BIBLE GATEWAY Proverbs 18:16 :: NASB.

Verse 1 states,

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“A man who isolates himself seeks his own desire; he rages against all wise judgment.”
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This writer does not have a knowledge of Hebrews, but apparently there is difficulty in translating this verse. Different translations may use different words for this verse. However, it seems that the intent behind this verse is a person who considers himself smarter and more capable than all others.

In this case, there is no motivation to interrelate with others. Conceit, stubborn, contentious would all describe such a man. But such an attitude is condemned.

BIBLE GATEWAY Proverbs 18:16 :: NASB

A common expression is that there are no solo Christians. **Hebrews 10:23-25** warn,

> *“Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.”*

To survive, Christians must be associated with Christians. Paul warns about having close friends with people whose actions and attitudes are worldly.

If there is a problem, possibly a tragedy, long-term illness or any of the other problems and trials of life, a Christian may feel the need to withdraw “for just a little while until things get better.” That is the Devil whispering such nonsense in that person’s ear! That is exactly the wrong action to take.

Peter called the Devil a lion seeking someone to devour. Well, how does a predator track and kill its prey? He looks for the one that has separated from the herd or appears to be weak and then strikes! There is no such thing as a strong solo Christian if that person has the

option to associate with other Christians. Such an attitude is the height of arrogance and folly.

Verse 5 states,

> *“It is not good to show partiality to the wicked, or to overthrow the righteous in judgment.”*

The first thought that comes to mind is why would a person show partiality to a wicked person? That seems foolish if not dangerous. And why oppose a righteous person? That seems to be counter-productive. But both actions are condemned in verse 5.

There are reasons that a person may use to convince himself it would be better to support the wicked or decide against the righteous. One reason could be desperation. A person sees no way out of a situation, but something must be done.

In 1 Samuel 28 the Philistine army had gathered to fight Israel. Earlier, King Saul had driven all mediums and witches from the land. But when the Philistine army stood before King Saul, he became afraid due to the size of the army.

The Lord God had abandoned Saul because of his pride and arrogance, and He did not answer Saul. So, in desperation, Saul turned to a

witch in Endor to find out what he should do. The spirit of Samuel appeared and rebuked him harshly and told Saul that he and his sons would die in the battle the next day.

The reason for the actions described in verse 5 could be expediency. It appears that a person's personal agenda could be advanced if he/she shows favor to a wicked party or turns against a righteous person. When Jesus was brought before Pilate, he questioned Jesus and determined that He was innocent of the charges.

John 19:12, records that Pilate was trying to release Jesus,

> *"but the Jews cried out, saying, 'If you let this Man go, you are not Caesar's friend. Whoever makes himself a king speaks against Caesar.'"*

That was a serious charge that could be leveled against any Roman administrator, and the charge could have threatened Pilate's career and even his life. At the threat to his own position, Pilate gave in to the demands of the mob to crucify Jesus.

Showing partiality to a wicked person could simply come from greed or a desire to obtain something. An individual arrives at a

gathering. The person is known to be wealthy and have power and influence. People will flock to that person trying to gain favor regardless of the person's moral or spiritual integrity. Wickedness can appear so strong, so powerful, so rich; but the spiritual fabric is rotten and corrupted.

Verse 8 states,

> *"The words of a talebearer are like tasty trifles, and they go down into the inmost body."*

This same practice is described, and condemned, in several other places in the Proverbs. The problem described here is one who spreads gossip or slander against another, and that person's audience eagerly accepts the tales like a sweet dessert. These actions are contemptible on so many levels.

Under the New Covenant of Jesus Christ, the Church was established in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost. As Christianity spread, local congregations were established throughout the world. The one thing that brought all Christians together was a Christ-like, or agape, love.

All the epistles emphasize the need for a genuine love for one another. Physical families may deal with “family drama” or strife, but this is condemned for Christians. Nothing can undermine and destroy that love and unity faster than gossip and slander.

One cause of this can be idleness. Paul wrote to Timothy concerning widows. Sickness and death was a very real part of the ancient world. One of the admonitions was for members to support widows that were in need.

However, Paul made it clear that families were expected to care for the widows within their own families. ***Older*** widows that demonstrated a godly life style would be helped by the church, because they had no one else, but young widows were not to be supported by the church.

In 1 Timothy 5:11-13, Paul wrote,

> *“But refuse the younger widows; for when they have begun to grow wanton against Christ, they desire to marry, having condemnation because they have cast off their first faith. And besides they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house, and not only idle but also gossips and busybodies, saying things which they ought not.”*

People that are busy and have a purpose do not have time for idle chatter, but there is a real danger when capable men and women sit idle.

Verses 10-11 can be tied together.

> *“The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous run to it and are safe. The rich man’s wealth is his strong city, and like a high wall in his own esteem.”*

The two approaches to life cannot be more different. Too many people place their trust in the physical, tangible things in life.

In the case of verse 11, the trust is placed in wealth. Being wealthy is not sinful. But wealth can lead to attitudes and actions that ARE sinful. Large homes can be bought or built. Walls and fences can be built to keep out unwanted people.

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Security cameras can be installed, and security guards can be hired. Wealth can buy influence and power. The possession of wealth can give a person the feeling that nothing can hurt him/her;

and much like the rich farmer in **Luke 12:19**, the person may say,

> *“Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry.”*

That person does not even consider the fact that God is in control. Wealth can be lost overnight, and with it gone, all the measures that were put in place begin to fail.

Or that person’s fate may be like the rich farmer described in Luke 12:20-21,

> *“But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?’ So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”*

In contrast to the misplaced trust on riches and worldly possessions or position, the righteous person will always view the Lord God as the source of strength and protection.

Some may state that a person can show integrity and do what is right and that is true. But the problem is that there is no real spiritual relationship between that “good” person and the Living God.

The teaching of Jesus Christ, and the letters written by the Apostles warn again and again that a person MUST be in the right relationship with God according to His Will. “Yes, I love you and I want to be with you….but I want to do it my way.” That approach will never work.

Today, a person can only come to and be joined with the Father through Jesus Christ; and how a person does that is clearly laid out in the New Testament. There is no ambiguity. Questions and disagreement come up when someone wants to change what is written.

But once a person DOES come to the Father through obedience to the Gospel, then that person has been made part of the family of God. When frightened or uncertain, a small child will go to his/her nearest parent where they know they will be protected.

That is the same automatic reaction that a Christian should have. The world may affect the physical body and circumstances of a

Christian, but the inner being, the soul, is guarded; and as long as that person continues to walk in the light, that protection remains in place.

Verse 14 states,

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“The spirit of a man will sustain him in sickness, but who can bear a broken spirit?”
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Many a person has been stricken by an illness or an injury where the chance the chance of that person surviving does not look good. Yet, the person will recover! Some will comment, “He/she has a strong will to live.”

Yet another person may suffer from an illness or an injury that is less serious than the first person and that second person weakens and dies. Any doctor will agree that a person’s state of mind, a positive attitude, can make an enormous difference in a recovery.

This is the point being made in verse 14. When a person has a strong, positive and hopeful attitude, that person is better able to deal with the trials of life and physical or emotional challenges. Of course, the question arises, “Where do you gain this kind of spirit?”

The answer will NOT come from worldly sources. It is true that worldly goals and attitudes can sustain a person for a time. But nothing lasts in this life. Goals vanish or change. Money, influence, and physical strength can disappear overnight. The spirit that will sustain a man must come from outside that man.

Today, that power comes from Jesus Christ. ALL AUTHORITY has been given to Him. Through the Inspired Word of God, any person can find the way to God through the Good News, the Gospel. Once that person becomes a Christian, then that person can turn to the ultimate power of God to sustain him/her.

Proverbs 18:16

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"A person’s gift makes room for him And brings him before great people."
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James pointed to the confidence that a person can have in Jesus Christ when he wrote in **james 1 2-4**,

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“Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your
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> *faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing."*

Paul proclaimed in Romans 8:35-39,

> *"Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Just as it is written, 'For Your sake we are being put to death all day long; We were considered as sheep to be slaughtered.' But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

Verse 22 states,

> *“He who finds a wife finds a good thing and obtains favor from the Lord.”*

In several places in Proverbs, there are warnings about living with a contentious woman, but this is an entirely different situation. From the very beginning, in Genesis 2:18,

> *“And the Lord God said, ‘It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him.’”*

After God formed the woman, Genesis 1:24 states,

> *“Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.”*

So, from the beginning, God created the institution of marriage. And if a husband and wife live together according to God’s Will and

Word, then that marriage can be wonderful. At the time of the writing of this article, this writer has been married for over 46 years. During that time, there were struggles and challenges, but every year has become better and richer. The words in verse 22 become a reality and a blessing.

Whereas, constant conflict between a husband and wife will occur if one, or both, are ignoring God’s instructions concerning the husband and the wife’s responsibilities. In Ephesians 5:22-33, Paul clearly lays out the responsibilities of each spouse in a marriage.

A careful reading shows that the burden of responsibility falls on the husband. If he meets his obligations as a husband, and his wife submits and respects him, then the conflicts and unhappiness in a marriage will disappear.

Some have questioned marriage after considering Paul’s words in I Corinthians chapter 7. Paul reaffirmed that a husband and wife are to honor their marriage vows and remain together. But he also implied that it was better for a person to remain unmarried.

He made clear that his words were not a command, but a recommendation because all Christians would soon be facing persecution from the Roman government. An individual would have a better chance to avoid arrest, punishment and imprisonment without a spouse or family to care for.