

**Wise Up!**  
**A Study in the Book of Proverbs**  
**Message #21 – Dealing with Discord**  
**Proverbs 18 (2/4/2018 PM)**

❖ ***Self-conceit* is the mark of the fool (1).**

This is a difficult verse but it seems to speak to the conceited, self-willed individual. This is the person who will not take counsel from others. They object just for the sake of objecting. They rage against wise and sound decisions. They are completely confident in their own opinions and ideas. “A fool has no delight in understanding, but in expressing his own heart.” They have no interest in hearing another’s reasoning (2). The word “expressing” is a verb form used in the O.T. only to depict Noah’s nakedness in Genesis 9:21. Most see the source of the “contempt” (3) as coming from the wicked. They delight in throwing it upon the wise and especially the godly. The result is that contempt and disgrace comes back upon them.

➤ The fool is continually ***ensnared*** by his mouth (6).

The fool’s mouth leads him into strife and quarrels. He meddles with things that are not his business. In so doing he brings trouble upon himself (7). It literally says his “destroyer.” He is so self-absorbed he often doesn’t recognize the damage he is bringing upon himself and others. He will suffer the consequences of his misuse of his tongue. Matthew 12:36-37, “But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the Day of Judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.” Our words are the accurate gauge of our hearts. They are observable evidence. Ecclesiastes 10:12-14, “the lips of a fool shall swallow him up; the words of his mouth begin with foolishness, and the end of his talk is raving madness. A fool also multiplies words.”

▪ ***The fool is attracted to malicious gossip* (8).**

Gossip is described as a delicious morsel that is eagerly devoured. Once they leave the lips they drop into the heart of the speaker and the listener. They cause suspicion and distrust. Many Christians have been poisoned towards another believer because of a talebearer.

❖ **The words of the wise person bring blessing and *refreshment* (4).**

It is difficult for us to understand the importance of clean flowing water. Water was the difference between life and death. Entire communities were established based upon the availability of water. In an arid climate there was no greater comparison in describing helpful speech than a deep flowing source of pure water. There is no greater depository of wisdom than the Word of God, Psalm 119:97-99.

➤ The wise person knows the value of ***listening*** (13).

This is rude and insulting to the person who is speaking. Pride is generally the cause of this bad habit. This treats the other person as inferior. When we do this we should be ashamed of ourselves. Faith comes by hearing and so does knowledge (15). Jesus in His humanity learned the value of listening, Isaiah 50:4.

The importance of listening also carries over into legal matters which the princes would be ruling over (17). What the first person says at first may seem right until his neighbor presents his case. There are always two sides to the story. At times it was impossible to humanly decide the truth (18). In this way they sought the Lord’s decision.

▪ ***Unresolved discord can cause permanent damage* (19).**

The princes of Israel were to strive to not leave a dispute unresolved. The closer the tie the greater the alienation when a dispute cannot be settled. The estrangement like barred gates is hard to remove. A wounded brother will often close the doors to reconciliation. Even Christians will at times disobey the clear commandment of scripture, Colossians 3:13. Sometimes this is because of deep hurt (14). One’s spirit can sustain a person going through a physical issue. A wounded spirit is much harder to heal.

➤ The wise person knows the value of ***wholesome*** words (20).

The wise person knows that speech is not an end in and of itself. Israel was a land that viewed fruitfulness and productivity as reward. Wise, sensible, positive speech brings constructive results to a society, a family and a congregation. This verse (21) can be taken as positive or negative. Some who “love” the tongue are people who are just talkative. They will suffer from the ill effects of the wrong use of the tongue. Others know the power of the tongue and use it with great care, Ecclesiastes 10:12 and Colossians 4:6.

❖ **The wise person recognizes that their *security* is in the Lord (10).**

Yahweh’s name stands for Himself and all of His attributes. Wealth does bring a measure of protection (11). However it also gives the wealthy person the illusion of a greater security that it can provide, Jeremiah 9:23-24. Sometimes when a person feels most secure difficulty can strike (12). The wise person is the humble person.

➤ This chapter includes some diverse ***loosley*** related proverbs.

In the last chapter we saw that God hates injustice (5). We need to remember that the Proverbs use repetition to teach these principles. (9) He who is slothful in his work is a brother to him who is a great destroyer.” Some translate it as “great waster.” The lazy person and the wasteful person are related. (22) “He who finds a wife finds a good thing, and obtains favor from the LORD.” Marriage has the blessing of God. The word “find” implies rarity. It also speaks to making a careful search and therefore a wise selection. Ecclesiastes 7:26, “And I find more bitter than death the woman whose heart is snares and nets, whose hands are fetters. He who pleases God shall escape from her, but the sinner shall be trapped by her.” The last two verses appear to be observational proverbs. (23) “The poor man uses entreaties, but the rich answers roughly.” Poverty can bring feelings of helplessness while wealth can bring feelings of self-sufficiency. (24) “A man who has friends must himself be friendly, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.” There are friends and then there are good friends.

**Wisdom is the *key* to harmonious relationships.**