

# Proverbs 16:22

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Understanding is a wellspring of life unto him that hath it: but the instruction of fools is folly.

## Analysis

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Understanding is a wellspring of life unto him that hath it: but the instruction of fools is folly. Meqor chayyim sekhel be'alaiv (מְקוֹר חַיִּים שֶׁכֶּהַל בְּעַלְאִיב, a fountain of life is understanding to its possessor). Understanding provides perpetual refreshment and vitality. Umusar evilim ivvelet (וּמוֹסָר עֲוִילִים אִיבֵּלֵת, but the discipline of fools is folly). Fools' instruction is inherently foolish—they can't give what they don't have. Believers have access to infinite wisdom in Christ (Colossians 2:3) and should drink from this wellspring rather than foolish instruction that only produces more folly.

## Historical Context

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Wellsprings provided continuous fresh water—essential for life in arid climates. Stagnant pools bred disease. This proverb contrasts living water (understanding) with poisonous pools (foolish instruction). Jesus offered living water (John 4:14, 7:37-38)—understanding flowing from relationship with Him. Early Christians rejected foolish philosophies for the life-giving wisdom of the gospel (Colossians 2:8).

## Related Passages

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**James 2:17** — Faith and works

**Romans 1:17** — The righteous shall live by faith

## Study Questions

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1. Are you drinking from the wellspring of biblical understanding or poisonous pools of foolish instruction?
2. What sources of teaching and wisdom are you consuming, and are they life-giving or folly-producing?
3. How does Jesus as living water provide the ultimate wellspring of understanding and life?

## Interlinear Text

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מְקוֹר חַיִּים	שֶׁ כָּל	בְּעַל יוֹ	וּמִוֶּסֶר	
is a wellspring	of life	Understanding	unto him that hath	it but the instruction
H4726	H2416	H7922	H1167	H4148
אֱלֹהִים	אֵלֶּה:			
of fools	is folly			
H191	H200			

## Additional Cross-References

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**Proverbs 13:14** (Parallel theme): The law of the wise is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death.

**Matthew 15:14** (Parallel theme): Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.

**John 6:63** (Parallel theme): It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.

**Proverbs 10:11** (Parallel theme): The mouth of a righteous man is a well of life: but violence covereth the mouth of the wicked.

**John 5:24** (Parallel theme): Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

**Proverbs 18:4** (Parallel theme): The words of a man's mouth are as deep waters, and the wellspring of wisdom as a flowing brook.

**Proverbs 15:28** (Parallel theme): The heart of the righteous studieth to answer: but the mouth of the wicked poureth out evil things.

**Proverbs 15:2** (Parallel theme): The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright: but the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness.

**Proverbs 14:27** (Parallel theme): The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death.

**John 6:68** (Parallel theme): Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.

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