took them through the Middle East. Friends expressed concern about how safe it was to go through that area given the trouble caused by the Taliban and ISIS. But while in Morocco Austin wrote, “You watch the news and you read the papers and you’re led to believe that the world is a big, scary place. People, the narrative goes, are not to be trusted. People are bad. People are evil. People are ax murderers and monsters and worse. I don’t buy it. Evil is a make believe concept we’ve invented to deal with the complexities of fellow humans holding values and beliefs and perspectives different than our own...By and large humans are kind.” They were warned repeatedly about the dangers of people in that area, but they knew better. They were certain that evil is make believe. Sadly, they found out the hard way that they were fools. This past summer both of them were ruthlessly murdered by a group of ISIS jihadists, purely because by ISIS lights they were “disbelievers.” Being foolish, refusing to listen to wise people can be dangerous.

What if you had admired that young couple? By all accounts they were both appealing people. If you got swept up in their foolishness and joined them on their adventure, you would be dead too.

In a way our entire culture is suffering from foolishness because it has, in its pride, chosen to refuse to listen to God. The beginning, the foundation of wisdom, the first necessary step to mastering life, is fearing him, obeying and worshiping him. Rejecting that fundamental starting point western culture is veering deep into foolishness.

There is a premise which requires very little thought to see as an important truth. It is that it is both wise and important to live with a clear understanding of reality. It is dangerous to live with beliefs that do not match up with what is real. The sad story of the two American bikers who believed that evil is make believe should tell us that. But we can see it in our own experience. For instance, imagine that I decide that I have financial resources that are as great as those of Jeff Bezos, the founder of Amazon, whose net worth comes in right around \$145 billion. I will make decisions based on that belief. How is that going to turn out? It's going to end badly, isn't it, because my net worth is a lot closer to \$145 than \$145 billion. If you took my entire net worth out of that \$145 billion you'd be left with...\$145 billion. But hey, if I have billions, no big deal to go buy a house in Hawaii and maybe to give a billion or so to deal with poverty. It won't take long for me to find out that reality can be brutal.

Emile Ratelbrand is a 69 year old man who lives in the Netherlands. He says he is a "positivity trainer." He also describes himself as a "young god." Oh boy, right there you sense there is going to be trouble. Early in November he filed suit in a court in the Netherlands to have his birthday changed from March 11, 1949 to March 11, 1969, thus changing his official age from 69 to 49. His argument was that in his country people have freedom of choice, choice of name, choice of gender, so why not choice of age? He said, "I want to have my own age. I want to control myself." Personally I think he's on to something. I don't get why he went for 49 though. I've decided I want to change my age to 35 because that's way better than 49.

Do you see the problem? Our culture has decided that people have the right to believe and claim whatever they want, and, for instance to decide for themselves what their gender is. Have you ever looked up the word "gender" in the dictionary? Do you know how it is defined? The dictionary says it means "sex." Your gender is

your sex, they mean the same thing. Here's the irrefutable truth about your sex. It is determined by your DNA. It is a physical fact. You may choose to believe it is something other than the facts. But when you do that you are believing something that conflicts with reality. And when you believe something that conflicts with reality you are heading for danger. It is foolish. Mr. Ratelbrand can believe and claim all he wants that he is 49, but he simply is not. He's 69 whether he feels like it or not, and to believe anything else is stupid. Our entire culture is being foolish, and its foolishness, rooted in human hubris and arrogance, is doing great damage to people. Foolishness always does harm.

The most important lesson in all of this is that in our pride when we refuse to listen, first and foremost to God, we are being truly foolish, and that foolishness will always do damage. The person we hurt most is ourselves. Do you get that? By refusing to fear God we are hurting ourselves. Sadly, in the process we absolutely will do damage in a variety of ways to other people as well.

APPLICATION

WE MUST ADMIT OUR FOOLISHNESS

We have to start by remembering that foolishness is a function of pride. C. S. Lewis claimed, correctly, that pride is a problem for every single human being. That means foolishness is a problem for all of us. Typically we don't accept that premise. Hey, I'm not arrogant. I'm not some stuck up proud jerk. Hopefully that is true, but remember what we are talking about when we talk about pride. It is the belief that I am the most important person alive and that I know better than anyone else what is right and what is good for me, including God. Unfortunately we all are plagued by that kind of pride. Do you believe you have a pride problem, thus you have a foolishness problem?

When you wake up in the morning, what are you thinking about? I feel safe in betting that you are thinking about how you are feeling, and about what you have to do this day. In fact, I bet that as you go through your day you are pretty much pre-occupied with your thoughts, your desires, your feelings, your tasks, your goals for that day. It is as though the most important thing in the world is...you!

Isn't that the definition of pride, according to Joe Stowell? Don't we evaluate nearly everything on the basis of, "how will this affect me?" Don't we all look first for ourselves in a group picture to see how we look, and evaluate how good a picture it is on the basis of how we appear in it? These things should clue us in to

the fact that we have a pride problem so deeply embedded in us we can't help ourselves. And that means we have a foolishness problem.

What happens when you learn that someone has said something derogatory or critical about you? Do you find yourself hurt, angry, and unable to forget about that cruel thing? That's your pride showing up. How do you do with receiving criticism? Have you trained yourself to know it is good for you, but it still stings? Or do you just see the critic as a foul enemy? These are reminders of our pride.

While on vacation Laurie and I went out to dinner one night at a place that was kind of busy. It took a while to get a table. Then once we got our table it took quite a while before our server finally showed up. But I noticed that people who were seated at a couple of tables near us, people who came in after us, had the server show up before they got to us. In fact, I saw one who got the food they ordered before we could even order. It bugged me. Do you know why? Because my pride was punctured. It was as if the server was saying those people were more important than me, and that's just not right.

In his book, *The Ragamuffin Gospel*, the late Brennan Manning wrote that it is virtually impossible to insult a truly humble individual personally. Unfortunately it is not all that hard to insult most of us, because our pride is very much alive.

We recently put our Christmas tree up. Laurie and I love Christmas and want to wring the most we can out of the celebration and enjoyment of it. However, a month before we put up our tree I encountered an astounding thing. I found a pine needle from our tree in the carpet. It was left over from last year! The thing had been there 10 months. How was that possible? When we took down our tree last year I made a diligent effort to vacuum up every last pine needle. I was thorough, but in the days after vacuuming I kept finding them, sometimes in places I knew for a fact that there had previously been no needles. It was like they just miraculously appeared. But after a couple of weeks the battle of the pine needles came to an end as I emerged victorious. The pine needles were totally vanquished, gone forever. At least that's what I thought. But throughout the year every now and then to my dismay I would encounter another one, sometimes in places that made no sense, places nowhere near where our tree had been. Had the needle somehow traveled to these remote spots? I have begun to suspect that they are alive and mobile, and they are multiplying. Even worse, they are intent on aggravating me. So now, just a few weeks before we were going to put up our tree again, I was still finding needles. It is a great mystery. I share that because our pride is like those

needles. You can try all you want to eradicate it, stomp it out, and you might even get to the place where you can convince yourself that you have won the battle. But if you are honest you will be surprised when some little hurt feeling, some ugly personal pride suddenly shows up out of nowhere. It is insidious, it is persistent, and it is everywhere in our hearts.

There is a simple statement of logic that can sum all this up. It is that pride inevitably produces foolishness, and foolishness always produces damage. So the most important thing we can do is admit our pride, confess it to God when we see it, and ask him to cure us of it.

WE MUST ROOT OUR WORTH IN THE CROSS

There is within all of us a desperate desire, even a need, to convince ourselves that we have great worth. Every human being is driven by this desire. It is behind much of our pride. So we go through life putting on performances intended to convince ourselves and other people that we are indeed someone important, someone of great worth.

But how much is something worth? Suppose I decide to auction off a copy of one of the books I have written. The bidding will start at \$100,000. How many bids do you think I'm going to get? If you think that number is anything other than zero you need to get help immediately because you are totally insane. I'm not going to get any bids at \$100,000, or 10,000, or 1000, or 100 or even \$10. I probably wouldn't even get a bid at \$1 because the book just isn't worth anything. A thing's value is determined by what it is worth to someone.

When we look at the cross of Jesus Christ it says two things that almost seem contradictory. First, it says that we are all hot messes, every single one of us. We are in such a horrible shape that it required Jesus Christ going to the extreme of dying an excruciating death to rescue us. If we just had a few problems that needed fixing it would not have taken something so unimaginably drastic to save us. Just a little tinkering, a little patching here and there and we'd be fine. The death of Jesus was the worst thing that has happened in the history of the universe. That was what it took to pull our chestnuts out of the fire. Without it, we were hopeless, worthy of condemnation, meaning we were worthless.

But the second thing the cross tells us is that God loves us so much, he valued us so vastly that he was willing to go to that extreme to rescue us and have us become

his adopted children. In other words, in his eyes, there is no human standard that can measure our worth to him.

Given that these things are true, the cross says two things about us and our pride. First, we have nothing to be proud about. On our own merit what we deserve is condemnation, a declaration of worthlessness. What if someone says something really derogatory about us? So what? The truth is that they have no idea how bad our state really is. The worst thing they can say about us doesn't begin to describe the truth of our situation. So we don't need to be offended. We should just be glad they don't know the depth of the problem.

But second, despite all that, we have immeasurable, immense worth to God. Whatever someone else thinks or says, it doesn't matter because God delights in us and considers us of almost infinite value. What God thinks is what matters. We think our worth is determined by other people. It's not. Even if you become universally applauded by people you will discover that it's not enough. Somehow, you'll still feel you need even more sense of worth. That's because what we were created for, what we need, is for God to value us, to experience our worth to him.

So we don't need to prove anything to ourselves or anyone else. We just rest in our worth as declared by the cross. But we also always remember the cross is death to our pride. Whenever we fall prey to pride we need to see it in light of the cross, and the cross says our pride must die.

WE MUST SEEK TO LOVE PEOPLE

When we are obsessed with ourselves, proud of ourselves, we are looking at ourselves. We are living out that pride that says life is about me. I am the star of the show. I deserve top billing. What we are not doing is loving other people, because we are not even thinking about them.

The cure for our pride and obsession with self, for our foolishness, is to love others. Love, at its core, is giving up self. It is caring about someone else not self and serving that person. If I am obsessed with loving and serving others, I cannot be focused on self. So love, real love, is a powerful antidote to pride and its consequent foolishness.

WE MUST BECOME OBSESSED WITH JESUS

In his book, *Perilous Pursuits*, Joe Stowell asked, “What, then, is true humility? It is not an act of our wills, something we manufacture, but a by product of being consumed with Christ.”

The person who has low self esteem and feels bad about himself or herself, and the person who has pride, elevated self esteem, who feels too good about himself or herself, share a common trait. They are both about themselves. Whether thinking too high or too low of themselves, they are thinking about themselves. What releases us from that prison is becoming obsessed with Jesus. When we can say with Paul, “For me, to live is Christ,” when all we live for is to glorify him, then how others see us, how important we are in this world, simply doesn’t matter. We have changed the scoreboard of our lives. What puts points on the board is not us being noticed, approved, better than others, smarter than others, more beautiful than others. What puts points on the board is Christ being honored, and nothing else counts.

Laurie and I had fun the last part of our recent flight out for vacation playing Yahtzee. The airline had screens on the backs of the seats, and Laurie figured out we could play games against each other on them. One of the games was Yahtzee. So we played several games. I won once. Yahtzee involves rolling 5 dice. On each turn you have 3 rolls, and you try to create combinations of 3, 4, or 5 of a kind, or a straight or full house. At one point I had a good game going, but I had to get 5’s. That was all I had left to do. On my first roll I got a straight, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. That’s normally a high scoring roll, but I already had a straight and I needed 5’s. I kept the 5 and rolled the other 4 dice. I got 2 2’s and 2 3’s. That was a good possibility for a full house, but I already had a full house and I needed 5’s. Those 2’s and 3’s were useless for me. I needed at least 2 more 5’s. I rolled the dice again, and got zero 5’s. I lost the game. I needed 5’s, and nothing else mattered. It occurred to me that’s a bit like life. The only thing that would enable me to win was 5’s, and everything else was useless. We need to see our lives like that. They are to be about honoring Christ. Everything else doesn’t matter. Only by honoring Christ do we get the score we need and win the game. And if all that matters to us is honoring Christ, pride simply won’t be an issue. Take away the pride and you take away the foolishness that goes with it. Mastering life becomes very possible.