

# Proverbs 20:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Counsel in the heart of man is like deep water; but a man of understanding will draw it out.

## Analysis

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Counsel in the heart is like 'deep water,' but 'a man of understanding' draws it out. The Hebrew 'mayim amaq' (deep waters) suggests hidden wisdom requiring effort to access. The word 'dalah' (draw out) refers to drawing water from a well—difficult but rewarding work. This teaches that insight often lies beneath surface thoughts, requiring reflection and questioning. Reformed theology values thoughtful meditation on Scripture and doctrine. A person of understanding asks probing questions and digs beneath superficial answers to reach truth.

## Historical Context

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Drawing water from deep wells was strenuous labor requiring specialized equipment. This metaphor emphasized that accessing deep wisdom required similar effort, patience, and skill.

## Related Passages

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**Psalm 19:1** — Heavens declare God's glory

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

## Study Questions

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1. Do you engage in deep reflection and meditation to access wisdom, or do you settle for superficial thinking?
2. How can you develop the skill of asking questions that draw out hidden counsel?
3. What practices help you move beyond surface-level understanding to deeper insight?

## Interlinear Text

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מַיְם מַקִּים עַזְהַב בְּלֹב אֲישׁ תְּבוּנָה  
water is like deep Counsel in the heart but a man but a man of understanding  
H4325 H6013 H6098 H3820 H376 H376 H8394

דָּלְבָה:  
will draw it out  
H1802

## Additional Cross-References

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**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.

**1 Corinthians 2:11** (Parallel theme): For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

**Psalms 64:6** (Parallel theme): They search out iniquities; they accomplish a diligent search: both the inward thought of every one of them, and the heart, is deep.