**Proverbs Chapter 18 (Lesson #19)**

**24** Additional Proverbs from the Pen of Solomon

As we have discussed, the book of Proverbs is broken into **Seven** different sections.

We finished **section I** chapters 1-9, months ago and we have started our journey in **SECTION II,** this is the largest section of the Proverbs and extends from **10:1** all the way to **22:16**. So it is a little longer than Section I.

**Proverbs 18** touches on a variety of themes, but one of its most prominent and recurring focuses is the power of listening and speaking. Throughout the chapter, Solomon offers rich insights into the value of wise speech and attentive listening. He not only highlights the benefits of speaking with wisdom but also emphasizes the importance of choosing the right words at the right time. Our words can bring great benefit—but only when shaped by the discipline of careful listening.

As you reflect on these proverbs, consider how you can strengthen your relationships by speaking thoughtfully and listening with intention.

Once Again, we are going to spend about a **minute** on each of these proverbs, **just scratching the surface**, for each is a **treasure chest** worthy of our **individual** **attention** and **meditation**.

***18:1 Whoever isolates himself seeks his own desire; he breaks out against all sound judgment.***

This verse speaks to the dangers of self-imposed isolation, especially when driven by selfish motives.

The person who separates themselves from community, counsel, or accountability does so to pursue their own desires—often at the expense of wisdom and discernment. The phrase "breaks out against all sound judgment" suggests a rebellious attitude, one that resists correction or shared wisdom.

Isolation here is not portrayed as solitude for reflection, but as a deliberate withdrawal to avoid the influence of truth or wise counsel.

Men this is a spiritual warning sign, this type of isolation can lead to poor decisions and spiritual vulnerability. It underscores the value of community, dialogue, and humility in seeking truth and making wise choices.

May we hear and learn this proverb well. Our spiritual well-being is found in community.

**CONSIDER** (Eph 4:2; Rom 12:10):

*“As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace:” (1Pe 4:10 ESV)*

***Vs 2 - A fool takes no pleasure in understanding, but only in expressing his opinion.***

This verse offers a sharp critique of those who prioritize speaking over listening and learning. It reveals a key trait of foolishness: the refusal to seek understanding.

Instead of engaging in thoughtful dialogue or pursuing wisdom, the fool is preoccupied with broadcasting their own views, often without regard for truth or context. This behavior not only stifles personal growth but also undermines meaningful relationships and community. The proverb encourages humility and a teachable spirit, reminding us that true wisdom begins with a desire to understand rather than a need to be heard.

**CONSIDER (Pr 17:16; Ps 1:1-2):**

*“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.” (Pr 1:7 ESV)*

**Vs 3 - When wickedness comes, contempt comes also, and with dishonor comes disgrace.**

Triple sisters we would do well to look out for and stay away from.

The first sister is wickedness. This is general wickedness, general sin against God.

When a person, even one who professes to know God becomes ensnared in sin, something else begins to happen. Solomon says contempt.

Likely what Solomon is saying with wickedness against God, a man’s heart is hardened in contempt (scorn and disapproval of others) which leads to dishonor and its associated disgrace.

This pictures sin blinding as it is binding. It pictures darkness spreading like cancer until one is left disgraced.

May Solomon’s words serve as a warning for us.

**CONSIDER** (Pr 29:16; IITim 2:22):

*“When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with the humble is wisdom.” (Pr 11:2 ESV)*

***Vs 4 - The words of a man’s mouth are deep waters; the fountain of wisdom is a bubbling brook.***

A wise man’s mouth is deep waters. It is filled with wisdom, filled with counsel, filled with life.

The wise man’s words are like living water, they are like an artesian spring, they are like a flowing brook.

Men, may our words be like this regardless of the situation, may we show up and our lips be filled with wisdom (deep wisdom), direction, and guidance, all from the Lord.

**CONSIDER** (Pr 10:21; Pr 15:4):

*“The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life, but the mouth of the wicked conceals violence.” (Pr 10:11 ESV)*

***Vs 5 - It is not good to be partial to the wicked or to deprive the righteous of justice.***

Here Solomon tells his sons and us by extension two things that are **“not good.”**

1. To be **partial** to the wicked, to **accept** the wicked, to **exalt** the wicked, to **regard in a positive sense** the wicked. It is not good to **lift up** the wicked. In context it seems Solomon is saying in rendering judgment.
2. Notice, it is equally, not good to deprive the righteous of justice. To come down on the **wrong side of the matter**, to **pervert justice**, to **overthrow justice**.

This lesson is crucial for all, including those who are in authority!

Justice must be dispensed honestly and fairly.

**CONSIDER** (Pr 17:17; Pr 28:21):

*“These also are sayings of the wise. Partiality in judging is not good.” (Pr 24:23 ESV)*

***Vs 6 - A fool’s lips walk into a fight, and his mouth invites a beating.***

This verse highlights the destructive power of careless or arrogant speech. It suggests that foolish individuals often speak without wisdom or restraint, provoking conflict and inviting consequences they could have avoided.

Their words stir up trouble, not just for others but for themselves, leading to strife and even physical retaliation. The proverb serves as a warning about the importance of self-control and discernment in communication—reminding us that words have weight, and those who speak recklessly may find themselves in situations of regret or harm.

**CONSIDER** (Pr 16:27; Pr 18:21):

“A fool’s mouth is his ruin, and his lips are a snare to his soul.” (Pr 18:7 ESV)

***Vs 7 - A fool’s mouth is his ruin, and his lips are a snare to his soul.***

A couplet with the prior proverb which deepens the warning from the previous one, emphasizing how a fool’s own words can lead to personal ruin.

It portrays speech not just as a source of external conflict, but as a trap that ensnares the speaker internally—affecting their character, reputation, and spiritual well-being. The imagery of a “snare” suggests entrapment, implying that foolish talk can entangle a person in consequences they didn’t foresee, ultimately leading to self-destruction. It’s a powerful reminder that wisdom in speech is not just about avoiding trouble with others, but about safeguarding one’s own soul.

**CONSIDER** (Pr 13:3; Ec 10:12):

*“An evil man is ensnared by the transgression of his lips, but the righteous escapes from trouble.” (Pr 12:13 ESV)*

***Vs 8 - The words of a whisperer are like delicious morsels; they go down into the inner parts of the body.***

**What a picture!** This verse vividly illustrates the seductive and penetrating nature of gossip. Just as delicious food is eagerly consumed and deeply enjoyed, gossip is often received with similar eagerness, sinking deep into the heart and mind of the listener.

It implies that gossip is not only tempting but also spiritually and emotionally invasive—it lodges itself within, shaping perceptions, attitudes, and relationships. The proverb warns that while gossip may seem harmless or entertaining, it has a profound and lasting impact, often sowing discord and corrupting the soul from within.

This proverb will be repeated in **26:22.**

**REMEMBER** (Jam 1:26):

*“Whoever slanders his neighbor secretly I will destroy. Whoever has a haughty look and an arrogant heart I will not endure.” (Ps 101:5 ESV)*

*“There are six things that the LORD hates, seven that are an abomination to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that make haste to run to evil, a false witness who breathes out lies, and one who sows discord among brothers.” (Pr 6:16-19 ESV)*

***Vs 9 - Whoever is slack in his work is a brother to him who destroys*.**

Idleness, laziness, slothfulness, in our modern culture, these things are barely viewed as sin, if at all. Yet hear Solomon, the one that is lazy is a brother (close relation) to the one who destroys.

We recognize the one who destroys as sinful, but **remember** (Pr 19:15; Pr 13:4):

*“But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.” (1Ti 5:8 ESV)*

***Vs 10 - The name of the LORD is a strong tower; the righteous man runs into it and is safe.***

This verse teaches a profound truth about the security and refuge found in God. The "name of the Lord" symbolizes His character, power, and faithfulness. Just as a strong tower in ancient times provided protection from enemies and danger, God's presence offers spiritual, emotional, and even physical safety to those who trust in Him.

The act of the righteous "running" to this tower suggests urgency, dependence, and faith—recognizing that true safety is not found in worldly strength or resources, but in God alone. It’s a reminder that in times of trouble, fear, or uncertainty, believers can find peace and protection by turning to the Lord.

It is not in our own strength or own righteous deeds that we should rely, but rather we should find our safety and preservation in Christ.

**REMEMBER** (Pr 61:3; Ps 91:2):

*“The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.” (Ps 18:2 ESV)*

***Vs 11 - A rich man’s wealth is his strong city, and like a high wall in his imagination.***

Here Solomon offers a profound reflection on the illusion of security that wealth can create.

Solomon compares a rich person's trust in their wealth to a fortified city and a high wall—symbols of protection and safety in ancient times. However, the key phrase is *"in his imagination."*

This reminds us that the security wealth provides is not absolute or guaranteed; it is perceived rather than real. The verse warns against placing ultimate trust in material riches, which can be fleeting and unreliable. Instead, it subtly points to the need for a deeper, more enduring foundation—such as wisdom, righteousness, and trust in God. The imagery challenges us to examine where we place our confidence and whether that foundation can truly withstand life's trials.

**REMEMBER** (Ps 49:6-7)**:**

*“Riches do not profit in the day of wrath, but righteousness delivers from death.” (Pr 11:4 ESV)*

***Vs 12 - Before destruction a man’s heart is haughty, but humility comes before honor.***

This verse draws a sharp contrast between pride and humility, highlighting their respective outcomes.

A haughty heart—one filled with arrogance and self-importance—often precedes downfall. Pride blinds individuals to their limitations, leading them to make reckless decisions or ignore wise counsel.

In contrast, humility is portrayed as the pathway to honor. When a person acknowledges their need for guidance, correction, or help, they position themselves to grow, learn, and be elevated.

This proverb serves as both a warning and an encouragement: it cautions against the dangers of pride while affirming the value and reward of a humble spirit. It echoes a recurring biblical theme that true greatness is found not in self-exaltation, but in a posture of humility before God and others.

**CONSIDER** (Pr 29:23):

*“When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with the humble is wisdom.” (Pr 11:2 ESV)*

*“Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.” (Pr 16:18 ESV)*

***Vs 13 - If one gives an answer before he hears, it is his folly and shame.***

This proverb highlights the importance of listening before speaking, emphasizing that premature responses often lead to embarrassment and disgrace.

It warns against the tendency to interrupt, assume, or speak hastily without fully understanding the situation or the other person's perspective. Such behavior is described not just as foolish, but shameful—suggesting that it reflects a lack of wisdom, humility, and respect.

The proverb encourages thoughtful communication, where listening is prioritized as a key component of wisdom. In a broader sense, it teaches that true discernment and effective counsel come from patience and attentiveness, not impulsiveness.

**REMEMBER** (Jn 7:24)**:**

*“The heart of the righteous ponders how to answer, but the mouth of the wicked pours out evil things.” (Pr 15:28 ESV)*

***Vs 14 - A man’s spirit will endure sickness, but a crushed spirit who can bear?***

Here Solomon draws a powerful distinction between physical and emotional suffering. It acknowledges that the human spirit—when strong and resilient—can sustain a person through physical illness. Inner strength, hope, and faith act as anchors during times of bodily weakness.

However, when the spirit itself is broken—when a person is overwhelmed by despair, grief, or hopelessness—the burden becomes far heavier and harder to bear. The proverb emphasizes the vital role of emotional and spiritual well-being in overall health and endurance.

It serves as a reminder to nurture and cultivate the inner life, for it is there we will find true joy and strength even in difficult times.

**REMEMBER** (Pr 42:11):

*“A joyful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones.” (Pr 17:22 ESV)*

***Vs 15 - An intelligent heart acquires knowledge, and the ear of the wise seeks knowledge*.**

This verse emphasizes the **active pursuit of wisdom** and understanding as marks of a truly discerning and truly wise person.

The "intelligent heart" refers to someone whose inner character is shaped by a desire to grow, learn, and apply God’s truth to their lives. Rather than being passive or content with surface-level understanding, this person *acquires* knowledge—suggesting intentional effort and discipline.

Similarly, the "ear of the wise" is attuned to instruction, always listening for insight and truth. Together, these images portray wisdom not as a **static trait**, but as a **dynamic pursuit**.

The proverb encourages us not to acquire wisdom, but to **pursue wisdom**, reminding us that wisdom begins with a teachable spirit and a willingness to listen and learn.

**REMEMBER** (Pr 4:7; Pr 15:14):

*“Let the wise hear and increase in learning, and the one who understands obtain guidance,” (Pr 1:5 ESV)*

***Vs 16 - A man’s gift makes room for him and brings him before the great*.**

Gifts are powerful and a gift given as a bribe is evil for it attempts to corrupt justice. I do not think that is what Solomon has in mind here. In this proverb, I believe Solomon is speaking positively of gifts both financial as well as one’s talents, skills, or offerings and how they can open doors and create opportunities. The “gift” can be understood both literally—as in a present or offering—and figuratively, as a person’s unique abilities or contributions.

When used wisely and with integrity, these gifts can pave the way for influence, recognition, and access to places or people of significance. It’s a reminder that excellence and generosity often lead to advancement, and that cultivating and sharing what one has been given can lead to divine favor and strategic positioning. This proverb encourages us to steward our gifts well, knowing they can be instruments of purpose and promotion.

**REMEMBER** (Pr 21:14; Gen 24:53):

*“A gift in secret averts anger, and a concealed bribe, strong wrath.” (Pr 21:14 ESV)*

***Vs 17 - The one who states his case first seems right, until the other comes and examines him.***

Solomon reminds his sons of a timelines truth into the nature of truth and justice. It warns against accepting initial claims at face value, reminding us that the first version of a story may appear convincing until it is challenged or scrutinized.

The proverb underscores the importance of hearing multiple perspectives before forming judgments, especially in matters of conflict or decision-making. It promotes discernment, patience, and fairness, encouraging us to seek full understanding rather than rushing to conclusions. In essence, it teaches that wisdom involves listening carefully and weighing all sides before determining what is truly right.

**CONSIDER:**

*“The simple believes everything, but the prudent gives thought to his steps.” (Pr 14:15 ESV)*

*“It is the glory of God to conceal things, but the glory of kings is to search things out.” (Pr 25:2 ESV)*

*“Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment."” (Joh 7:24 ESV)*

***Vs 18 - The lot puts an end to quarrels and decides between powerful contenders.***

This proverb reflects on the ancient practice of using lots—similar to drawing straws or rolling dice—as a way to impartially resolve conflicts. In situations where human judgment might be biased or where tensions run high, casting lots was seen as a way to leave the decision to divine providence, removing personal agendas from the outcome.

The mention of “powerful contenders” suggests that even among influential or strong-willed individuals, impartial resolution is necessary to maintain peace and fairness. The proverb teaches that sometimes, surrendering control and trusting in God can be the wisest path to justice and reconciliation.

**CONSIDER:**

*“The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD.” (Pr 16:33 ESV)*

***Vs 19 - A brother offended is more unyielding than a strong city, and quarreling is like the bars of a castle.***

This verse vividly illustrates the deep pain and difficulty of reconciling with someone close who has been hurt. When trust is broken between family or close friends, the emotional walls that go up can be stronger than physical defenses.

The imagery of a fortified city and barred gates conveys how hard it is to regain access to a wounded heart. It serves as a warning to tread carefully in relationships, especially with those closest to us, because offenses in such intimate bonds can lead to long-lasting estrangement.

This proverb encourages wisdom, humility, and care in how we treat others, reminding us that reconciliation may be far more difficult than we expect once damage is done.

**CONSIDER:**

*“Whoever is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city.” (Pr 16:32 ESV)*

*“I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” (Eph 4:1-3 ESV)*

***Vs 20 - From the fruit of a man’s mouth his stomach is satisfied; he is satisfied by the yield of his lips.***

This proverb teaches that our words have the power to nourish or deplete us, much like food satisfies physical hunger. The "fruit of the mouth" symbolizes the outcomes of what we say—whether good or bad—and how those words shape our inner life and relationships. When we speak with wisdom, kindness, and truth, we not only uplift others but also experience personal fulfillment and peace. Conversely, careless or harmful speech can lead to regret and emotional emptiness. This verse reminds us that our speech is not just communication, it's a reflection of our character and a source of either satisfaction or sorrow.

**CONSIDER:**

*“An evil man is ensnared by the transgression of his lips, but the righteous escapes from trouble.” (Pr 12:13 ESV)*

*“From the fruit of his mouth a man is satisfied with good, and the work of a man’s hand comes back to him.” (Pr 12:14 ESV)*

*“From the fruit of his mouth a man eats what is good, but the desire of the treacherous is for violence.” (Pr 13:2 ESV)*

***Vs 21 - Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruits.***

Here Solomon expounds a profound truth: our words carry the power to either give life or bring death. The tongue, though small, wields immense influence over emotions, relationships, and even destinies. This verse urges us to recognize that what we say can heal, encourage, and build—or wound, discourage, and destroy.

The phrase “those who love it will eat its fruit” suggests that people who are mindful of their speech will experience the consequences of their words, whether sweet or bitter. It’s a call to speak with intention, knowing that our language shapes the world around us and reflects the condition of our hearts.

**CONSIDER:**

*“The words of a man’s mouth are deep waters; the fountain of wisdom is a bubbling brook.” (Pr 18:4 ESV)*

*“The lips of the righteous feed many, but fools die for lack of sense.” (Pr 10:21 ESV)*

*“The mouth of the righteous brings forth wisdom, but the perverse tongue will be cut off.” (Pr 10:31 ESV)*

***Vs 22 - He who finds a wife finds a good thing and obtains favor from the LORD.***

Here Solomon shares the profound blessing of finding a loving and godly spouse. It says, “He who finds a wife finds a good thing and obtains favor from the Lord,” highlighting that marriage, when rooted in faith and mutual respect, is a divine gift.

This verse underscores the value of companionship and the spiritual enrichment that comes from a committed marital relationship. A virtuous partner not only brings joy and support but also reflects God's favor and design for human flourishing. It’s a reminder that love, when chosen wisely and nurtured faithfully, becomes a source of strength and grace in life.

**CONSIDER:**

*“Drink water from your own cistern, flowing water from your own well. Should your springs be scattered abroad, streams of water in the streets? Let them be for yourself alone, and not for strangers with you. Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice in the wife of your youth, a lovely deer, a graceful doe. Let her breasts fill you at all times with delight; be intoxicated always in her love.” (Pr 5:15-19 ESV)*

*“An excellent wife is the crown of her husband, but she who brings shame is like rottenness in his bones.” (Pr 12:4 ESV)*

*“House and wealth are inherited from fathers, but a prudent wife is from the LORD.” (Pr 19:14 ESV)*

***Vs 23 - The poor use entreaties, but the rich answer roughly.***

Proverbs 18:23 reveals a stark contrast in how people of different social standings communicate: “The poor use entreaties, but the rich answer roughly.”

This verse highlights the humility often found in those who lack material wealth—they tend to speak with gentleness and supplication, aware of their dependence on others. In contrast, the rich may respond with harshness or arrogance, emboldened by their resources and status. It’s not a blanket condemnation of wealth, but a reflection on how power can influence tone and empathy. The proverb invites us to examine our own speech and attitudes, urging compassion and humility regardless of our circumstances.

**CONSIDER:**

“Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.” (Eph 4:29 ESV)

“Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.” (Col 4:6 ESV)

“A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.” (Pr 15:1 ESV)

***Vs 24 - A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.***

This proverb is translated many different ways, I think the RSV gets to the heart of it:

**“There are friends who pretend to be friends, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.”**

Here at the close of chapter 18, Solomon offers a powerful reflection on the nature of relationships: “A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.”

This verse warns against superficial friendships—having many acquaintances doesn’t guarantee support in times of trouble. True friendship is marked by loyalty, depth, and unwavering presence, even more dependable than family ties. It encourages us to seek and be the kind of friend who remains steadfast through adversity.

Obviously the “friend who sticks closer than a brother” is a foreshadowing of Christ, the ultimate companion who will never leave us of forsake us.

**CONSIDER:**

*“A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.” (Pr 17:17 ESV)*

*“Oil and perfume make the heart glad, and the sweetness of a friend comes from his earnest counsel.” (Pr 27:9 ESV)*