

Avoid the Fate of the Reprobate, part 2 (Prov. 17)

1. Pause Before a Fight (Proverbs 17:14, 19, 27-28)

- **Don't Start Needless Strife (v. 14):** Starting conflict is like breaching a dam—small actions can lead to big consequences. Avoid grabbing “a dog by the ears” unless prepared for the fallout.
- **If You Must Start It, Do It Righteously:** Follow Matthew 18:15-17 for biblical conflict resolution.
- **Don't Start It Sinfully (v. 19a):** Ask, “Does this align with God’s mission?” If not, let it go.
- **Don't Love Conflict (v. 19b):** Pride fuels unnecessary strife.
- **Don't Stir Up Strife (vv. 27-28):** Grievous words escalate conflict—choose words wisely.

Application: Reflect before acting. Is this conflict necessary and godly? If not, walk away.

2. Uphold Justice (Proverbs 17:15, 23, 26)

- **Don't Justify the Wicked (v. 15):** Avoid excusing sin for personal gain or prestige.
- **Don't Take Bribes (v. 23):** Integrity matters—don't compromise for reward.
- **Don't Condemn the Righteous (v. 15):** Avoid punishing the innocent to “fit in” or appear active.
- **Don't Punish for “Equality” (v. 26):** Justice isn't about quotas—it's about truth.
- **God's Standard:** All these actions are an **abomination** to God. We answer to Him alone. “Thine own reproach alone do fear.” (Carnegie)

Application: Live for God's approval, not man's. Ensure your actions pass His “sniff test.”

3. Don't Avoid Hard Decisions (Proverbs 17:16)

- **Don't Avoid Tough Choices:** Know the cost of decisions and pay it if it's worth it.
- **Fools Ignore Wisdom:** The foolish don't seek or value understanding, missing the mark entirely.

Application: Face difficult choices with courage and discernment, seeking God's wisdom.

4. Love as a Forgiven Man (Proverbs 17:17-18)

- **Love Consistently (v. 17):** Love in good times and bad, like a true friend in need.
- **Avoid Fair-Weather Friendship (v. 18):** Don't be a "tit-for-tat" friend who only loves when it's easy.

Application: Show steadfast love, reflecting the forgiveness you've received from God.

5. Pursue Wisdom with a Right Heart (Proverbs 17:19, 24)

- **Avoid Needless Trouble (v. 19):** A perverse heart clouds judgment and invites trouble.
- **Wisdom Comes Easily with a Right Heart (v. 24):** When your heart aligns with God, wisdom is clear and accessible.

Application: Guard your heart against perversity to see and follow God's wisdom clearly.

6. Persevere with Joy (Proverbs 17:22)

- **Keep Going with a Merry Heart:** "A merry heart does good, like medicine, but a broken spirit dries the bones." Don't let troubles consume your focus.
- **Stay Resilient:** A joyful heart sustains you through challenges.

Application: Focus on God's goodness and keep moving forward with a cheerful spirit.

Final Thought: To avoid reprobation, heed God's warnings and turn from folly (Prov. 29:1). Live with integrity, love, and wisdom, answering to God alone. Modify "thine own reproach alone do fear" to "would Christ think well of me doing this?"