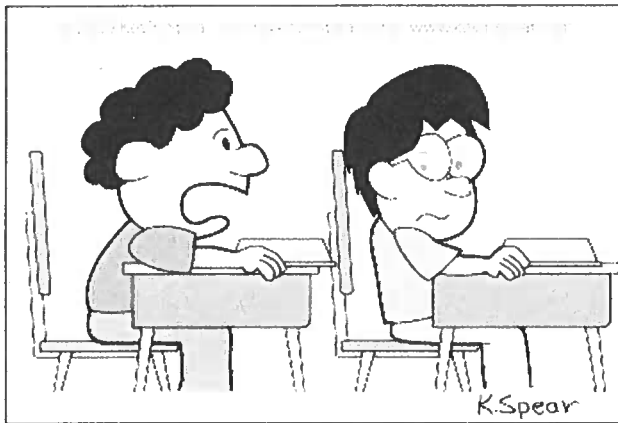
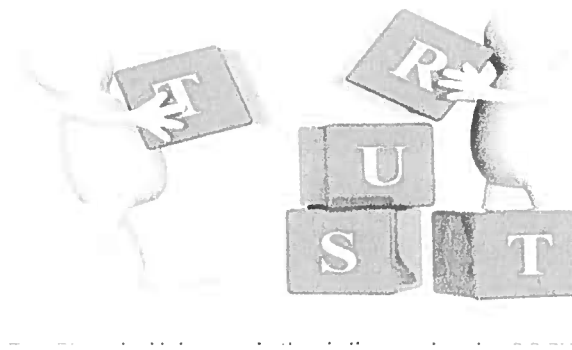




"We must be getting knowledge. It smells a lot like fear."



"I'd like a million dollars worth of wisdom, please.
Can you just bill me?"



Proverbs 18

Main Message: Proverbs 18 offers wisdom on relationships, words, and judgment, emphasizing that isolation is selfish, fools cause strife with careless talk, and wise speech brings life, with "deep waters" representing profound understanding.

Key Themes:

The importance of listening and seeking truth (not just the first story told), the power of speech (life and death), the value of true friendship, and that pride precedes a fall while humility leads to honor, contrasting wealth's false security with God's protective name.

- Community vs. Isolation: A person who isolates themselves seeks selfish desires and rejects wise counsel, while God intends for people to live in community, supporting each other.
- The Power of Words:
 1. Fools' words bring conflict and destruction, while the wise use words for healing and life.
 2. "The words of man's mouth are deep waters, but the fountain of wisdom is a rushing stream" (v. 4).
 3. "Death and Life are in the power of the tongue: (v. 21).
- Justice and Judgment:
 1. It's wrong to show favoritism in judgment, as the first person to speak often seems right until the other side is heard (v. 17),
 2. Prudence requires listening to all sides to find the full truth, rather than just repeating the first story.
- Friendship: A loyal friend is more valuable than many companions, and good friendship is a core part of wisdom.
- Pride and Humility: Pride leads to a haughty heart before destruction, while humility precedes honor.
- Divine Protection: The name of the Lord is a strong tower where the righteous find safety, unlike the rich who trust in their wealth as a fortress.

Constructive work is the law of human life and progress. There is an active principle of destruction operating in the history of man; and he who is a slacker at his work, who does not put into it all his strength, is a brother to the man who is wickedness sets himself to the activity of destruction.

"The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous run to it and are safe" (v. 10) and "To answer before listening—that is folly and shame" (v. 13), highlighting that wise speech brings deep understanding while fools invite strife and ruin. The chapter contrasts self-isolating desire with community, emphasizes seeking knowledge, and warns against partiality and arrogance, noting that a crushed spirit is hard to bear.

Key Verses

- **Wisdom and Folly:** Fools delight in their own opinions, not understanding (v. 2); wise words are like deep, flowing water (v.4).
- **Words and Communication:** A fool's words lead to strife (v.6) and are a snare (v.7); gossip is like tasty morsels that affect one deeply (v.8).
- **Justice and Righteousness:** It's wrong to favor the wicked or pervert justice for the righteous (v.5).
- **Strength and Safety:** God's name is a strong tower for the righteous (v.10).
- **Humility and Pride:** Pride precedes a fall, while humility comes before honor (v. 12).
- **Listening:** Answering a matter before hearing it is foolish and shameful (v.13).
- **Spirit and Resilience:** A person's spirit sustains them in sickness, but a crushed spirit is unbearable (v. 14).
- **Knowledge:** The discerning heart acquires knowledge; the wise seek it out (v. 15).

Popular Interpretation

Verse 1: Isolating oneself shows selfish desire and rejects wise counsel, emphasizing the need for community.

Verse 10: The Lord's name offers refuge and safety for those who are righteous.

Verse 13: Highlights the importance of listening to understand fully before speaking or judging.



The Three Powers of the Tongue

The "three powers of the tongue," primarily from a biblical perspective (James 3), refer to its power to direct, its power to destroy, and its power to bless/heal, often contrasted with its capacity for evil, with examples including the ability to control large things (like a ship's rudder), the destructive force of fire, and the contradictory use for praise and cursing. Some theological interpretations further categorize spiritual tongues as the personal (for self), prophetic (for the church), and proof (for unbelievers).

Core Biblical Powers (James 3)

1. **Power to Direct:** Like a bit in a horse's mouth or a small rudder on a ship, the tongue, though small, can steer a person's entire life in a positive or negative direction.
2. **Power to Destroy:** It can be a "world of evil," like a tiny spark setting a forest fire, corrupting the whole person and setting life ablaze with wickedness.
3. **Power to Bless and Curse (or Heal and Harm):** The tongue can speak praise and blessing to God, but also curses and deceit, demonstrating its capacity for both life and death.

Spiritual Interpretations (Gift of Tongues)

- **Personal Tongue:** For personal edification, a private prayer language understood only by God (1 Corinthians 14:2).
- **Prophetic Tongue:** For the church, requiring interpretation to build up the community (1 Corinthians 14:27).
- **Proof Tongue:** A sign to unbelievers, understood as an earthly language without needing interpretation (Acts 2:8).

Faith is a motif in the story of Elijah and the widow from beginning to end. Both ultimately cultivated deeper faith through experiencing God.

"Can you drink the cup I am going to drink?" He was asking His disciples if they could share in His coming suffering and judgment, symbolized by the "cup" of God's wrath for humanity's sins, which He would drink on the cross to save them, while the disciples misunderstood it as a cup of triumph, showing their failure to grasp His mission. It signifies enduring intense suffering, including physical death and spiritual agony, but for Jesus, it was the ultimate sacrifice, taking on divine wrath so believers wouldn't have to.

*motif - important element
distinctive feature or dominant idea
in a composition
idea repeatedly appears in work of art*