There are few things more tragic than a person becoming a fool or a scoffer. A few of the terms that describe this type of person are juvenile delinquent, incorrigible, career criminal, rebellious, or self-centered. While anyone could display some aspects of a fool or scoffer briefly, fools and scoffers demonstrate their destructive behavior as a way of life. They continue in willful sin, disregard God’s plan for their lives, and dismiss anyone who warns them of sin’s consequences.

The speech and actions of fools and scoffers indicate the self-centered condition of their hearts, their real selves (Mark 7:20-23). Since fools and scoffers have spiritual “heart disease,” all aspects of their lives and relationships are detrimentally affected. However, due to their self-centeredness, fools and scoffers do not accurately discern the negative impact they have on others.

Not surprisingly, a confirmed fool or scoffer will not respond in a Christ-honoring manner to loving, biblically based communication, no matter how diligently a believer in Christ utilizes it. This rejection is critical for believers to realize when they try to help someone with characteristics of a fool or scoffer. No believer is gifted or caring enough to change the heart of a fool or scoffer. The only hope for a fool or scoffer is a “heart change,” which is accomplished only by God.

The book of Proverbs lists the following traits of a fool (sample of a larger list):

- A fool despises instruction, hates knowledge, and sets his own self-centered standards as the “rule” for living. (Proverbs 12:15)
- A fool slanders others, lies, and often conceals hatred. (Proverbs 10:18)

The book of Proverbs describes the characteristics of a scoffer:

- A scoffer will not respond to correction. (Proverbs 13:1)
- A scoffer cannot find wisdom. (Proverbs 14:6)
- A scoffer enjoys his/her way of life. (Proverbs 1:22)

Trouble is inevitable for a fool or scoffer (Proverbs 3:35; 9:12; 10:14; 10:21). If you try to correct a fool or scoffer, expect rejection and retaliation (Proverbs 9:6-8; 13:20).

Scriptural perspectives of fools and scoffers provide ample warnings of this destructive pattern of life. Apart from divine intervention, fools and scoffers will persist in a continual downward spiral of devastation for themselves, often causing untold pain and heartache for others as well. The downward spiral of fools and scoffers can only be halted by a heart change. This is accomplished by God’s power, not by anyone’s good intentions or sincere efforts.

For a more complete study of Fools & Scoffers, see The Most Difficult People in the World.