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## Four Kinds of Troublemakers

### 26: 17-28

**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.**

**1. The busybody (26:17): Interfering in someone else's argument is as foolish as yanking a dog's ears (26:17 NLT).** The least dangerous of the antisocial troublemakers is the busybody, for she only hurts herself. This first **proverb** ridicules those who get involved in a dispute or fight in which they have no business. In the south they would say that such **a person** "has no **dog** in the hunt." It is obviously stupid to **yank a dog's ears**. Because of the Jews belief that **dogs** were unclean, most **dogs** in Isra'el were considered wild, something like a jackal. **Yanking** a jackal by **its ears** implies the inevitability of getting bit by getting involved in somebody else's dispute. Not even Sampson yanked the foxes by their **ears (Judges 15:4)**. Thus, the busybody should leave **the wild dog** alone, and **the son**, who is the object of **Solomon's** teaching, should walk away from a dispute in which he has no business.<sup>501</sup>

**2. The deceiver (26:18-19): Just as damaging as a madman shooting a deadly weapon is someone who lies to a friend and then says, "I was only joking" (26:18-19 NLT).** The second **proverb** considers yet another situation: when people deceive those who are close to them and then claim that it was **a joke**. From the context it is unclear whether the claim that it was **a joke**. From the context it is unclear whether the claim that they were kidding comes before or after the deception is discovered. Certainly, if the admission comes afterward, the claim to be joking would be even weaker. In this case, their words start a war. One may as well shoot at neighbors with deadly flaming arrows. Undoubtedly, it will result in the death of any kind of relationship they may have had with their friends or neighbors.<sup>502</sup> The comparison of **the treacherous clown** with **the armed berserk warrior** is a double. Both cannot distinguish between right and wrong and both inflict horrible tragedy on the community. However, the difference is that **the**

**madman** is out of **his** mind and cannot plot evil, while **the deceiver** is cunning, showing that **he** is intellectually capable of carrying out a crime. **His** problem is not intellectual but spiritual.



**3. The slanderer (26:20-22):** Hezekiah's collectors (**to see link click [Df - Proverbs of Solomon Copied by Hezekiah's Men](#)**) now ratchet up the section on antisocial types to **the slanderer**, who destroys the community by inflaming **strife (16:28 and 18:8)**. **Slander** involves speaking to third parties about a **person** with the intention of harm, not help. **Fire goes out without wood, and quarrels disappear when gossip stops**. But then, **a quarrelsome person starts fights as easily as hot embers light charcoal or fire lights wood**. **Rumors are dainty morsels that sink deep into one's heart (26:20-22 NLT)**. **Verses 20-21** present two sides of the same coin. The inflammatory speech of **the slanderer** burns the community down (**verse 21**), but **his** absence gives it an opportunity to restore its peace (**verse 20**). **His** words are so destructive to the community's well-being because people swallow **his** inflammatory **slanders** like **dainty morsels (verses 22a)**. But the community that tolerates **his slander** is also guilty for the conflicts that tear it apart.<sup>503</sup>

**A deceiver stirs up strife, and a slanderer can separate even close friends (16:28 CJB)**. **Slander** always causes hurt and divisions, and it destroys fellowship, and **ADONAI** is very clear that we are to confront **those** who cause division among the congregations of **God**. **They** may get mad and leave your small group or place of worship if you confront them about their divisive actions, but the fellowship of **the Body of Messiah** is more important than any one **person**.<sup>504</sup> **The Word of God** is very clear about this: **There are six things that ADONAI hates, yes, seven that are detestable to Him (6:16 Hebrew)**. This **verse** is known as a numerical saying; a typical **wisdom** form found prominently in **Proverbs** (see **Proverbs 30:15, 18, 21, 24, and 29; Job 5:19; Ecclesiastes 11:2; Amos 1:6, 9, 13 and 2:1, 4, and 6; Micah 5:5**). The clue to reading numerical sayings is that

the focus of the message is often on the last item mentioned. The **seventh** example here: **the person who stirs up descension in the congregation**, draws together the remainder of the other descriptions.<sup>505</sup>

**4. The hater (26:23-28):** Finally, the compilers narrow the troublemakers down to the son's **hateful** enemy. The imperative "**do not trust him**" shows that **the son** is **the hater's** target and states the aim of the partial subunit. The first of its triplet sayings depicts **the enemy's** deception. **Like a clay vessel overlaid with silver dross, are the burning lips of a wicked heart.** This first **proverb** begins by describing how **silver** can cover **clay** in order to produce a beautiful **vase**. However, the **silver** is only paper thin, and once penetrated, you can see that **the silver** gives way to ordinary **clay**. The surface gives the illusion of a completely **silver vessel**, but that isn't the reality. The same is true of **smooth speech of someone with a wicked heart. They** hide **their** intentions. **They** say nice things, but inside **their** hatred burns. **He may cover his hatred with smooth speech, but he's deceiving you. The third proverb** moves from observation to advice. Always be looking for signs that others are not honestly reflecting their true feelings. **He pretends to be kind, but don't trust him, for there are seven abominations in his heart (26:23-25 Hebrew). Seven** is a symbolic number representing completion (see the commentary on **Genesis Ae - The Number Seven**). Hence, **they** are totally **abominable**. The term **an abomination** has been used frequently so far in the expression **an abomination to ADOANI (3:32, 11:20, 12:22, 15:8-9, and 26, 16:5, 17:15, 20:10 and 23)**. This indicates the utmost divine censure against something or someone, the cherem judgment of **Ha'Shem** (see **Leviticus Ff - The Cherem**).

The second triplet depicts **the hater's** destruction. **While their hatred may be concealed deceit, their wickedness will be exposed in public.** Although people can hide their true thoughts and intentions for a while, they will eventually come out. **They** just wait until **they** have enough harmful ammunition to attack **their** intended victim. But unwittingly, **he who digs a pit will fall into it.** The idea that **the wicked** will be hurt by **their** own actions aimed at others appears frequently in the book (**Proverbs 1:18-19**; also see **Psalms 7:4-5; Ecclesiastes 10:8**). **And he who rolls a stone down onto others, it will crush you instead.** The first colon is clear enough, falling into **a pit dug** as a trap for another person. But the second colon only makes sense if provided with a bit of narrative. We might imagine **the wicked** pushing **a stone** to the top of a hill, planning to drop it on the head of a passerby. Instead, as **he rolls it** up the height, its weight

proves to be too much, and **it rolls** back, **crushing the wicked**. Lastly, **a lying tongue hates its victims, and flattering words cause ruin (26:26-28 Hebrew)**. The first colon simply states that **the wicked** who **lie** about **others** **hate** those **people** that **they** are trying to harm. The second colon makes the point that **flattering words** also cause destruction. **Flattery** can be a certain way of **lying**. Without conviction or reality, **it** exaggerates the positive points of another person. **Flattery** may be used to set a person up to be taken advantage of. **Flattery** may also cause those who are **flattered** to think too highly of **themselves**, and thus, to act in a way that is detrimental.<sup>506</sup>

*Dear heavenly **Father**, praise **You** that **Your** love and power is greater than any problems that troublemakers can make. To be connected to **You** and to please **You** brings great joy, no matter what the circumstances. Your heart is a heart of **love – for God is love (First John 4:8)**. **You** never **slander**, nor are **You** ever deceitful. **Your** words are always pure and **wise**. Even in discipline **Your** words and actions are couched in **love** so that the fruit of righteousness is produced from the discipline (**Hebrews 12:11**). When **slandered** or put down by **a busybody**, I can take comfort in **Your** abiding **love**. Thank **You** that **You** are not a father who is far off, but rather **a Father** who is always near me, watching over me to care and to protect me when others **gossip** about me. **O God, You are my God, earnestly I seek You. My soul thirsts for You. My flesh longs for You in a dry and weary land, where there is no water (Hebrews 13:5c)**. Thank you that when others **gossip** or **slander** me, I can always run into **Your loving** arms, knowing that in **You** I am accepted, blessed and connected to **You**. In **Messiah Yeshua's** holy **Name** and power of **His** resurrection. Amen*