

## Listening Is a Virtue

Proverbs 18:2

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The New American Standard Version of the Bible renders Proverbs 18:2 as follows:

A fool does not delight in understanding,  
But only in revealing his own mind.

When a fool is put in the position of being a listener he does not like it. It may be that he is so self-opinionated that he is not interested in what others have to say; he knows it all. Or, perhaps he just does not care about knowledge or understanding, and finds no value in learning. In either case, whether for arrogance or stupidity, it is sad trying to speak to such a person. To try to teach a fool is to throw pearls to a swine.

Solomon reminds us that a fool's only desire is to reveal *his own* mind. Foolish enough is he who does not desire to learn the wisdom of other minds, but twice the fool is he who wants all to see the emptiness of his own. Proverbs 12:23 says, "A prudent man conceals knowledge, But the heart of fools proclaims folly" and in 15:2 we find, "..the mouth of fools spouts folly."

Very few of us will readily admit we are fools. I certainly don't want to. Perhaps, Solomon's wisdom here is lost on us because, not believing ourselves to be fools, we fail to find in it a personal application. If that is my position, Solomon's words may indict me far more than I care to admit.

There is a lesson here that all of us, fool or wise man alike, will do well to heed. Solomon is telling us all to simply listen. Stop talking long enough to listen and learn. We need to recognize there is much we don't know that would be good for us to know. Revealing our own knowledge is not nearly so beneficial as listening in order to increase understanding. Listening is a virtue unappreciated by fools.