



Studies in the Book of Proverbs by [John T Polk II](#)
For [The Fellowship Room](#)

(#135) The Proverbs of Solomon 18:17- Who's On, First?

Since God Created humans, only God can provide specific understanding of human behavior. God gave Solomon Divine Wisdom (**1 Kings Chapters 3 and 10**) to explain what and why behavior is as it is, and **Proverbs 10:1 - 24:34** are randomly written, as if they were Judgments Solomon made about individual cases brought to him for Divine Wisdom (**1 Kings Chapters 3 and 10**), or simply God-given explanations about life. New Testament passages may help see the continuation of Wisdom offered through Jesus Christ.

Proverbs 18:17:

The first one to plead his cause seems right, until his neighbor comes and examines him.

The sympathetic ear is what this Proverb is all about. In every dispute or trouble, there is always a "first side," that is, the one we hear first. The problem comes when we are prone to form an opinion before hearing the "other side." We need to remember that all forms of media are presenting their "first side:" movies, books, TV news, magazines, and papers.

The second part of the proverb shows that cross-examination, or further examination of the facts, can change the whole perspective. Other corresponding proverbs say:

- A faithful witness does not lie, but a false witness will utter lies. (**Proverbs 14:5**)
- Do not be a witness against your neighbor without cause, for would you deceive with your lips? (**Proverbs 24:28**)
- He who passes by *and* meddles in a quarrel not his own *Is like* one who takes a dog by the ears. (**Proverbs 26:17**)

Because there often is a mixture of faithful and false witnesses, we need to be most careful in our cross-examination. This possibility of wrong-sidedness shows the peril of quick judgments.

Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. (**1 John 4:1**)

Getting involved in "a quarrel" before we understand "both sides," is like controlling a dog by holding its ears – it may work for a while, but sooner or later, we must let go, and then what? We will get "bitten" by the arguments in the quarrel when we don't know what we're getting into. Why not wait until the "neighbor comes and examines" what we've been told?