

**Without counsel plans fail,
but with many advisers they succeed.**

Proverbs 15:22 – A Proverbial Story

By Ted Hildebrandt and Chapgpt

In a lush valley cradled between two mountains, the village of Elderglen had thrived for generations. Its people were known for their unity and wisdom, often sought out by neighboring hamlets during troubled times.

But when a blight struck their orchards one spring, panic replaced their usual harmony. The trees bore blackened fruit, and the leaves curled and fell long before autumn's breath. For a village that lived off its harvest, this was a death sentence.

The village chief, Carson, was a young man with a passionate heart but little experience. Driven by urgency, he declared, "We must burn the infected groves immediately and plant anew. It is the only way."

Some villagers nodded, desperate for action. But an elder named MacKenzie stepped forward. "Chief Carson," she said gently, "such a decision cannot be made in haste. The land is old, and so are its ailments. We must seek counsel."

Carson frowned. "We don't have time. Every day we wait, the blight spreads."

Still, MacKenzie persisted. "Without counsel, plans fail, but with many advisers they succeed," she quoted the old proverb.

Reluctantly, Carson agreed to convene a council.

He summoned the village herbalist, who had treated sick crops before. They brought in a traveler who had seen a similar blight beyond the mountains. The blacksmith, though no farmer, understood soil from the forge clay and offered his insights. Even children who spent hours among the trees shared what they had noticed — ants fleeing the roots and a strange smell on the wind before the sickness appeared.

From each voice came a fragment of the truth.

They soon discovered that the blight was not a disease of the trees, but of the soil — poisoned by a toxic green fungus that thrived in the damp shadows. Burning the trees would have spread the spores further, dooming future harvests.

Instead, they cleared the underbrush to allow sunlight to reach the roots, mixed ash and sand into the soil to dry it, and planted herbs known to repel the fungus's spread.

It was slow work, and the first season yielded little. But by autumn of the next year, green returned to the grove, and the fruit, though fewer, was healthy and sweet.

Carson stood beneath a fruit-laden branch and turned to MacKenzie. "I nearly doomed us by my certainty."

She smiled, brushing a leaf from his shoulder. "Leadership is not knowing everything, Carson. It's knowing when to listen."

From that day forward, the village held a monthly gathering, where any voice could be heard and wisdom shared. Elderglen grew stronger, not just in harvest, but in heart — a place where counsel was as valued as courage, and unity was their richest crop.

Carson raised his voice so the village could hear. He declared that the ancient proverb be carved in stone at the entrance to the village: "Without counsel plans fail, but with many advisers they succeed" (Proverbs 15:22).