

# Proverbs 26:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out: so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth.

## Analysis

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Where no wood is, fire goes out; where there's no talebearer, strife ceases. The Hebrew 'nir gan' (whisperer/talebearer) and 'shahaq' (quiet/cease) creates clear cause-effect. Fire requires fuel; remove wood, fire dies. Strife requires gossip; remove gossip, strife ends. This verse identifies gossip as conflict's fuel. Want to end disputes? Stop gossiping. James 1:26 warns: 'If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridled his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain.'

## Historical Context

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Proverbs repeatedly condemns gossip (11:13, 16:28, 18:8, 20:19). Ancient close communities made gossip especially destructive. Leviticus 19:16 commands: 'Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people.' Modern social media exponentially amplifies gossip's reach. Ending strife often requires simply stopping gossip rather than complex conflict resolution. Remove fuel, fire dies.

## 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. What conflicts persist because you or others keep feeding them through gossip?
2. How can you stop being 'wood' that fuels fires of strife?
3. What discipline would eliminate gossip from your speech patterns?

## Interlinear Text

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וְאֵי פֹס	עֵצִים	תִּכְבֶּה	אֵשׁ	וְאֵי יִן
Where no	wood	goeth out	is there the fire	H369
H657	H6086	H3518	H784	
וְהִנֵּה	יֹשֶׁת קַ	מִדּוֹן:		
so where there is no talebearer	ceaseth	the strife		
H5372	H8367	H4066		

## Additional Cross-References

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**Proverbs 22:10** (Parallel theme): Cast out the scorner, and contention shall go out; yea, strife and reproach shall cease.

**James 3:6** (Parallel theme): And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell.

**Proverbs 16:28** (Parallel theme): A froward man soweth strife: and a whisperer separateth chief friends.

**Proverbs 26:22** (Parallel theme): The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly.