

# Ecclesiastes 9:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The words of wise men are heard in quiet more than the cry of him that ruleth among fools.

## Analysis

**The words of wise men are heard in quiet** (דִּבְרֵי חֲכָמִים בְּנֵתָת נִשְׁמָא'ִים) — 'the words of the wise in quietness are heard,' using nachat (quietness, calm, rest). **More than the cry of him that ruleth among fools** (מִזְעָקַת מֶשֶׁל בְּקָסִילִים) — 'than the shouting of a ruler among fools,' from za'aqah (cry, shout, loud voice).

This verse contrasts communication styles and contexts: wise speech operates benachat (in calm quietness), while foolish leadership requires za'aqah (shouting, clamor). The principle: truth doesn't need volume—wisdom spoken gently carries more weight than foolishness bellowed loudly. The phrase 'ruler among fools' suggests a leader whose authority derives from noise rather than substance, requiring constant loud assertion because lacking intrinsic credibility. Proverbs 17:27 agrees: 'Whoever restrains his words has knowledge, and he who has a cool spirit is a man of understanding.' Jesus spoke with quiet authority (Matthew 7:29), never needing to shout. Elijah learned God speaks not in earthquake or fire but 'a still small voice' (1 Kings 19:12).

## Historical Context

Ancient rhetoric valued forceful oratory, but Hebrew wisdom tradition uniquely prized restrained, measured speech. The contrast between prophetic thunder (sometimes necessary) and daily wise counsel (usually quiet) appears throughout Scripture.

## Related Passages

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**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

## Study Questions

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1. How does contemporary culture's addiction to volume and drama obscure quiet wisdom?
2. In what ways might you be mistaking loudness or confidence for truth or authority?
3. What practices help you cultivate the 'quiet' spirit that characterizes wise communication?

## Interlinear Text

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|                           |                    |                 |                      |                          |       |         |      |         |   |
|---------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|----------------------|--------------------------|-------|---------|------|---------|---|
| מִתְעַד                   | תִּ                | נִשְׁמַע        | יְמִ                 | בָּנִ                    | חַתָּ | חַכָּמִ | יְמִ | דִּבְרֵ | ' |
| <b>The words</b>          | <b>of wise</b>     | <b>in quiet</b> | <b>men are heard</b> | <b>more than the cry</b> |       |         |      |         |   |
| H1697                     | H2450              | H5183           | H8085                | H2201                    |       |         |      |         |   |
| מִזְשֵׁ                   | לִ                 | בְּפִסְלִים:    |                      |                          |       |         |      |         |   |
| <b>of him that ruleth</b> | <b>among fools</b> |                 |                      |                          |       |         |      |         |   |
| H4910                     | H3684              |                 |                      |                          |       |         |      |         |   |

## Additional Cross-References

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**Proverbs 28:23** (Parallel theme): He that rebuketh a man afterwards shall find more favour than he that flattereth with the tongue.

**Isaiah 42:2** (Parallel theme): He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street.

**James 1:20** (Parallel theme): For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.

