



## Proverbs chapter 18:1-19:29

Taught at our Sunday evening service, 31st October 2021 @ Deal Christian Fellowship

**Reading:** James 3:1-12

**Good evening. Let's pray.**

### Introduction

We are in the book of Proverbs, and in the second section of the book where we are reading Proverbs that were written and set in order by King Solomon himself.

As I've shared before, some view the whole book as almost documenting as an example, the progression through life of a young man starting out, gathering wisdom, applying it through the years and then reflecting on his success and failure in doing that. And if viewing it in that way, then he is currently progressing through school. And like school, the topics are repeated year on year so that he may come to learn them, and increase in understanding.

And whether you find that way of looking at this book helpful or not, I'm sure you see the repetition of topics here, and are becoming familiar with what the book says. And importantly I hope that you're both learning it, and applying it too.

## Themes in chapter eighteen

The predominant theme we'll see in chapter 18 is that of our words:

- Our words (v2, 4, 6-8, 13, 21, 23-24)
- Rashness (v13, 17 and 19:2)

And also of rashness, which will carry on into the second verse of chapter 19.

## Themes in chapter nineteen

Also continuing in this chapter is the theme of our words, with some other topics touched on more than once:

- Our words (v1, 5, 7, 9, 13, 28)
- Friendship (v4, 6)
- Wives (v13-14)
- Laziness (v24, 27)

## Chapter eighteen

So jumping into chapter 18, in verse 1 we read:

### **Proverbs 18:1**

A man who isolates himself seeks his own desire;

He rages against all wise judgment.

This, of course, is not talking about isolating for health reasons! Rather, the one who isolates himself from the company and counsel of others is unwise. Why? Because we each need wisdom + counsel + correction. And we need to get that from both the Word, and through others that love the Word.

There are some who believe they don't need to go to church to be a Christian, so don't. And while indeed going to church doesn't make you a Christian, staying away makes you a fool.

So make attending church meetings a priority that the rest of your calendar fits around, and be willing to let others correct, instruct and, if necessary, rebuke you.

Connected with this we read...

### **Proverbs 18:2**

A fool has no delight in understanding,

But in expressing his own heart.

Sometimes the one who knows the least, says the most. And whether in church meetings or at work, it's possible to come across others that try to dominate the meeting with their own opinion, not pausing to consider others may have something valuable to say. But if we are to be wise, we'll listen to others. And I'm thankful that we don't see folks try and dominate meetings here.

However, we're also at risk in our personal lives - in those moments where we rely more on what our hearts and feelings are saying, rather than knowledge and understanding.

Jon Courson comments:

My faith must be based upon the facts of what God's Word says, not upon how I feel on any given day. For example, God's Word says He will never leave me nor forsake me (Hebrews 13:5). If I keep my focus on that fact, I'll do fine. But if I start to say, "I don't think God is with me today because I don't feel His presence," I'll stumble and fall.

**Jon Courson**

We need understanding. We need counsel. We need God's Word in our lives.

**Proverbs 18:3**

When the wicked comes, contempt comes also;  
And with dishonour comes reproach.

That is, we reap what we sow. But beware, what you sow doesn't always burst forth into plain view - but it starts below the surface, and even once visible to others, may only be fraction of what it will yet be if left unchecked. Small seeds can result in large trees.

**Proverbs 18:4**

The words of a man's mouth are deep waters;  
The wellspring of wisdom is a flowing brook.

A couple of commentaries I have read on this verse look at the words the man speaks in the first half of this verse being a positive thing in the sense of deep thoughts, but considering the context of the verses surrounding, I don't believe that is the case - that rather when left to our own devices our words are really like dangerously deep shark infested waters, but when we apply wisdom, they become like the flowing brook - safe to consume, refreshing, peaceful.

**Proverbs 18:5**

It is not good to show partiality to the wicked,  
Or to overthrow the righteous in judgment.

We should not allow the riches or position of the wicked to influence our decisions. That is we should not promote the wicked in any regard, while suppressing righteousness and justice.

**Proverbs 18:6-7**

A fool's lips enter into contention,  
And his mouth calls for blows.  
A fool's mouth is his destruction,  
And his lips are the snare of his soul.

Returning to the topic of our words, Solomon warns how the fool is always starting arguments, always causing offence, and that it does him no good. Indeed he trips over and gets caught up in his own words. May our words not do this to us!

Yet, we should be equally if not more watchful of our words because of the effect they can have on others. We read:

**Proverbs 18:8**

The words of a talebearer are like tasty trifles,  
And they go down into the inmost body.

How true this is - that others words can make you feel sick to the stomach. Whether said out loud, or on an email, text, or social media post. It's a horrible feeling. It's been well said that a tongue three inches long can destroy a man six feet tall.

So be careful with your words. Be kind, considerate, and God honouring in all you say, and all that you type. Where there is temptation to gossip, don't. Where gossip is told to you, stop it there in it's tracks. Don't repeat it.

**Proverbs 18:9**

He who is slothful in his work  
Is a brother to him who is a great destroyer.

That is, if you let your work go to ruin, you're in company with those who would intentionally destroy it. So don't be lazy. Put effort into what you do - whether in your home, in ministry, or in your workplace. I love Jon Courson's comment on this:

If you feel like you're going in circles, it could be because you're cutting corners. If you're cutting corners, not diligently performing the task before you, you can feel like your day is a waste. Whatever you do, do all to the glory of God, for even the most seemingly trivial tasks become meaningful if they're done for His glory (1 Corinthians 10:31).

**Jon Courson**

"That's not me" - we might think. But consider this next verse...

**Proverbs 18:10**

The name of the LORD is a strong tower;  
The righteous run to it and are safe.

Oh, there's much we could dig into here. Especially with the likelihood of the tower at Migdal Ader being the location of Jesus' birth.

But what is most closely associated with the name of the Lord? It's prayer. Praying in Jesus' name.

So consider that in light of the previous verse - are we lazy to pray?

We want security. We want safety. But how much time do we really spend in prayer? Praying in Jesus' name is an incredible privilege, and it is a place of utter safety - not only is He powerful enough to grant what we ask, but kind enough to sometimes say no.

But furthermore, isn't at least part of the work that Jesus has given us all to do, to pray?

In contrast...

**Proverbs 18:11**

The rich man's wealth is his strong city,  
And like a high wall in his own esteem.

Wealth might seem like a castle, but it's one built on sand. Even a casual glance at history will help you see that - from recessions to redundancies, to collapses of businesses to stock markets. We need to put our trust not in riches, but in Jesus.

One problem, however, is that financial gain, power, control, and possessions, appeal to our sense of pride. We read...

**Proverbs 18:12**

Before destruction the heart of a man is haughty,  
And before honour is humility.

We saw this last week in the example of King Nebuchadnezzar. One minute boasting how great he was, and the next eating grass like an animal.

And we see this contrast between David and Goliath in 1 Samuel 17...

Goliath stands there in full confidence of his own abilities and taunts the army of Israel. Yet David, when questioned by Saul of his abilities says "The LORD, who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, He will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine."

So our confidence needs to be in the Lord. And one of the greatest evidences of this is prayer. For in prayer, we rely on God rather than ourselves. Maybe that's why we don't do it as much as we should, because we're far too self-assured and self-dependant!

**Proverbs 18:13**

He who answers a matter before he hears it,  
It is folly and shame to him.

We can be the fool described in verse 2, when we don't take the time to hear something out. But rather we should listen to what others are saying, and why they are saying it, before we try to respond. And remember that there is always something that you don't know about every situation.

**Proverbs 18:14**

The spirit of a man will sustain him in sickness,  
But who can bear a broken spirit?

That is, it's easier to fix broken bodies & bones than a broken spirit. But given that our bodies are guaranteed to fail us, where will you find your happiness? For if it is in your health, and even in the things it allows you to do, then you're headed for trouble. But if your happiness comes from your walk with the Lord, then you will indeed be able to say that the joy of the Lord is your strength.

A phrase I read this week said "Joy is the flag that is flown in the heart when the Master is in residence." - I like that.

**Proverbs 18:15**

The heart of the prudent acquires knowledge,  
And the ear of the wise seeks knowledge.

We've heard so many times now of the need for wisdom, for knowledge, for understanding - but what are you doing about it? Don't wait until you need it - but be prudent, seeing that you'll need it sooner or later. And be prepared in case it is sooner!

**Proverbs 18:16**

A man's gift makes room for him,  
And brings him before great men.

Even today in various cultures or situations, it is still the done thing to arrive with a gift. Whether that be leaders of countries meeting for the first time, or turning up at a birthday party with a present.

But consider how you can use this practically for spiritual purposes - for buying someone a coffee or lunch can open doors - as can the gift of a kind or encouraging word. In particular, it can open up doors to share the gospel.

**Proverbs 18:17**

The first one to plead his cause seems right,  
Until his neighbour comes and examines him.

V13 warned us not to answer a matter before we hear it. This is why!

In any dispute, you need to hear both sides. Whether that be with your employees, your friends, or your children. Don't assume the first child that speaks is the one telling the truth!

We don't need to have an immediate opinion on everything. We need to be wise.

**Proverbs 18:18**

Casting lots causes contentions to cease,  
And keeps the mighty apart.

On the one hand this proverb is quite the indictment on us, that we can be in situations where we are more likely to listen to random chance than to people!

But on the other hand, this is valuable instruction. How, you might ask!? Because it implies that sometimes decisions just need to be made. Napoleon said:

Nothing is more difficult, and therefore more precious, than to be able to decide.

**Napoleon Bonaparte**

While I don't think it's right to say it is the most precious thing, it certainly is an important thing to be able to do. And especially in the case of small matters that are often down to preference, not doctrine, or right or wrong, we would do well to drop our tempers, abandon our egos, and be open enough to decide on something, even if it's not what we prefer. Being able to say "Let's try it", or "Let's go with your suggestion" are phrases we should be more comfortable with than we are.

We read...

**Proverbs 18:19**

A brother offended is harder to win than a strong city,  
And contentions are like the bars of a castle.

This is why we shouldn't start arguments! And I think we should be especially careful not to argue with or cause offence to our Christian brothers and sisters.

Divisions are sometimes entirely necessary - especially where we distance ourselves from those who don't hold fast to the Bible. Yet, even in those situations we should show love. We should do all we can to not cause offence or strife.

Sadly, there are too many discernment ministries, that seek to point out error in the Bible teaching of certain groups or individuals, yet do so in a way that is unloving, un-Biblical, and ironically, lacking in discernment. Yes, we should be wise to spot compromise, but we can't let that cause us to compromise in love.

**Proverbs 18:20-21**

A man's stomach shall be satisfied from the fruit of his mouth;  
From the produce of his lips he shall be filled.  
Death and life are in the power of the tongue,  
And those who love it will eat its fruit.

When you speak as you ought to speak, you can indeed be satisfied in it. But when you speak as you ought not to speak, you'll reap what you sow.

James warns us:

**James 3:3-5**

Indeed, we put bits in horses' mouths that they may obey us, and we turn their whole body. Look also at ships: although they are so large and are driven by fierce winds, they are turned by a very small rudder wherever the pilot desires. Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles!

Be careful with your words. Next, Solomon writes:

**Proverbs 18:22**

He who finds a wife finds a good thing,  
And obtains favour from the LORD.

Proverbs work on the basis of things being as they should be. This is a good example of that - for a wife is a good thing if she is the kind of wife that she ought to be. A wife that is, is truly a blessing from the Lord!

But also, let's note here that here marriage is specifically noted as a good thing. That's in contrast to the one thing in creation that God declared as not good - that man was alone. Marriage is not compulsory, but it is to be honoured as instituted by God, and *never* to be forbidden.

Should you be single, and desire to marry, know that you are desiring a good thing, and that it is very much OK to pray for that.

**Proverbs 18:23**

The poor man uses entreaties,  
But the rich answers roughly.

That is, the poor man makes earnest and humble requests knowing he cannot offer anything. But the rich man, sees the poor man cannot offer him anything, and treats him shamefully.

Is this true of everyone who has money? No, but it's true of those who money has.

**Proverbs 18:24**

A man who has friends must himself be friendly,  
But there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.

Let's get serious. When was the last time you spoke meaningfully to everyone here? Pause for a moment. Look around. When was the last time that you spoke to each person here with anything more than small talk? Do not expect others to come to you or to start those deeper conversations. If you fail to talk to others, you'll find yourself missing out - whether you realise it or not.

"Oh, but I'm not confident!" That's irrelevant. I was the shy kid at school. I never wanted to put my hand up in class. I never wanted to stand at the front. And many of those feelings still surface often - but I know this verse to be true. If I want friends, I can't avoid conversations - in fact, I will often have to start them! Maturity in this means you can go and start a conversation with the person you feel like talking to the least. Including after our Sunday services.



Of course, there are some that genuinely have difficulty in social settings, and I have sympathy toward them. But if we're honest, the difficulty most of us have is that we lack effort, compassion or willingness to talk to others, and we wrongly assume it is easy for everyone else.

In the second half of this verse we see our example, for the friend that sticks closer than a brother is Jesus. Our Lord, our Saviour, our Friend. And He is our example, in that He can meet with us, talk with us, and be friends with sinners like us. He is an example not merely to be admired, but followed.

## Chapter nineteen

As we move into chapter 19, we see Solomon continue to address our conduct and our attitude toward others. We read:

### **Proverbs 19:1**

Better is the poor who walks in his integrity  
Than one who is perverse in his lips, and is a fool.

Remember what CS Lewis wrote? He said:

Integrity is doing the right thing even when no one is watching.

**CS Lewis**

Though of course, God is always watching.

When you have integrity like that, then others can safely trust you. And Solomon says it is better to be like this and poor, than rich and foolish. It doesn't mean poor is best. But integrity is worth more than the riches of this world can provide.

### **Proverbs 19:2**

Also it is not good for a soul to be without knowledge,  
And he sins who hastens with his feet.

In 18:13 we see the problem of responding rashly with words. Here we are warned of responding rashly with our actions. Whether like Peter chopping the ear off the high priest's servant, or Darius signing the decree that would condemn Daniel to the lions den, we too can act foolishly when we act quickly. What is our defence? To have knowledge already. To be prudent, and gain wisdom and knowledge in advance. You can't pop to the shop to get them when you need either in a hurry. You need to be investing in them now.

### **Proverbs 19:3**

The foolishness of a man twists his way,  
And his heart frets against the LORD.

The fool perverts his own ways, yet when things go wrong he blames God.

**Proverbs 19:4**

Wealth makes many friends,  
But the poor is separated from his friend.

This verse, plus 6 & 7, show how easily swayed we are by money, gifts, favours, power and position. And if it is evident we have money or contacts or means, people will like us too!

In light of this I couldn't help but think of the wise suggestion to treat people well on the way up, as you may need them on the way down. Of course, people are more including to be your friend when all is well, rather than when all is lost. That's a sad reality, but one we shouldn't reinforce with our own level of friendliness to others.

**Proverbs 19:5**

A false witness will not go unpunished,  
And he who speaks lies will not escape.

Justice will come - God is too good to not ensure that.

But do we pull people up when they lie? Do we hold colleagues, or indeed our children to account? It's all too easy to avoid having those conversations. Fortunately, in the end, it will be God who judges. And He'll do so righteously.

**Proverbs 19:6-7**

Many entreat the favour of the nobility,  
And every man is a friend to one who gives gifts.  
All the brothers of the poor hate him;  
How much more do his friends go far from him!  
He may pursue them with words, yet they abandon him.

Back to the influence of power and gifts, be careful WHY people like you. It may be that you have a wonderful personality or a great sense of humour. But it may also be that you're the one who is known for buying drinks, for having a large bank account, for being willing to give lifts, or being generous in other ways. People are typically friendly when it is to their advantage.

Yet again, Jon Courson makes an excellent comment on this particular proverb:

Both biblically and innately we know we are to love people and use things. But practically, too often we do just the opposite. People have a tendency to hang around those who can advance their career or enhance their social standing. But not Jesus. On the contrary, He said we should give to those who can't return the favor (Luke 14:13, 14).

It has been said that you can judge a man's character by how he treats those who can do nothing for him. That's why Jesus is so remarkable. He chose to hang out with those who, in the world's eyes, were unimportant and forgotten.

**Jon Courson**

We should consider how good we really are as friends, and how well we choose friends.

**Proverbs 19:8**

He who gets wisdom loves his own soul;  
He who keeps understanding will find good.

Want some me time? Want to take care of #1? A coffee, a spa, a walk or a take out won't do your soul good like this. Seek wisdom. As we head this morning, read your Bible!

**Proverbs 19:9**

A false witness will not go unpunished,  
And he who speaks lies shall perish.

Much a repeat of verse 5, here we see that the liar will not only fail to escape, but that they will perish.

**Proverbs 19:10**

Luxury is not fitting for a fool,  
Much less for a servant to rule over princes.

Again, proverbs should be read in the light of everything else being as it should be. That is, it's not fitting for a servant to rule over a good prince.

**Proverbs 19:11**

The discretion of a man makes him slow to anger,  
And his glory is to overlook a transgression.

Solomon has warned on the rashness of our words, and our actions - but now our thoughts. And that makes sense as our words and actions flow from what we think.

And this proverb implies that there is choice. That you CAN control your temper. Learn what helps and what doesn't. Early nights, starting the day with prayer and the Word etc. Learn how to prolong your patience, not your anger - especially toward other people. And start that by remembering that Jesus died for them too.

**Proverbs 19:12**

The king's wrath is like the roaring of a lion,  
But his favour is like dew on the grass.

How much more so with our King? Both His power and His favour are unsurpassed.

**Proverbs 19:13-14**

A foolish son is the ruin of his father,  
And the contentions of a wife are a continual dripping.  
Houses and riches are an inheritance from fathers,  
But a prudent wife is from the LORD.

Two comparisons are made here. First, a foolish son causes so much strife that there is no inheritance left, but where the son is good, his father would willingly pass on all he owns.

The second comparison is that the nagging wife is like a dripping tap. Constantly. Wearing. Away. At. You. Yet, a prudent wife is always thinking of the outcome of her actions, and probably yours too - and able to build and not tear down. To encourage, rather than discourage.

Both the wisest son and most prudent wife are a result of a right relationship with the Lord. That's why she is described as from Him.

**Proverbs 19:15**

Laziness casts one into a deep sleep,  
And an idle person will suffer hunger.

Here is clear warning. Laziness is addictive. It can snowball. Such as endless, mindless scrolling or binge watching. But Solomon says if you don't work, you won't eat. We need to be careful not to become so lazy, that we become oblivious to all interests and responsibilities in life. The same is true spiritually - if you don't pick up your Bible and feed on it, you won't be filled, neither will you even be aware of your spiritual responsibilities to serve, to love, to give.

However...

**Proverbs 19:16**

He who keeps the commandment keeps his soul,  
But he who is careless of his ways will die.

Don't we so undervalue our souls? Too often feeding on the wrong thing, becoming careless of how we live. We need a healthy spiritual diet!

**Proverbs 19:17**

He who has pity on the poor lends to the LORD,  
And He will pay back what he has given.

That is, you can't out give God! But love others as God would have you love them.

**Proverbs 19:18**

Chasten your son while there is hope,  
And do not set your heart on his destruction.

Parents - you have such a short time while your children are at home - use it well! Finnis Dake comments on this and says:

Discipline your son before his habits are formed and sealed for life. This is not advice for cruel punishment, but against cruel kindness that ultimately leads the child to ruin and death. It is better for him to cry now from strict punishment than for you both to cry later.

**Finnis Dake**

So discipline while you have the chance, but within the bounds of love that the Bible sets out. We read...

**Proverbs 19:19**

A man of great wrath will suffer punishment;  
For if you rescue him, you will have to do it again.

A man who always shouts his mouth off will always get into trouble. Don't be that man! But rather...

**Proverbs 19:20**

Listen to counsel and receive instruction,  
That you may be wise in your latter days.

We all run the risk of thinking that some of the topics the Bible teaches on, and therefore we teach on in this church, are not relevant to us. While I hope that's not the case, if you do think that way, you are wrong for 2 reasons.

First, you need to be learning now what you'll need then. You may be single, but if you fail to listen to the sermons on marriage now, you will regret it later. Likewise, you may be married now, but if you fail to listen to the sermons on singleness now, you will regret it if you suffer bereavement, or divorce.

Second, regardless of what you believe is relevant to *you* - if you learn what God's word says on all topics, you'll be a much wiser and better friend to those that need that counsel!

**Proverbs 19:21**

There are many plans in a man's heart,  
Nevertheless the LORD's counsel—that will stand.

Our plans are quickly outdated. In my job, I've seen so many re-orgs, new products, and plans that I've lost count. And each one of them get's superseded. All of them. But God's counsel, His Word, does not. It is a strong foundation.

**Proverbs 19:22**

What is desired in a man is kindness,  
And a poor man is better than a liar.

Here's some dating and marriage advice.

Ladies - look for this quality! Look for kindness!

Gentlemen - work on this quality! Essentially, you'll be more attractive the more like Jesus you are. And the best way to be more like Him, is to spend time in His Word and in prayer.

**Proverbs 19:23**

The fear of the LORD leads to life,  
And he who has it will abide in satisfaction;  
He will not be visited with evil.

Oh, how a right understanding of who God is and what he requires of us shapes our lives for the better - including how satisfied we are in life.

**Proverbs 19:24**

A lazy man buries his hand in the bowl,  
And will not so much as bring it to his mouth again.

The lazy man says “never do today what you can put off until tomorrow”. But the prudent man works hard, and then is able to rest in a way that the lazy man never experiences.

Likewise in the spiritual sense, the man or woman who holds their Bible in their hands but fails to read it, never knows the peace that comes from *having* read it.

**Proverbs 19:25**

Strike a scoffer, and the simple will become wary;  
Rebuke one who has understanding, and he will discern knowledge.

Correcting someone may not help them, but it may help others, and therefore it remains necessary.

In the same way that driving past someone that has been pulled over by the police causes you to watch your speed, so does seeing others corrected remind you of how to act. But we need to get the balance right, with our aim being to instruct, not humiliate.

**Proverbs 19:26**

He who mistreats his father and chases away his mother  
Is a son who causes shame and brings reproach.

I wonder, how much better would we treat our parents if EVERYTHING we did to/for them was public knowledge?

**Proverbs 19:27**

Cease listening to instruction, my son,  
And you will stray from the words of knowledge.

In other words, you can't stand still or tread water. You're always moving in one direction or another.

**Proverbs 19:28-29**

A disreputable witness scorns justice,  
And the mouth of the wicked devours iniquity.  
Judgments are prepared for scoffers,  
And beatings for the backs of fools.

As JVM notes, “Judgment is coming—that is quite obvious. God is not soft on the guilty. The pleasures of sin are for a season, but the wages of sin last for all eternity.”

**Summary**

I want to conclude with something I said in our first study, that is if the book of Proverbs could be summarised in one word, it is WISDOM.

If it could be summarised in 2 words, it would be GET WISDOM.

And if it could be summarised in 3 words, it would be GET WISDOM NOW.

If reading your Bible is not a priority in your life, I urge you to make it one. With urgency.

### Application questions

Some application questions to ponder this week are:

- Do your words hurt, or cause offence?
- Do you speak or act without thinking?
- Are you lazy in life, prayer or reading God's Word?

**Let's pray.**