

# Proverbs 17:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Excellent speech becometh not a fool: much less do lying lips a prince.

## Analysis

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Excellent speech is unfitting for a fool, and lying lips are 'much more' unsuitable for a prince. The Hebrew 'yether' (excellent/surpassing) describes noble or lofty speech that contradicts foolish character. Even more incongruous are lies from a 'nadiyb' (prince/noble)—one whose position demands truth. This establishes a hierarchy of moral expectations: everyone should speak truthfully, but leaders especially. Reformed theology emphasizes that those in authority bear greater accountability (James 3:1). Leaders who lie betray their calling and bring reproach on their office.

## Historical Context

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Ancient Near Eastern rulers were expected to embody justice and truth. When kings became liars and tyrants, it undermined the moral order and led to societal collapse, as Israel's history repeatedly demonstrated.

## Related Passages

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**1 Corinthians 13:4** — Characteristics of love

**1 John 4:8** — God is love

## Study Questions

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1. If you hold positions of leadership, do you maintain higher standards of truthfulness and integrity?
2. How do you respond when leaders lie or use their position to deceive?
3. What is the relationship between character and calling in Christian leadership?

## Interlinear Text

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שְׁפָתָ לֹא תִּאָתֶה כִּי יְבִרְכֶּתֶךְ לֹא תִּשְׁפַּת  
H3808 becometh H5000 not a fool H5036 lips H8193 Excellent H3499 H637 H3588 a prince H5081 H8193

שְׁקָרָה:

**much less do lying**

H8267

## Additional Cross-References

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**Proverbs 29:12** (Parallel theme): If a ruler hearken to lies, all his servants are wicked.

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