

Proverbs - Chapter 18

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[v.1–v.2](#) – These first two verses of this chapter go hand-in-hand. In the first verse, Solomon states that wisdom is only achieved through diligent desire and the effort to pursue it and acquire it.

When a person desires wisdom, sometimes it calls for sacrifice to attain it. They avoid things that distract them from the pursuit of wisdom or that will get them off-track. Anything that doesn't conform to their goal of attaining wisdom is laid aside. They reject vain ambitions like wealth and power to focus on attaining Godly wisdom.

Verse 1 states that this person intermeddles with wisdom – meaning they get deeply involved, occupied, and concerned with all matters of attaining wisdom. Think about your Bible study time. In the KJV Bible, there are 31,173 verses – and the time we spend studying each one of them in-depth will bring new insight to each of us. But it takes time and effort to do this.

Our Lord taught us that the Kingdom of Heaven was like hidden treasure that a man would gladly sell all that he had to buy the field and dig for it ([Matthew 13:44](#)). He also taught us that it was like a priceless pearl that one would sell all that he had to purchase it ([Matthew 13:45-46](#)). Wisdom opens the treasures of Heaven, so it too must be searched for diligently.

Verse 2 compares the opposite of this person desiring wisdom so strongly they are willing to search and sacrifice for it. This verse states that fools have no desire in learning wisdom or anything else because they are too preoccupied with their own thoughts.

They value their own opinions and thoughts more than truth. This person values the pull and direction of their own heart more than trying to gain the Godly wisdom and truth of God's Word. A fool does not have any pleasure or joy in understanding – obtaining wisdom, truth and knowledge. They have no heart for it.

[v.3](#) – This is sort of a hard proverb to understand. When we have seen words like "wicked", "contempt", and "reproach" in prior Proverbs, it was usually referenced to people who were evil in their actions and deeds. But keep in mind, each time this has been mentioned, Solomon has stated fairly clearly who this was directed toward.

This proverb is a bit different. To understand this fully, it might be helpful to look at a few situations in scripture where this proverb would apply.

In [1 Corinthians 5:1-13](#), Paul rebuked the Corinthian church for not only allowing but protecting a person who was a fornicator in their church. While they should have been saddened by this situation and eliminated that from their body to avoid reproach on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ....but they did not. And Paul rebuked them for it. The word used here, ignominy, means dishonor and disgrace. This action has brought dishonor and disgrace on the church, and reproach from the outside enemies of the church.

The lesson from this proverb is that wicked conduct brings reproach on God's name and religion, so this must be addressed at the first sign of it in our homes and churches to avoid contempt toward God from the outside world.

Solomon was a king, and he was training his own son to be a good king. If wicked people or ignominy were allowed to exist in government, it would bring reproach and contempt on the nation. He desired that Israel would have the honor and glory that comes with righteousness and wisdom. We should desire the same for our families and our church.

[v.4](#) – This proverb has two beautiful metaphors. First, it states that a wise man's words are like deep waters. His wisdom is deep, not superficial. His wisdom is plentiful, and can help with a variety of situations.

Secondly, it compares a wise man's words to a wellspring that produces a flowing brook. A wellspring is the source of water for a brook or stream. The brook has water that flows downstream to provide water to other areas. So too a wise man's word prosper those around him, providing wise counsel to many people.

There is a reference here to Jesus Christ. While Solomon was a wise man, could speak intelligently on any subject, and was sought after by people to hear his wisdom, it pales in comparison with the wisdom in the mouth of the Lord Jesus Christ. When Jesus spoke, people were astonished by His authority and kindness. Even His enemies were left speechless when confronted by His words. Satan himself had to leave Him for a season after tempting Him in the wilderness, when Jesus quoted scripture to Satan and resisted his temptations.

Do people consider our words and counsel to be deep waters and a flowing brook? Do we think before we speak? Do we seek the Lord's guidance on

matters that require a solid, well-considered response? If we do, we'll be more likely to give an answer that can aid the situation and will bring glory to our Father.

[v.5](#) – In this proverb, Solomon gave his son invaluable wisdom in how to reign justly. He had to ignore who the people were in a controversy in order to judge rightly and fairly. Justice has to be dispensed equitably and fairly in order to maintain the integrity of the ruler and their position. While many allow personalities or relationships to influence their decisions, their standards, and their judgments, decisions need to be made only in light of God's infallible Word.

This lesson was taught to Israel by her leaders. The rich and the poor were to be judged alike. Prominent people were not to be favored. Bribes were to be rejected. Public opinion was to be ignored. God's laws were to be applied righteously and consistently, with no other factors influencing the decision. Sadly, Israel often ignored this edict and suffered the consequences.

Even worse, this practice has still continued. Pilate gave up Jesus to be crucified against his will and the counsel of his wife, just to keep peace with the Jews. Politicians promised whatever will please the crowd and guarantee them their vote.

Recently in NC, we had a vote on a Marriage Amendment to our constitution. It is a sad thing that a vote even had to be taken on this issue, but if people had not stood up for what they felt was right, the measure would have gone the other way.

God will adhere to His own law at judgment day. All will be judged (rich and poor, black and white, male and female) according to each one's life in light of God's standards. Name, family, position, etc. will not matter. His judgment will be fair and righteous. His sentence will be absolute and final. We all need to humble ourselves and ask for His mercy daily, now, while there is still time.

[v.6–v.8](#) – These next three verses relate a common theme in Proverbs – watching what we say and taking control of our tongues.

Verse 6 states that one problem with the fool is that they are always contentious in their speech. They always seem to be disagreeable, showing no discretion, objecting to everything, critical, and negative. Solomon states that "...his mouth calleth for strokes" which is basically stating that his words are so irritating and contentious that they deserve to be beaten severely.

Verse 7 again relates a common theme that the words of a fool are always the cause of their pain and suffering. In verse 6, their irritating words cause contention, and verse 7 shows us the end result.

Even the Psalmist David knew how important it was to guard our mouths and tongues:

Psalm 141:3 "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips."

Psalm 19:14 "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer."

Verse 8 speaks about a different source of injury that can come from our words....talebearing. Talebearing is spreading news about someone else. It hurts their reputation, and the person spreading it loses the trust of the other person. Even if the information is true, it is still talebearing. The results are long-term wounds that are deep in the heart and soul.

Talebearing is the same as backbiting and whispering, all three being condemned as sins in the Bible. Look at what God told Israel:

Leviticus 19:16 "Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people."

The worst part is that this is a sin that is hard to be corrected with the person who has been offended. The injury done can last a lifetime, so the Bible clearly states that this is not to be done.

Understand that his proverb is not dealing with illegal acts that need to be reported to authorities....that is not talebearing.

Our goal for others, whether close friends or general acquaintances, should be to build each other up, not to tear each other down.

v.9 – There are people in this world that are just plain lazy. You can't get them to work no matter how much you would pay them. They look to get through life as easily as they can without lifting a finger to help themselves. They may have great potential, but their laziness drowns that out and they end up with nothing.

There are others who work hard, and probably make a good living. But they take what they earn and waste it. They can't resist temptations and if they have a dollar, they're going to spend it. Sadly, they end up with nothing as well.

Although getting to the same place by different paths, Solomon states that these two men are brothers – they come from the same family of financial and professional ruin.

Solomon's proverb to us is to work hard, waste less, or do both. Wise people are prudent, working hard for what they earn, but being prudent with what they spend and how they spend it.

For us as Christians, this proverb also has meaning as well. We are to work hard for the cause of Christ, and be good stewards with the blessing He has given to us. All things must be for the upbuilding of His kingdom here on earth.

v.10 – Whenever we are fearful, we can always go to the Lord for safety. He is a strong tower in difficult times. Nothing than breach it. We're always safe with Him.

This proverb calls holiness to the name of the Lord. Notice in your Bible how it is likely all capitalized. That's because the translators thought the name of the Lord was so holy it needed to be distinguished from the other writing. The God who revealed himself to Moses as "I Am That I Am" is so revered by Jews that they do not speak His name. When it is written, the "o" in Lord is left out, showing his name as "L_ord."

His name is our strong tower but it is not merely His name that we have treasure. Our Lord is alive, strong, and available to us each day. Scripture states that there is no other name under Heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.

When we close our prayers to God "in Jesus' name", we are calling on the highest power in the universe. What a privilege to do so. There is truly something about that name.

v.11 – Money can't buy happiness, although that's where many people search for it. It can't buy one more minute of life here on earth. Some people put so much trust in their money that they feel it can buy their way out of whatever trouble they find themselves in. But this proverb says that sort of conceit deceives them.

Because of wealth, some may feel that enemies can never get to them. They feel secure just as if they were within a strong city, fortified with a high wall. They put their safety and trust in their finances. But all the money in the world can't keep away trouble, sickness, and even death from touching our lives.

When we read v. 10 and note that **"The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it, and is safe"**, we can see the drastic difference between the righteous who put their trust in the Lord, and those that see this safety elsewhere. The righteous seek their safety from the Lord, while the rich look to their money for protection.

In Luke 12, Jesus told a story of a rich man who had more material blessings than he could store. In his conceit, he boasted that he would tear down his older, smaller barns and build even bigger ones to store it and keep it all for himself. In his conceit, he then planned to live in the lap of luxury for years. But scripture states that the Lord said to him, **"Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee. Then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided."** ([Luke 12:20](#)). His high wall, the thing he placed his trust in, could not save him.

[1 Timothy 6:17-19](#) **"Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy. That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate, laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life."**

[v.12](#) – We always have a choice as to whether or not we're prideful or humble. Scripture tells us that pride goes before a fall. Arrogance and pride is always dangerous to us.

On the other hand, humbleness and humility, before God and others, brings honor.

This is a law of God that has been true all through scripture – the proud will be brought low, and the lowly will be raised up.

God is not only a jealous God, but also one of justice. He does not want us to have any other things ahead of Him in importance in our lives. Scripture has told us that He hates pride.

When Moses went to Pharaoh to tell him to let Israel go, Pharaoh said, **"Who is the Lord that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I**

know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go.” (Exodus 5:2). God destroyed Pharaoh’s nation and his army in the Red Sea.

In contrast, look at what Solomon said when he was made king: **“And now, O Lord my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father, and I am but a little child. I know not how to go out or come in.” (1 Kings 3:7).** In humility and humbleness, Solomon searched for the Lord, admitting his limitations and looking for help. God gave him wisdom, riches, and peace in his rule.

Pride was the sin of Satan. When he attempted to lift himself above God, God threw him out of Heaven to the depths of Hell.

When we feel ourselves being lifted up due to some accomplishment or success, let’s never forget who gives us the ability to accomplish anything and who is the start of all our successes.

1 Peter 5:5-6 “God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time.”

v.13 – This proverb is very simple, but important - Be a good listener! God has given us 2 ears for a reason. Wisdom tells us that we should listen carefully and answer slowly. We need to ensure we know every situation fully before giving an answer or making a judgment.

As an example, King Darius made a pact that condemned Daniel to the lion’s den.....all because he acted with haste and fell right into the trap his colleagues had set for Daniel.

Wisdom dictates that we listen well in order to gather all facts before forming an opinion or giving an explanation. Wisdom also dictates we respond carefully in giving our opinions, knowing that our first thought may not always be our best thoughts.

James 1:19-20 “Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.”

v.14 – Each of us either has a happy spirit inside of us or one that is troubled. A happy spirit can help us through the daily troubles of life so that we always have an attitude of praise and thankfulness. However, a troubled spirit can cause us pain, sometimes so deeply that the hurt is difficult to describe.

A wounded spirit is painful....many times, more painful than a body that is hurting. However, our spirit can help us to survive any difficulty that comes our way. If we allow our spirit to rule us, it can be almost unbearable when wounded or hurt. However, if ruled and directed by God, our spirit can help us to be happy and cheerful even in the face of adversity.

Job is a good example of how important ruling our spirit is. Job ruled his spirit when, even in the face of terrible loss, adversity, and sickness, he worshipped and blessed the Lord. Even though his life was falling apart, he still found reasons to give praise to God. However, there did come a time in Job's trial where he let his spirit fall, dwelled on how much he had lost, and even cursed the day he was born and wished for death.

David was another example who, while running for his life from Saul and from his own friend that wanted him dead, **"...he encouraged himself in the Lord his God...."** ([1 Samuel 30:6](#)).

If we rule our spirit in the fear and joy of the Lord, we can find something good everyday, regardless of our circumstances. However, if we allow our spirit to be ruled by our afflictions and circumstances, we can find negative things every day of our life.

We all get discouraged, and we all get down. However, our circumstances never have to define our response. Trust in the Lord.

[v.15](#) – Wisdom must most certainly come from the heart, but it is gained through listening and understanding. We have to have a heart and an ear for knowledge.

The people at Berea that Paul and Silas preached to had both a heart and an ear for Godly wisdom and knowledge.

[Acts 17:11](#) **"These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so."**

No matter how long we've been in church, no matter how long we've been a Christian, we should always strive to know God on a deeper level than we do today. Our heart drives our thirst for knowledge of God, and we listen to learn more.

[v.16](#) – Solomon has already spoken to us about "gifts". He knew how powerful they were, for both good and evil purposes. We've already seen

him warn against using gifts as bribes to pervert justice and judgment. But Solomon also knew the importance of gifts in showing thankfulness and also in obtaining favor with others.

This proverb speaks of a gift given to “make room for him” – to open doors of opportunity that might otherwise be closed. It also speaks of a gift “bringing him before great men” – getting an audience with people they might otherwise not get to associate with.

It brought to my mind Jed Clampett....a poor mountain man who had struck oil in the hills and now had more money than he could spend in a lifetime. When he moved the family to Beverly Hills, Mr. Milton Drysdale was more than happy to have Jed’s money in the First Commerce Bank of Beverly Hills. Jed got whatever he needed from Mr. Drysdale, whenever he needed it. Why? Because his “gift” of placing millions of dollars with Mr. Drysdale’s bank got that man’s attention. Without it, he would have just been another person on the street.

The power of gifts can be abused, so we must be careful. To give or receive a gift for the purpose of abusing justice is bribery, which is a terrible sin either way....and God condemns such actions.

People in authority can be tempted to be swayed in their judgment by others bringing bribes disguised as gifts. As God places us in positions of authority, we need to be on guard for this and use wisdom to guide our actions.

[v.17](#) – In a courtroom, a person is being tried for a crime. The defense for the accused usually presents their case first. If the trial were to stop there, the jury would probably find many of these people not guilty, due to the evidence presented that defends the accused. However, there is a second part to the trial that is presented by the prosecution, the side that has evidence showing the accused did commit the crime. After the prosecution has finished presenting their evidence, much of which may contradict the evidence presented by the defense, the jury must weigh both sides and determine if the accused is innocent or guilty.

This proverb states that the person who speaks first in his own cause seems just. This is absolutely true, because there is no opposing argument.

[1 Thessalonians 5:21](#) **“Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.”**

Solomon wrote this proverb to likely teach his son to use wise discretion when judging accusations from one against another. The truth can always

withstand questions, but lies usually cannot. We've already read about this previously in our study.

Proverbs 14:15 "The simple believeth every word; but the prudent man looketh well to his going."

"It takes only a little knowledge to believe something, much more knowledge to teach it, but a great deal of knowledge to defend it." (unknown)

v.18 – A lot is a chance event that is used to settle a dilemma. Today, we may flip a coin, roll dice, or draw straws...in the time this was written, the items were probably different, but the purpose was the same. The purpose of this was to allow a random chance event choose the solution from the alternatives available.

If the solution to a problem could not be reached by any other means, a lot would end the strife and contentions by all parties agreeing to allow this random chance event to decide the outcome. This proverb specifically mentions "the mighty", the rich and powerful, who were more likely to be stubborn and contentious due to their wealth and power.

From our standpoint, there are chance events...but not with God. He knows what will occur from today until the end of time. When we flip a coin, we can mathematically calculate the chances of it coming up on one side or the other...but it's still a chance event in our eyes. However, God knows the outcome before the coin was ever tossed in the air.

For example, the apostles even used lots to decide on Matthias as the replacement for Judas (**Acts 1:23-26**), and I personally feel certain God was involved in that choice.

However, the Bible does not show any use for lots after Pentecost when the Holy Spirit was given to us. The implication seems to be that with the Holy Spirit to guide us, there is less need for a chance event to decide direction in our lives. Instead of using lots and chance events to determine direction now, we need to spend time in prayer allowing God to use the Holy Spirit to guide and direct us.

We also have no need for lots and chance events to decide on actions that wisdom should direct. God has inspired written wisdom for our lives and that should be our first source of seeking guidance.

v.19 – While this proverb speaks of a "brother" being offended, it should be noted that this can refer to a blood brother or sister, as well as a brother or

sister in the church family. The proverb states that one who has been offended is harder to win back than a strong city (which is seldom overtaken by the enemy) and that their contentions are like castle bars (which were made of the strongest material available).

Basically, Solomon's inspired wisdom is teaching that once a brother is offended, winning them back is almost a hopeless situation. The reason for this is the closeness of the family. When we offend those who love us, we can create hatred. Hurting those that have given us their love, loyalty, affection, and trust cuts deeper than when we offend a stranger with whom we have no relationship.

There are several evidences of this in scripture. Cain killed Abel for being offended at his righteousness toward God. Esau looked to kill Jacob for obtaining his birthright and his blessing by deceiving their father. Joseph's brothers were so envious of him that they sold him into slavery and told his father he was killed by a wild animal.

Even in the New Testament, Paul and Barnabas, both of whom were men of God and successful missionaries, had sharp contentions about taking Mark on their second missionary journey. Paul did not like Mark deserting them on the first trip, and refused to have him tag along on the next one. Barnabas, Mark's uncle, was offended by Paul's rejection of his family. Two friend, two saints of God, who were once close companions doing the work of Christ together, now parted and went their separate ways.

The wisdom Solomon brings to us here is to avoid contention and offenses with brothers and sisters, including brothers and sisters in Christ. Since offenses of this type are difficult to recover from, they should be avoided in the first place if possible. If we offend a brother or sister, it is our duty to try and reconcile it as quickly as possible. If we have been offended, it is our duty to overlook the transgression if possible (just as Christ forgives us) or follow an orderly procedure to solve it.

How many people do you know of that are not in church today because they have been hurt in the past? Is there anything we can do to show the love of Christ to them, to help them get over the hurt of the past?

This is part of our mission as God's Church.

[v.20-v.21](#) – To completely understand this proverb, a few terms need to be defined as used here in v.20:

Belly – This is our heart, soul, spirit, and conscience.

Fruit of our mouth – This is words that are gracious, wise, and well-chosen.

Increase of his lips – The improvement we make to our speech by learning the rules of wisdom for our mouth, tongue, and lips.

The implication of the proverb is that if we improve our speech, we will be blessed in many ways by God, by others, and even by our own soul.

Our “belly” is fulfilled and satisfied when we speak well. How many times have we said to ourselves, “I sure wish I hadn’t said that”? When that happens, our conscience is hurt because we have hurt others, although unintentional. Learning the wise use of our speech and improving the way we use our words toward others helps to eliminate this source of pain in our lives, as well as others. The old saying of “If you cannot say something kind and helpful, say nothing at all” certainly applies here.

Our mouth was made for the glory of God, not for hurting and tearing down others. By proper use, it can accomplish this purpose. We can help others by kind and encouraging words.

Changing our way of speaking is not easy....but it can be done. Guard your speech. Cut words in half. Think before speaking. Work harder as listening.

In v.21, the proverb speaks about how our own speech will either promote or destroy us. Many lives have been ruined by speech that was not governed by God. Others have been praised and lifted up for their kind and gracious words.

This verse states that there is both life and death in the tongue. A false witness (something condemned by God throughout scripture and even in the Ten Commandments) can easily cause the death of an innocent person. Slander can kill the reputation of a good person. Conversely, a true witness can save the life of a person wrongly accused, and praise and encouragement can build up the life of others. Our tongue definitely affects the lives of others, but there is more than this lesson in this proverb.

The tongue also affects us personally. The death and life in the power of the tongue are the effects of our speech on ourselves. Notice the second clause of this proverb that states those loving the use of their tongue will either eat the fruit of life or death. Also, notice v.20 which states **“A man’s belly shall be satisfied with the fruit of his mouth, and with the increase of his lips shall he be filled.”**

Look at what Jesus said in Matthew:

Matthew 12:36-37 "But I say unto you, that every idle word that men speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."

Death and life are in the tongue...the choice is ours. Choose life.

v.22 – Imagine yourself as Adam in the Garden of Eden. You have a paradise to live in, you don't have to work for anything because all is provided, God walks and talks with you daily, there is no sickness, no pain, and no trouble.....everything is perfect.....almost.

There was something wrong here. Adam did not have a wife. Even in this perfect situation, Adam's situation was not perfect. He needed a companion. So God created Eve, a wife and companion for Adam.

Two are always better than one. They share the result of labor, help each other in difficult times, and share companionship.

As we've already discussed in Proverbs, Solomon warns his son about evil women. He realized that a bad wife was worse than being alone. This is coming from a man who had over 1,000 wives and in Ecclesiastes realized that most all of them had just caused him pain and heartache.

In Chapter 31, we'll see where Solomon speaks about a virtuous woman....a woman that was rare, so rare that only through God's blessings could such a woman be found.

Husbands, if you have a wife who loves the Lord and fulfills her role as a Godly and virtuous woman, you are blessed. Have you thanked the Lord for her? Does she know how thankful you are to have her as your wife?

v.23 – The poor learn quickly that they need to ask for what they need kindly, and even sometimes have to beg for what they need. Something, they have to swallow their pride and ask for help when they never intended to. However, the rich sometimes become arrogant and speak harshly against them.

Financial situations affect all of our lives. Many times, the rich are conceited, put their trust in their money, and live thinking the world moves

at their will. They think they are independent of God and others, so they speak harshly and roughly with those who have less than they do.

If we do this to the poor, we are not being Christ-like. In Jesus Christ, there is no difference between those who are rich and those who are slaves. "The ground is level at the foot of the cross."

No wonder Jesus said it was harder for a rich man to enter Heaven than for a camel to go through the eye of a needle.

Rather than harshness, our speech should be gracious to all people, rich as poor alike, as we've already reviewed.

Remember, it was the poor publican, not the rich Pharisee, who went to his home justified ([Luke 18:9-14](#)). We are all poor before God, and we beg for His mercy and grace. How thankful are we He responds to us when we come to Him with grace and mercy rather than roughness or harshness?

[v.24](#) – There are two simple lessons in this proverb. First, friends need to show friendliness. Second, great friends are sometimes even better than family. We also see a hint of Jesus Christ in this proverb.

To make or keep friends, a person has to be friendly. Friends love at all times. They give more than they take. They give good advice and counsel, not just saying what others want to hear. They are always gracious. They trust each other.

Friends do not give advice or counsel that is unwanted, they don't meddle in private issues, and they don't remember past faults.

Exceptional friends are rare. Great friends are better than family because they will stick closer to you than a brother. Brothers did not choose each other, while friends do.

A good example of friends in scripture was David and Jonathan. They were close to each other, with scripture saying that Jonathan loved David more than his own soul.

Saints of God should be the best of friends. The best friend we all have, our Lord Jesus Christ, laid down his very life for us.....even while we were sinners.

No better friend has anyone ever had.