

When I was a kid, I remember times of waiting at the Dentist's office and thumbing through the Highlight's Magazine left in the book rack. I always liked Highlight's because of the 'Goofus and Gallant' cartoons. Goofus and Gallant were two boys who modeled opposite behavior. If their mother told them to go rake the leaves, Gallant was seen outside raking the leaves and Goofus would be inside watching t.v. Goofus is selfish and refuses to share his snack with his friends while Gallant offers some of what he has to others. In the cartoon sketches the artist sought to make a quick lesson about good behavior in a practical way that children could understand.

In some ways, the Bible has its own 'Goofus and Gallant' section that we know as the book of Proverbs. The Proverbs contain pithy little word sketches contrasting wise and foolish behavior in this world. Instead of Goofus and Gallant we find characters like, 'the sluggard' and 'the diligent', or the 'hot-tempered man' and he who is slow to anger. On a vast array of topics, the reader is given a helpful picture of wisdom or folly.

For example, consider the Proverbs on speech. "He who guards his mouth and his tongue, guards his soul from troubles." [Prov. 21:23] Also, 'the fool's mouth is his ruin, and his lips are the snare of his soul.' [Prov. 18:7]

These examples play out every day but one incident in Hollywood a couple years ago could not have provided a better illustration of what the Proverbs are referring to. In early 2018 Roseanne Barr was on top of the world. Her show, 'Roseanne' had been rebooted by ABC and was breaking records in viewing numbers when suddenly on May 29 the show was abruptly canceled by the ABC executives. The cause: Roseanne, in real life, had said something on Twitter – a single tweet, that struck a number of people as being highly offensive and racist. The controversy exploded, the pile-on began and pretty soon Roseanne found out that forgiveness does not come easy in Hollywood.

In her first interview after the incident she tried to apologize. She admitted to being a loudmouth and complained that she was misunderstood in what she said. She sobbed as she told the interviewer that she was truly sorry and that she had suffered tremendously because of her ill-advised comment. But alas, the damage was done. After all, 'the fool's mouth is his ruin, and his lips are the snare of his soul.'

I'm glad we have the book of Proverbs. God knows that there is a bit of Goofus in all of us – or perhaps a lot. But, by reflecting upon the wise admonitions found in the book of Proverbs we can be spared from the harm of our old natures and more regularly reflect the wisdom of the new given to us in Christ Jesus.