

## Proverbs

### Scripture Reading — Ezekiel 18:1-13

*“What do you people mean by quoting this proverb about the land of Israel ... ?”  
Ezekiel 18:2 —*

All around us are sayings that express the wisdom learned in our society. Some sayings are good; some are not. In the United States many people like the sayings of Benjamin Franklin, such as “A penny saved is a penny earned” and “A small leak can sink a great ship.” Every culture has its wise sayings.

Little sayings like these can open the way for meaningful conversation. Such proverbs can even help us to challenge questionable ideas and present Christ to people whose “wise sayings” keep them from a relationship with God.

The people of Ezekiel’s day had a proverb about grapes that was really a criticism of God. Its meaning was this: “Our fathers sinned, but we got the blame. God is unfair. We’re innocent.” Ezekiel rejected that proverb, saying that God’s judgment is just. The soul that sins dies for its own sin, and God offers forgiveness to all who turn to him in repentance.

In Japan there is a common proverb: “There are many roads to the top of Mount Fuji.” It means there are many ways to salvation, and many acceptable saviors (a dearly held belief in a country with many gods). I never let that one go unchallenged. Listen to sayings that often come up in conversations, and don’t be afraid to say, “Yes, I hear that a lot, but it doesn’t ring true...”

### Prayer

*Lord, teach us when to speak and when to remain silent. Teach us discernment, that we may shine the wisdom of Christ into our conversations. In Jesus’s name, Amen.*

**Devotion topics:** [Christianity](#), [Discipleship](#), [Witness](#)

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