

Proverbs 18:13 – “He who answers a matter before he hears it, it is folly and shame to him.”

Principle: Answering a matter before hearing the whole story is folly.

It is more important to listen for the truth than to defend unproven conclusions. It takes years to learn that, but we all need to start sometime. If what you believe is not true, would you want to know? We owe it to ourselves to be honest enough to ask ourselves that question. I’m not talking about questioning God’s revelation, but our opinions. If, when challenged, we can’t wait to defend our ideas, we easily miss the point. I have often done that, and afterward realized I was so ready to defend myself I didn’t hear the other person. I have a useful tool in my office called a “talking stick.” It has a coyote skull on the end of a stick. A coyote is an Indian symbol for wisdom. When Indian chiefs engaged in a powwow, the only person who could talk was the one with the stick. The chief who talked first would hold it until the next person could repeat to him what he said to his satisfaction. Only then was the talking stick passed to that person. This was repeated until everyone had a chance to speak. I have actually used this in marriage counselling. James said, “Be swift to hear, slow to speak.” If we do that, it will keep us from folly.