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Advice for the King

25: 1-10

A proverb is a short and memorable saying designed to be our blueprint for living in the world that ADONAI has created. It is important to note that proverbs are not promises; they are generally true principles, all other things being equal.



These are more Proverbs of Solomon, which were copied by the men of Hezekiah, king of Judah (25:1 BSB). As Tremper Longman III relates in his commentary on *Proverbs*, this is the fifth superscription of the book (see **1:1, 10:1, 22:17-21, and 24:23**). It begins another section of the proverbs of **Solomon**, and will continue through the end of **Chapter 29**, but this time others are involved. The mystery of the verse has to do with the nature of **the men of Hezekiah**. However, first of all, we should mention that **Hezekiah** was king of Judah from 715 to 687 BCE (see the commentary on **Isaiah, to see the link click Gq - In the Fourteenth Year of Hezekiah's Reign**). Though **he** had lapses in good judgment, **he** was essentially **a king** known for **his** devotion to **God (Second Kings Chapters 18-20; Second Chronicles Chapters 29-32; and Isaiah Chapters 36-39)**. It is likely that along with other acts of reform and renewal of worship

following the destruction of the Northern Kingdom in 722 BCE, **he** also initiated more care in the transmission of sacred literature.

The tradition represented here, that people associated with **Hezekiah** had something to do with the composition and transmission of **Proverbs**, certainly is in keeping with what we know about this **king** from these other biblical sources above. Yet, the rather general reference to **the men of Hezekiah** does not enable us to be more specific in identifying exactly who they were: sages employed by the court? Priests charged with the transmission of the text, which may already have been considered sacred and authoritative? We can't tell for sure. But it seems that these **proverbs** were also recognized as being authoritative and needed to be added to the growing collection that up to this point had been transmitted separately.⁴⁷¹

These two **proverbs** are linked by their common reference to **the “king”** as well as the repetition of the verb **“examine.” It's God's privilege to conceal things and it's the king's privilege to examine them (25:2 NLT)**. The first proverb sounds like a case of hide-and-seek. **ADONAI** hides something (**Deuteronomy 29:29**), and **the kings** try to search it out. **God's** world is full of problems and puzzles beyond the capacity of ordinary people to understand them, but **the king** is there to unravel them and lead people to serve **Him**. **The heavens are so high and the earth so deep, and there is no examining the heart of a king (25:3 Hebrew)**! The second proverb teaches about **the king's** profound thinking, motives, and emotions – **his** whole inner life. This is compared to other grand matters like **the heavens** and **the earth**. This **proverb** is addressed primarily to the sages who would work with **the king**, perhaps instilling within them proper respect.

This **proverb** fits in with those that speak to the dangers of associating with **wickedness**. **Proverbs** operate on the principle that **people** will become like those with whom **they** associate (see [Al - Bad Company Corrupts Good Character](#)). Here the stakes are high, because the person in view is **the king**, the most influential person in the kingdom. An analogy is drawn between the two verses of the passage. In the first, the process of refining **silver** is described in general terms. Lead ore contained some **silver**, and to get in a pure form, it was necessary to heat it and to melt off the lead oxide (dross). To get the good metal, one had to separate it from the worthless metal. In the same way, one should remove **wicked** people from the presence of **the king**, which is probably a reference to **the king's** associates and advisors. **Remove the impurities from the silver, and the**

sterling will be ready for the silversmith (25:4 NLT). Likewise, remove the wicked from the king's court, and his reign will be established in righteousness (25:5 Hebrew). This **proverb** is addressed to **the king's** righteous advisors, who needed to keep their **king** from bad influences.

Proverbs constantly warn us against arrogance as well as boasting. In general, the book warns against pride and promotes humility. How much more important these principles are when in the presence of nobility. After all, these are people who are due honor themselves, and they will find it difficult to tolerate people who try to bestow honor to themselves. **Don't demand an audience with the king or request to stand in the place of great men (25:6 Heb).** The next verse makes it clear that it is not the honor itself that is bad. Rather, it is self-honor. **It's better to wait for an invitation to the head of the table than to be sent away in public disgrace (25:7b NLT).** The hope is that **the king** will initiate honor to a person on **his** own. The primary audience for this warning is the slave who serves the court, though the principle may have a wider application.

The warning delivered by these verses is similar, and perhaps even the background, to the advice given by **Yeshua**: **When someone invites you to a wedding banquet, do not recline in the place of honor, for a person more distinguished than you may have been invited. If so, the host who invited both of you will come and say to you, "Give this person your seat." Then, humiliated, you will have to take the least important place. But when you are invited, take the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he will say to you, "Friend, move up to a better place." Then you will be honored in the presence of all the other guests. Messiah** said that when **they** arrive at **a great banquet they** should take **the lowest place** so that when **the host** arrives **he** might assign **them** a position of prominence. The person who honors oneself **will not be honored**, but the one whom **the host** (meaning **God**) **honors** will be **honored** indeed. **For** at the last judgment **all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted (Luke 14:7-11).**

Whatever you have seen (25:7c NLT), don't be in a hurry to go to court. For what will you do in the end if your neighbor humiliates you (25:8 NLT)? When arguing with your neighbor, don't betray another person's confidence. This proverb warns against an overtly accusation of some kind of wrongdoing. The language makes it sound like a legal "accusation," but again, the principle is relevant for an informal accusation toward a neighbor or even toward a

third party (thus making the situation a form of **gossip**, also utterly condemned by **Proverbs**). Eyes can be deceptive, so one must reflect on a situation before making an accusation. It could also be that what one saw was truthful, but couldn't prove it, and so one's accusation looks like a trumped-up charge. If the charge is false or unproven, then the neighbor can make the one making the charges appear to be a **gossip** at best, or unethical at worst.⁴⁷²

This **proverb** suggests that we keep all **secrets**, not just disputes. The principle is the same: keep private matters private. As the sage suggests, "Discuss your dispute with your **neighbor**." In this discussion, however, the object should be the preservation of the relationship and reconciliation. **It is for this reason that Pirqu Avot 2:15 reads, "Let the honor of your fellow be as precious as your own."**⁴⁷³

Argue your case with your neighbor, but do not reveal your secret to another (25:9 Hebrew). Others may accuse you of gossip, and you will never regain your good reputation (25:10 NLT). This proverbial saying follows nicely on the heels of the one preceding it. They both give godly **wisdom** about how to deal with perceived problems with a **neighbor**. Here, the advice is to criticize one's **neighbor** directly without going public. **The secret** is the criticism that one has of a **neighbor**. The fear is that criticism may be overheard by a third party, perhaps sympathetic to **the neighbor**, and then the accuser will have the reputation of being a **gossip**, something severely criticized by the book of **Proverbs (11:13, 17:4 and 18:8)**. This advice is echoed in the B'rit Chadashah by **Yeshua Messiah Himself** (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Gi - If Brother of Sister Sins, Go and Point Out Their Fault**).⁴⁷⁴

Refuse to listen to **gossip**. **Gossip** is the passing on information when you are neither part of the problem nor part of the solution. You know spreading **gossip** is wrong, but you should not listen to it, either, if you want to protect yourself and your place of worship. Listening to **gossip** is like accepting stolen property, and it makes you just as guilty of the crime. When someone begins to **gossip** to you, have the courage to say, "Please stop. I don't need to know this. Have you talked directly with that person? People who **gossip to you** will **gossip about you**. They cannot be trusted. If you listen to **gossip**, **God** says you are a **troublemaker** because **troublemakers listen to troublemakers (17:4 CEV). These are the ones who split [the congregations of God], thinking only of themselves Jude 1:19 (Msg)**. It is sad that in **God's** flock, the greatest wounds usually come from other

sheep, not wolves. **Paul** warned about “cannibal believers” who **devour one another** destroying fellowship. **If you are always biting and devouring others, watch out! Beware of destroying yourself (Gal 5:15).**⁴⁷⁵

Dear heavenly **Father**, praise **You** for the joy of giving **You** all honor. It is such a pleasure to honor **You** as **the King** of our lives, for **You** are so **wise**, loving and holy. **Your love, ADONAI, is in the heavens, Your faithfulness up to the skies (Psalms 36:5).** Your rule as **King of kings (Revelation 19:16)** is always done with **righteous judgements. Your righteousness is like the mountains of God. Your judgments are like the great deep. (Psalm 36:6).** Your rule is always done **lovingly** and with complete **truth! Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne. Lovingkindness and truth go before You (Psalm 89:14)**

The four living creatures in heaven give an excellent example to follow as they worship **You** day and night. **The four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes all around and within. They do not rest day or night, chanting, “Kadosh, kadosh, Kadosh Adonai Elohei-Tzva’ot, asher haya v’hoveh v’yavo! Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God of Hosts, who was and who is and who is to come!” And whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to the One seated on the throne, who lives forever and ever, (Revelation 4:8-9).**

You are worthy of our total adoration in honoring **You** for how awesome and excellent **You** are in every situation at all times! More worship comes from **the twenty-four elders who fall down before the One seated on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever. And they throw their crowns down before the throne, chanting, “Worthy are You, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, For You created all things, and because of Your will they existed and were created” (Revelation 4:10-11)!** To seek honor for oneself is so fleeting, but to honor **You** is a great joy that will last throughout all eternity! In **Messiah Yeshua’s** holy **Name** and power of **His** resurrection. Amen