Communication is always a complicated topic. There are so many different ways to get it wrong! And here we have several. There are people you just shouldn’t engage with. You can’t argue a foolish person into wisdom. Verse 9 assures us that contending with a foolish man leads surely to disruption and disquiet—but never to actual improvement. There are also people that we shouldn’t allow to engage with us. The bloodthirsty, wicked person hates the righteous person. But the righteous person seeks only good for others. Verse 11 makes it clear that communication isn’t only about speaking. Sometimes it’s about holding your peace! A wise man needn’t blurt out everything he knows at the beginning of a debate. He is able to retain his commentary until it can do some good. We must offer comments only at the most opportune time rather than telling everything we know at the first opportunity. We must also take care with the communication that we receive. Listening to or accepting lies tends to make us more susceptible to lies the next time. And residing in an environment filled with charming lies makes the truth less appealing. As verse 12 suggests, listening to lies can contribute to an environment containing only liars. But despite the many difficulties that we have with communication, verse 13 reminds us of its importance. The poor and the deceitful associate together in a lot of unhappy ways, but God gives life to both. He made us in the same way and He has placed us in the same environments. We’re a community, and we need to learn to communicate in positive ways, recognizing and avoiding deceit and other types of wickedness, and contributing positively to our communities as best we can.

**Proverbs 29:9-13**

**If a wise man contendeth with a foolish man, whether he rage or laugh, there is no rest.**

**The bloodthirsty hate the upright: but the just seek his soul.**

**A fool uttereth all his mind: but a wise man keepeth it in till afterwards.**

**If a ruler hearken to lies, all his servants are wicked.**

**The poor and the deceitful man meet together: the Lord lighteneth both their eyes.**

**Topi**

This animal is a highly social and very fast-movint type of antelope found in sub-Saharan Africa. The word “tope” or “topi” is Swahili, and was first recorded in the 1880s by the German explorer Gustav Fischer. These creatures migrate along with the wildebeest, zebra, and other grass-eaters of the plains. Being out in the open, Topi stand watch so that a few individuals watch the surroundings while the rest graze. The watchers emit a distinctive snort to warn of approaching danger. It is also true that Topi have a complicated reproductive arrangement, ranging between the traditional territorial system of resource defense polygyny herds to gatherings that contain short-lasting territories to lek systems. It’s hard for a male to get a female’s attention in this environment! So some male topi use the warning snort in order to get the females to pause nearby, allowing them time to try and tempt her into mating. These creatures are managing their communication with care! I’m not sure if the fake snorts exactly qualify as deception or not. Perhaps they are sincere complements! But they are certainly evidence that the topi are working together to communicate within their communities. If only our communication were as clear and peaceable!

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Season 1

Episode 3

Start: 4:57 (48:05 from End)

End: 9:29 (43:33 from End)