

The Fool at the Gate

In ancient cities the city gate was a point of vulnerability during war time. However, in peacetime the gate was a bevy of activity. Residents passed through the gate to and from their fields and livestock. Merchants approached the city gate to do business. In many cities the entrance was beautified and marketplaces were built.

As a central area of activity, the city gate was a natural place for important people to address the citizens. Kings, judges and city leaders would meet at the city gate to hear legal cases, settle disputes, and engage in discussions pertaining to the welfare of the city and her citizens.

'The gate' was not merely a door; it was an opening in the city walls, walls which might be as much as 15 to 20 feet thick. On either side of the gate might be structures built into the walls such as watch-towers. Some 'gates' housed chambers of two, four, or six rooms which served various purposes.

Those who sat at the city gate were men of wisdom and discernment. It was no place for the childish 'fool.'

*Wisdom is too high for a fool,
He does not open his mouth
in the gate.*

--Proverbs 24:7

The leaders of God's people today are elders, men who are dignified, family men, godly, and full of integrity. They are not unlike the men who sat at the ancient city gate. They are mature and serious-minded about God, God's word, and God's people.

In our entertainment-crazed society there are fewer and fewer men who are true leaders. The Apostle Paul wrote:

*When I was a child,
I used to speak as a child,
think as a child,
reason as a child;
when I became a man,
I did away with childish things.*

--1 Corinthians 13:11

I wonder if today we have too many churches filled with adult children captivated with fun, entertainment, and leisure; too busy to serve; too busy with their own folly that they cannot even understand God's wisdom. I wonder if we will see a generation of men rise up who are not men at all.

In our churches, who will be able to 'sit in the gate' and open his mouth with God's wisdom in the years to come?

Young men, **now** is the time to prepare your heart to lead.

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