



PEACEABLENESS AND CONTENTION  
10:12; 13:10; 15:17, 18; 16:28; 17:1, 14, 19; 18:6;  
20:3; 25:8; 26:17, 20-21; 29:22

The primary subject of these **proverbs** is **contention** and **strife** (disputes and conflicts between individuals that cause discord) and that prove to be disruptive and troublesome. These **proverbs** speak of the fact that these disputes, conflicts, and discord are often **stirred** [10:12; 15:18; 28:25; 29:22] meaning that “*it is something that is worked up, provoked, and incited.*” And that it is something that is **sown** [16:28] meaning that “*it is something that is caused, created, and brought about.*” And that it is something that is **kindled** [26:21] or “*set fire to.*” A person of “*wisdom*” does not seek to **stir**, **sow**, or **kindle** contention and strife, but seeks to avoid the very things that cause such. These contentions and disputes are a breeding ground for that which is **dangerous** and **destructive** [I Timothy 6:4], resulting in “*railings*” (complaints, and protests) and “*evil surmisings*” (conjectures, speculations, assumptions, and imaginations), and as *James* puts it in James 3:16 “*For where envying and strife is, there is confusion (uncertainty, disorder, and chaos) and every evil work*” Because of the **danger** and the **destruction** that contention can cause the Word of God teaches that God’s people are to cultivate peaceableness [Romans 12:18-19; Hebrews 12:14], and the Word of God commends “*peacemakers*” [Matthew 5:9]. And though God’s people are to “*earnestly contend for the faith*” [Jude 3], they are not to become contentious (provoking), and they must not contend about things that are not profitable [II Timothy 2:14].

*“Hatred stirreth up strife: but love covereth all sins” [10:12].*

A spirit of “*hatred*” (ill-will, ill-feelings, enmity, animosity) has a tendency to provoke and incite “*strife*” (conflict, friction, disagreement, and discord). THIS HATRED NOT ONLY STIRS UP STRIFE, BUT ALSO KEEPS IT ALIVE! A spirit of “*hatred*” does the devil’s work, and is condemned [Leviticus 19:17; I John 2:9; 3:15; 4:20]. In contrast to this “*hatred*” is “*love*” and it is said that “*love covereth all sins*” that is, rather than provoking and inciting strife, and looking for occasion to contend, “*love*” desires to overlook and forgive offenses, and does not look for offense, and when there is offense, “*love*” is forgiving and forbearing! THE WISE INDIVIDUAL WILL CULTIVATE LOVE RATHER THAN HATRED!

*“Only by pride cometh contention: but with the well advised is wisdom” [13:10].*

“*Pride*” here is “*an unyielding arrogance*” a “*know it all view*” In contrast to this “*but with the well advised is wisdom*” which has reference to those who are humble enough to seek counsel, guidance, direction, and information. “*Pride*” will keep an individual from doing such, resulting many times in contention. It is the individual that is “*of a proud heart*” that “*stirreth up strife*” [Proverbs 28:25]. THE WISE INDIVIDUAL WILL CULTIVATE HUMILITY RATHER THAN PRIDE!

*“Better is a dinner of herbs (little) where love is, than a stalled ox (an ox kept in a stall for fattening) and hatred therewith. A wrathful man stirreth up strife; but he that is slow to anger appeaseth strife” [15:17-18].*

“Love” and “hatred” are contrasted, followed by the mention of a “wrathful man” which is a man of hateful spirit, an angry individual, one filled with indignation and vengeance, and this individual “stirreth (provokes and incites) strife” In contrast is the one “that is slow to anger” he is a man of love, a man of patience and forbearance and such is said to “appease (able to quiet) strife” The “wrathful man” seeks strife, while the one that “is slow to anger” seeks to quiet and end strife. THE WISE INDIVIDUAL WILL CULTIVATE PATIENCE AND FORBEARANCE RATHER THAN WRATH!

*“A froward man soweth strife” [16:28].*

The “froward” are the perverse, the twisted, the irrational, the obstinate, the stubborn, the contrary, and a person of wrong motives, and such an individual will cause, create, and bring about dissension and discord.

*“Better is a dry morsel, and quietness (peace) therewith, than an house full of sacrifices (meat from animals sacrificed to the Lord), with strife” [17:1].*

This is the same truth presented in 15:17, the lesson being that love, peace, and unity contribute greatly to happiness and contentment, while contention contributes greatly to misery and discontent in spite of riches.

*“The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water: therefore leave off contention, before it be meddled with” [17:14].*

This speaks of the danger of the beginning (the start) of “strife” What is being said here is, that “the start of strife, though it may seem like a minor matter, often grows beyond control resulting in great destruction” The advice of wisdom is “leave off contention” that is, “refuse to let an issue fester” “before it be meddled (tampered) with”

*“He loveth transgression that loveth strife: and he that exalteth his gate seeketh destruction” [17:19].*

There is the individual that loves “strife” he is the hateful individual, the proud, the wrathful and the froward, and such an individual must also love sin, for there is no lack of sin in “strife” [James 3:16].

*“A fool’s lips enter into contention, and his mouth calleth for strokes” [18:6].*

“A fool’s lips” has reference to the one who is hasty and speaks thoughtlessly, without due care, and such an individual will quickly enter into contention.

*“It is an honor for a man to cease from strife: but every fool will be meddling” [20:3].*

It is **upright** and a manifestation of good **character** for one to “*cease* (halt, bring to an end) *from strife*” It is an act of **virtue** to prevent and to put an end to unnecessary and unprofitable “*strife*” But on the other hand, “*every fool will be meddling*” will carry on the debate or contention though it be of no profit and benefit.

*“Go not forth hastily to strive, lest thou know not what to do in the end thereof, when thy neighbor hath put thee to shame” [25:8].*

“*Wisdom*” dictates that one go not forth without necessary cause and due consideration. “*Wisdom*” will cause one to carefully examine and consider whether it is a matter worth entering contention over, and whether or not it is the right time and place. Further instruction is given in verse 9.

*“He that passeth by, and meddleth with strife belonging not to him, is like one that taketh a dog by the ears” [26:17].*

The simple lesson here is that the individual who enters into that which it is not necessary for him to enter into, or is not his business exposes himself to needless dangers.

*“As coals are to burning coals, and wood to fire; so is a contentious man to kindle strife” [26:21].*

The one who is “*contentious*” is one who seems to enjoy contention, and freely and willingly enters into it, and he is like charcoal and wood to a fire. A “*contentious man*” will also strive to keep the flames of contention burning. A WISE INDIVIDUAL WILL CULTIVATE MEEKNESS RATHER THAN A CONTENTIOUS SPIRIT!

*“An angry man stirreth up strife, and a furious man aboundeth in transgression” [29:22].*

An “*angry man*” is one who possesses strong feelings of hostility or opposition and such an individual is prone to provoke and incite “*strife*” A “*furious man*” is one who is full of angry energy and such an individual abounds in sin! A “*furious man*” is the result of anger progressing, and therefore even more prone to provoke and incite “*strife*”

*“Surely the churning of milk bringeth forth butter, and the wringing of the nose bringeth forth blood: so the forcing of wrath bringeth forth strife” [30:33].*

The first half of this verse presents two absolute certainties for the sake of analogy; “*so the forcing* (irritating and provoking) *of wrath* (a passion within another) *bringeth forth strife*” The one who possesses heavenly “*wisdom*” does not purposely say or do things to irritate and provoke another.

From these **proverbs** we learn that **hatred**, **pride**, **wrath**, **frowardness**, a spirit of **contentiousness**, and **anger** provoke, incite, cause, create, and bring about “*strife*” Paul instructs in **Philippians 2:3** “*Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory*” One who possesses the “*wisdom*” that is from above will seek to avoid the very things that provoke unnecessary and unprofitable contentions.