

## TEXT — 18:1-12

1. He that separateth himself seeketh his own desire,  
And rageth against all sound wisdom.
2. A fool hath no delight in understanding,  
But only that his heart may reveal itself.
3. When the wicked cometh, there cometh also contempt,  
And with ignominy cometh reproach.
4. The words of a man's mouth are as deep waters;  
The wellspring of wisdom is as a flowing brook.
5. To respect the person of the wicked is not good,  
Not to turn aside the righteous in judgment.
6. A fool's lips enter into contention,  
And his lips are the snare of his soul.
7. A fool's mouth is his destruction,  
And his lips are the snare of his soul.
8. The words of a whisperer are as dainty morsels,  
And they go down into the innermost parts.
9. He also that is slack in his work  
Is brother to him that is a destroyer.
10. The name of Jehovah is a strong tower;  
The righteous runneth into it, and is safe.
11. The rich man's wealth is his strong city,  
And as a high wall in his own imagination.
12. Before destruction the heart of man is haughty;  
And before honor goeth humility.

## STUDY QUESTIONS OVER 18:1-12

1. What kind of person do you visualize in v. 1?
2. What kind of person do you visualize in v. 2?
3. What does "ignominy" mean (v. 3)?
4. How are words like "deep waters" (v. 4)?
5. What is the "wellspring of wisdom" (v. 4)?
6. What verse in Chapter 17 goes with v. 5?
7. Were these "stripes" public stripes (v. 6)?
8. Cite personal instances where you know people's mouths have cost them jobs, marriage, tranquility, etc. (v. 7).
9. Comment on "dainty morsels" (v. 8).
10. How is a slacker a brother to a destroyer (v. 9)?
11. Comment on "tower" as used in v. 10.
12. Does the rich man's "strong city" and "high wall" ever

fail him (v. 11)?

13. What other passages in Proverbs teach the same as v. 12?

#### PARAPHRASE OF 18:1-12

1. The selfish man quarrels against every sound principle of conduct by demanding his own way.
2. A rebel doesn't care about the facts. All he wants to do is yell.
3. Sin brings disgrace.
4. A wise man's words express deep streams of thought.
5. It is wrong for a judge to favor the wicked and condemn the innocent.
- 6,7. A fool gets into constant fights. His mouth is his undoing! His words endanger him.
8. What dainty morsels rumors are. They are eaten with great relish!
9. A lazy man is brother to the saboteur.
10. The Lord is a strong fortress. The godly run to Him and are safe.
11. The rich man thinks of his wealth as an impregnable defense, a high wall of safety. What a dreamer!
12. Pride ends in destruction; humility ends in honor.

#### COMMENTS ON 18:1-12

V. 1. Selfish and self-centered people isolate themselves from others. And a self-centered person is conceited to the point that he goes into a rage against the sound words and advice of others. This is true in the field of religion also: "Mark them that are causing the divisions and occasions of stumbling, contrary to the doctrine which ye learned: and turn away from them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Christ, but their own belly" (Rom. 16:17,18).

V. 2. A fool does not like to take in, to learn, but only to talk. Facts, figures, and business have no interest for the fool--only to talk, talk, talk, and he really has nothing to say that is worth listening to. How often the Bible represents the fool as contented without learning or improving himself!

V. 3. Another Hebrew parallelism, paralleling "wicked" and "ignominy" (no reputation) and paralleling "contempt" and "reproach". The wicked loses a good name and turns despiser of all that is good and of all who are good. "When the wicked

cometh," watch out! He injects into the association contempt and reproach. The rule is, those who deserve no honor themselves are sure to dishonor all others, and those who themselves are good are the last to suspicion others of evil.

V. 4. The verse is not talking about just any mouth but the mouth of "wisdom". A wise man's mouth is likened to a "deep", "flowing" spring. Such is a great blessing to all around him, and to such they turn for counsel and guidance.

V. 5. A "court" verse. Clarke: "We must not, in judicial cases, pay any attention to a man's riches, influence, friends, offices, etc. but judge the case according to its own merits." Many passages teach the same: Lev. 19:15; Deut. 1:17; 16:19; Prov. 24:23; 28:21. A nation's principles are either maintained or crucified by its judicial officials.

V. 6. A fool's lips show that he is a fool. He says the wrong thing or speaks at the wrong time, or he says what he does in the wrong place or to the wrong person. He is like a child who does not know these wise details of speech. Consequently, he gets himself into trouble with others, and his superiors correct him severely for it.

V. 7. This verse continues the topic of v. 6. Similar passages: Prov. 10:14; 12:13; 13:3; Eccl. 10:12. "Soul" means "life" here, showing the serious destruction that his speech is capable of bringing.

V. 8. This saying is carried twice in Proverbs (see 26:22 also), probably for a needed emphasis. A "whisperer" is one who goes behind people's backs in talking about them, saying things that are not in the best interests of the one being spoken about. The verse brings out the sad fact that people are willing to listen to such cowardly, wrong, ruinous talk (They are as "dainty morsels"). They are swallowed without question ("they go down into the innermost parts of the belly").

V. 9. The slacker (one who doesn't work) doesn't produce, and the destroyer destroys what has been produced. The results are the same: there is nothing to show for one's time and efforts. Therefore, they are said to be "brothers". Some who don't take care of what they have, or who are spendthrifts, sometimes look down upon and criticize the person who has no ambition and produces nothing. But this saying relates the two groups.

V. 10. Many passages teach that God is a refuge: sometimes a "tower," sometimes a "rock", sometimes covering "wings" (II Sam. 22:3; Psa. 18:2; 27:1; 61:3,4; 91:2ff; 144:2).

The ancients had their fortified cities with their walls, big gates, and towers. Sometimes the enemy was able to break through the gates and batter down the walls. That left a tower to get up into for their final safety. The Lord is able to take care of us when other helpers fail.

V. 11. The first statement is also in Prov. 10:15. In contrast to the righteous person's God, the rich man makes "wealth" that in which he trusts. This is forbidden in I Tim. 6:17: "Charge them that are rich in this present world, that they be not highminded, nor have their hope set on the uncertainty of riches, but on God." Don't overlook the connection of "high wall", "strong city," and "tower" in vs. 10,11.

V. 12. While the righteous of v. 10 find their "tower" (Jehovah) a place of safety, the rich man of v. 11 finds that his false-trust (His "wealth") did not save him from destruction. The first statement is similar to Prov. 16:18; the last to Prov. 15:33. The present verse actually brings these two contrasting statements found isolated in Proverbs and brings them together in one verse as a contrast, whose truths are witnessed numerous times in the Bible.

#### TEST QUESTIONS OVER 18:1-12

1. How does selfishness show up in v. 1?
2. According to v. 2 what is and what isn't a fool interested in?
3. When the wicked come, what else comes (v. 3)?
4. Find three words in v. 4 that are related in a natural world?
5. What is the setting of v. 5?
6. How does the fool's mouth prove to be his destruction (v. 7)?
7. Why will people play the role of the "whisperer" (v. 8)?
8. Who besides the "whisperer" is condemned in v. 8?
9. Prove that a slacker and a destroyer are "relatives" (v. 9).
10. Find three things in vs. 10,11 that are related in life.
11. Compare the "strong tower" of the righteous with the "strong city" of the rich (vs. 10,11).
12. What fact was brought out about the two statements in v. 12?

## TEXT — 18:13-24

13. He that giveth answer before he heareth,  
It is folly and shame unto him.
14. The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity;  
But a broken spirit who can bear?
15. The heart of the prudent getteth knowledge;  
And the ear of the wise seeketh knowledge.
16. A man's gift maketh room for him,  
And bringeth him before great men.
17. He that pleadeth his cause first seemeth just;  
But his neighbor cometh and searcheth him out.
18. The lot causeth contentions to cease,  
And parteth between the might.
19. A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong  
city;  
And such contentions are like the bars of a castle.
20. A man's belly shall be filled with the fruit of his mouth;  
With the increase of his lips shall he be satisfied.
21. Death and life are in the power of the tongue;  
And they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof.
22. Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing,  
And obtaineth favor of Jehovah.
23. The poor useth entreaties;  
But the rich answereth roughly.
24. He that maketh many friends doeth it to his own destruc-  
tion;  
But there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.

## STUDY QUESTIONS OVER 18:13-24

1. How is it "folly" to him (v. 13)?
2. How is it "shame" to him (v. 13)?
3. What would a doctor get out of v. 14?
4. Locate the parallels in v. 15.
5. Cite Bible examples of such "gifts" (v. 16).
6. What lesson should church leaders learn from the first  
statement (v. 17)?
7. Why did the lot end contentions (v. 18)?
8. What lesson should Christians gain from the first  
statement in v. 19?
9. Is the first statement in v. 20 true whether his words are  
good or bad?

10. Give examples of "death" and "life" resulting from the tongue (v. 21).
11. How have Catholics misapplied verse 22.
12. When do the poor use entreaties (v. 23)?
13. Why do the rich answer roughly (v. 23)?
14. When might the first statement of v. 24 prove to be true?
15. What friend of David's seemed to be closer to him than his brothers (v. 24)?

#### PARAPHRASE OF 18:13-24

13. What a shame--yes, how stupid!--to decide before knowing the facts!
14. A man's courage can sustain his broken body, but when courage dies, what hope is left?
15. The intelligent man is always open to new ideas. In fact, he looks for them.
16. A bribe does wonders: it will bring you before men of importance!
17. Any story sounds true until someone tells the other side and sets the record straight.
18. A coin toss ends arguments and settles disputes between powerful opponents.
19. It is harder to win back the friendship of an offended brother than to capture a fortified city. His anger shuts you out like iron bars.
20. Ability to give wise advice satisfied like a good meal!
21. Those who love to talk will suffer the consequences. Men have died for saying the wrong thing!
22. The man who finds a wife finds a good thing; she is a blessing to him from the Lord.
23. The poor man pleads and the rich man answers with insults.
24. Some people are friends in name only. Others are closer than brothers.

#### COMMENTS ON 18:13-24

V. 13. Pre-judging (judging before the facts are known) gives us our word "prejudice". Many misjudgments are made because of pre-judging: replacing investigation with rumor or making a judgment of a person on the sound of his or her name or where one is from (John 1:45,46), one's looks, or first impres-

sions. Nicodemus said, "Doth our law judge a man, except it first hear from himself and know what he doeth?" (John 7:51). Jesus said, "Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment" (John 7:24).

V. 14. One who maintains a cherry, hopeful, bright outlook will rebound from his sickness sooner, but one who has a dark, pessimistic outlook does not recover so well. In fact, when one loses the will to live, he often dies. Pulpit Commentary: "The influence of the mind over the body, in a general sense, is here expressed."

V. 15. The heart of the prudent desires knowledge, and it uses the ear as a means of acquisition. Or said again, the ear seeks knowledge, and the heart lays it up. It is too bad that we have many people who have no thirst for useful knowledge.

V. 16. "Pulpit Commentary": "The Oriental custom of offering suitable gifts to one in authority, when a favor or an audience is desired, is here alluded to (I Sam. 10:27; I Kings 4:21; 10:25)." See also Gen. 32:20; I Sam. 25:27. It is also true today that people's gifts have opened doors to them in various realms.

V. 17. Leaders, be careful! The first person to come to you with his side of a story may not be true. See this even in children: "Johnny hit me;" and while he is speaking, in comes another child of the group and says, "And what did you do to Johnny first? You kicked him!" An old maxim is so true: "One story is good till the other is told."

V. 18. The ancients sometimes resorted to this to settle important contentions. Moderns in our land sometimes draw straws and other means to settle minor matters. Pulpit Commentary: "If it were not for the decision by lot, persons... would settle their differences by violent means." The apostle used this method in determining who was to succeed Judas (Acts 1:26). There is no doubt but what God directed the pagans' lot to fall upon Jonah (Jon. 1:7). See comment on Prov. 16:33.

V. 19. When love is lost, bitterness sets in, and the bitterness is as strong and as intense as the love had previously been. "Pulpit Commentary": "Bitter are the quarrels of friends"; and, "Those who love beyond measure also hate beyond measure." "Clarke": "When brothers fall out, it is with extreme difficulty that they can be reconciled." The verse shows an offended brother is hard to be won, but it does not say it is impossible. Paul and Barnabas had a serious break (Acts

15:36-40), but there is evidence that such was not permanent. Paul refused to take Mark (Acts 15:37,38), which no doubt was an offence to Mark, but later Paul wrote, "Take Mark, and bring him with thee; for he is useful to me for ministering" (II Tim. 4:11). Jacob and Esau had a notable falling out (Gen. 27:41-45), but later there was a reconciliation (Gen 33:8-12). This verse gives a strong reason for being careful of what we say and do that may needlessly offend others. Jas. 1:19 says, "Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath."

V. 20. This verse likens what a man says to the food he eats. If what he says is good, it is like eating good food: there is no bad after-effect. The verse is speaking of good speech. Prov. 12:14 and 13:2 contain similar statements.

V. 21. The tongue can edify (build up), or it can destroy the heart or the reputation of another. By our words we can bring either the best or the worst out of a person. As Jas. 3:9 says, "Therewith bless we the Lord and Father; and therewith curse we man." The last statement of our verse speaks of good speech and the pleasant results it brings.

V. 22. Marriage is God's plan for the human race (Matt. 19:4-6). His displeasure is against the growing trend in society to by-pass marriage by illicitly living together. A common-law situation is not equal to marriage in God's sight (John 4:16-18). Other passages that show the divine plan includes marriage: Prov. 19:14; 31:10; Heb. 13:4. There are at least two abuses of this verse: (1) Jokers quote this in levity as if to prove that a wife is a "thing"; (2) Catholics have used it as a proof-text that marriage is a sacrament because of the words "obtaineth favor of Jehovah". What the verse really means is that when one marries, he is entering into something good and is carrying out God's will for the human race in that regard. If somebody argues back that many marriages are anything but pleasant and good, it is not God's fault but the people who have made their marriages that way. If they would follow God's instructions for marriage (Eph. 5:22-33), they would find that it is good.

V. 23. The poor man who is behind on his loan payments begs for mercy and consideration, and the rich man who loaned him the money and is afraid he is going to lose that money talks roughly to him. The same is true of the delinquent renter and his landlord. The poor man uses entreaties because he knows he is at a disadvantage and is at the mercy of the rich man, and the rich man answers roughly because he can, because he is afraid he is

going to lose some money, and sometimes so that he can take undue advantage of the situation.

V. 24. In what sense is the first statement true? In the many friends that people make, often there is one or a small handful of them that he would have been better off not to have known: the one or the group that turned against him and ruined him. In the long run they proved not to be true friends and are to be contrasted to the true friend who "sticketh closer than a brother", such as Jonathan was to David. Jonathan was closer to David (I Sam. 18:1-4; 19:1-7; 20:17,41,42; 23:15-18) than his own brothers were (I Sam. 17:28).

#### TEST QUESTIONS OVER CHAPTER 18:13-24

1. What does our word "prejudice" mean (v. 13)?
2. Give examples of people who pass judgment before they have the facts (v. 13).
3. What is one of the best things for helping a sick person get better?
4. What usually happens when a person gives up and loses his will to live (v. 14)?
5. According to v. 15 what two parts of a person are involved in his getting knowledge?
6. Cite examples verifying the truth of v. 16.
7. Where trouble brews, who is often first to tell his side of it (v. 17)?
8. When have people resorted to using the lot to settle their differences (v. 18)?
9. What happens when love between people dies (v. 19)?
10. Comment upon v. 20.
11. What are two uses of the tongue (v. 21)?
12. How important can what we say prove to be (v. 21)?
13. What is the meaning of v. 22?
14. Cite an example of a poor man using entreaties and a rich man answering roughly (v. 23).
15. Why does a poor man use entreaties (v. 23)?
16. Why does a rich man answer roughly (v. 23)?
17. What may come out of some of the friendships that a man makes (v. 24)?
18. What friend in the Bible was closer than the man's own brothers (v. 24)?

## PONDERING THE PROVERBS

### NOTICEABLE GROUPINGS IN CHAPTER 18

#### *“Speech”--*

- “The words of a man’s mouth are as deep waters” (v. 4).  
“A fool’s lips enter into contention, And his mouth calleth for stripes” (v. 6).  
“A fool’s mouth is his destruction, And his lips are the snare of his soul” (v. 7).  
“The words of a whisperer are as dainty morsels, And they go down into the innermost parts” (v. 8).  
“He that giveth answer before he heareth, It is folly and shame unto him” (v. 13).  
“A man’s belly shall be filled with the fruit of his mouth; With the increase of his lips shall he be satisfied” (v. 20).  
“Death and life are in the power of the tongue” (v. 21).  
“The poor useth entreaties; But the rich answereth roughly” (v. 23).

#### *“Fools”--*

- “A fool hath no delight in understanding, But only that his heart may reveal itself” (v. 2).  
“A fool’s lips enter into contention, And his mouth calleth for stripes” (v. 6).  
“A fool’s mouth is his destruction, And his lips are the snare of his soul” (v. 7).  
“He that giveth answer before he heareth, It is folly and shame unto him” (v. 13).

#### *“Rich”--*

- “The rich man’s wealth is his strong city, And as a high wall in his own imagination” (v. 11).  
“The rich answereth roughly” (v. 23).

#### *“Wicked”--*

- “When the wicked cometh, there cometh also contempt” (v. 3).  
“To respect the person of the wicked is not good” (v. 5).

#### *“Wisdom”--*

- “The wellspring of wisdom is as a flowing brook” (v. 4).  
“The heart of the prudent getteth knowledge; And the ear of the wise seeketh knowledge” (v. 15).

## CHAPTER 18

### *"Righteous"*--

"Not good...to turn aside the righteous in judgment" (v. 5).

"The righteous runneth into it, and is safe" (v. 10).

### *"Destruction"*--

"The fool's mouth is his destruction" (v. 7).

"Before destruction the heart of man is haughty" (v. 12).

"He that maketh many friends doeth it to his own destruction" (v. 24).

## THE BLESSINGS OF WISDOM

We should appreciate the splendid words concerning the desirableness of wisdom in 4:5-13: "Get wisdom, get understanding; forget it not; neither decline from the words of my mouth. Forsake her not, and she shall preserve thee: love her, and she shall keep thee. Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom; and with all thy getting get understanding. Exalt her, and she shall promote thee: she shall bring thee to honour, when thou dost embrace her. She shall give to thine head an ornament of grace: a crown of glory shall she deliver to thee. Hear, O my son, and receive my sayings; and the years of thy life shall be many. I have taught thee in the way of wisdom; I have led thee in right paths. When thou goest, thy steps shall not be straitened; and when thou runnest, thou shalt not stumble. Take fast hold of instruction; let her not go; keep her; for she is thy life."

2:10-17 is another fine passage showing the usefulness of wisdom: "When wisdom entereth into thine heart, and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul; discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee: to deliver thee from the way of the evil man, from the man that speaketh froward things; who leave the paths of uprightness, to walk in the ways of darkness; who rejoice to do evil, and delight in the frowardness of the wicked; whose ways are crooked, and they froward in their paths: to deliver thee from the strange woman, even from the stranger which flattereth with her words." Nothing like wisdom can preserve a person from crooked men and wicked women.

## PONDERING THE PROVERBS

Consider other smaller passages on the subject of wisdom:

12:8: "A man shall be commended according to his wisdom." Other things being as they should be, a man of wisdom is a well respected man. His advice is often sought, His word carries weight. His very person embodies a dignity.

13:20: "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed." This passage shows the importance of proper association. Choosing fools as one's companions does not lead to great things in one's life, but walking with wise men does.

19:2: "That the soul be without knowledge, it is not good." Here is a real appeal to be an informed soul, to know the things we should, to appreciate the privileges of learning and to take advantage of them.

19:27: "Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge." There is false knowledge that leads astray. In this passage, the father warns the son about receiving false instruction and counsel.

24:3-5: "Through wisdom is an house builded; and by understanding it is established: and by knowledge shall the chambers be filled with all precious and pleasant riches. A wise man is strong; yea, a man of knowledge increaseth strength." Yes, wisdom is strength, and knowledge leads to many victories.