

# Proverbs 10:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Wise men lay up knowledge: but the mouth of the foolish is near destruction.

## Analysis

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This proverb contrasts wisdom's strategic preparation with folly's impending disaster. "Wise men lay up knowledge" uses tsaphan (תְּשַׁפֵּן, to treasure, store, hide away)—the same verb describing hiding treasure for safekeeping. Knowledge (da'at, דעת) is not mere information but skillful understanding of God's ways. The wise accumulate wisdom as one stores grain for famine, building reserves for future challenges.

"But the mouth of the foolish is near destruction" presents the alternative. The fool's mouth—representing his characteristic speech—stands on the precipice of ruin. Mechittah (מְחִתָּה, destruction, ruin) awaits the careless talker. Rather than storing wisdom, the fool speaks impulsively, revealing ignorance and inviting calamity. James 3:6 warns that "the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity...and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell."

The proverb teaches preparedness versus presumption. The wise anticipate challenges by accumulating wisdom from Scripture, godly counsel, and experience. The fool speaks without thought, creating problems rather than solving them. In Christ, believers have access to God's infinite wisdom (Colossians 2:3) and should diligently store His Word in their hearts (Psalm 119:11).

## Historical Context

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In ancient agrarian societies, storing grain was essential for survival during lean years. Joseph's wisdom in storing during plenty saved Egypt and Israel during famine (Genesis 41). Solomon applies this principle to intellectual and spiritual preparedness—wise people accumulate knowledge against future trials. The fool's mouth, by contrast, hastens destruction through rash words, false witness, or revealing secrets.

## Related Passages

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**Genesis 1:1** — Creation of heavens and earth

**Colossians 1:16** — All things created through Christ

## Study Questions

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1. How are you intentionally 'laying up knowledge' through Bible study, reading, and learning from wise mentors?
2. In what situations has your mouth brought you near destruction due to hasty or foolish words?
3. How does hiding God's Word in your heart (Psalm 119:11) prepare you for spiritual battles and moral decisions?

## Interlinear Text

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מִתְחַדֵּת	הַ	אֵיל	וְ	לִפְנֵי	עַתָּה	לִזְמֹן	מְכַמֵּם	יְמִינֵיכֶם
destruction	the	foolish	of	before	time	knowledge	lay up	men

קָרְבָּה:

is near

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## Additional Cross-References

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**Proverbs 18:7** (Parallel theme): A fool's mouth is his destruction, and his lips are the snare of his soul.

**Proverbs 10:8** (Parallel theme): The wise in heart will receive commandments: but a prating fool shall fall.

**Proverbs 13:3** (Parallel theme): He that keepeth his mouth keepeth his life: but he that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction.

**Proverbs 9:9** (Parallel theme): Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser: teach a just man, and he will increase in learning.

**Proverbs 10:10** (Parallel theme): He that winketh with the eye causeth sorrow: but a prating fool shall fall.