

## Ecclesiastes 10 New International Version (NIV)

<sup>1</sup> As dead flies give perfume a bad smell,

so a little folly outweighs wisdom and honor.

<sup>2</sup> The heart of the wise inclines to the right,

but the heart of the fool to the left.

<sup>3</sup> Even as fools walk along the road, they lack sense

and show everyone how stupid they are.

<sup>4</sup> If a ruler's anger rises against you, do not leave your post;

calmness can lay great offenses to rest.

<sup>5</sup> There is an evil I have seen under the sun,

the sort of error that arises from a ruler:

<sup>6</sup> Fools are put in many high positions, while the rich occupy the low ones.

<sup>7</sup> I have seen slaves on horseback, while princes go on foot like slaves.

<sup>8</sup> Whoever digs a pit may fall into it; whoever breaks through a wall may be bitten by a snake.

<sup>9</sup> Whoever quarries stones may be injured by them;

whoever splits logs may be endangered by them.

<sup>10</sup> If the ax is dull and its edge unsharpened, more strength is needed, but skill will bring success.

<sup>11</sup> If a snake bites before it is charmed, the charmer receives no fee.

<sup>12</sup> Words from the mouth of the wise are gracious,

but fools are consumed by their own lips.

<sup>13</sup> At the beginning their words are folly; at the end they are wicked madness—

<sup>14</sup> and fools multiply words.

No one knows what is coming—

who can tell someone else what will happen after them?

<sup>15</sup> The toil of fools wearies them; they do not know the way to town.

<sup>16</sup> Woe to the land whose king was a servant<sup>a</sup>

and whose princes feast in the morning.

<sup>17</sup> Blessed is the land whose king is of noble birth

and whose princes eat at a proper time—  
for strength and not for drunkenness.

<sup>18</sup> Through laziness, the rafters sag; because of idle hands, the house leaks.

<sup>19</sup> A feast is made for laughter, wine makes life merry, and money is the answer for everything.

<sup>20</sup> Do not revile the king even in your thoughts,  
or curse the rich in your bedroom, because a bird in the sky may carry your words,  
and a bird on the wing may report what you say.

a. [Ecclesiastes 10:16](#) Or *king is a child*

# Discussion Questions

1. What seems different about this chapter from the nine that preceded it?
2. Is the wisdom of v.4 still relevant today? Have you ever experienced this?
3. Can you think of modern-day examples that speak to the enduring truth of the proverb given in v.11?
4. What are the advantages of not “multiplying words”?
5. Is money really the “answer for everything”?
6. There is a commentary on our thought life in v.20. Why is it so important to be careful about what we think?