

## Proverbs Chapter 30 - John Karmelich

1. We now have two chapters left in Proverbs. Each of the last two chapters is unique and different in style from most of Proverbs. Let's just say we have to study each chapter carefully. ☺
2. Chapter 30 was written by a man named "Agur". If you study through the commentaries, no one has any idea who "Agur" is. There is a (not the) view that "Agur" is a code name for Solomon. Since Proverbs Chapter 1 Verse 1 says the book was written by Solomon, some suspect that Agur is a secret name for Solomon. When I start Verse 1 of this chapter, we'll discuss who "Agur" is.
3. Chapter 30 is very different from most of Proverbs. While Chapters 9 through 29 are mostly one-line proverbs that stand alone, or in small groups, this chapter has a whole different flavor.
  - a) The topic of this chapter is still biblical wisdom, but it is not the "do this and avoid that" style we have been reading through most of the book.
  - b) This chapter gives examples in human characters and animal characters of what is "wise" and what is not "wise". This chapter requires a lot more deciphering than all the previous chapters in this book.
  - c) Most of the book of Proverbs is pretty straightforward stuff. I wrote some commentary on each verse, but a lot of it is very "logical". Chapter 30 requires a lot more thought and explanation than any of the previous chapters.
4. The theme of Chapter 30 is essentially the same as the book: Wisdom. What changes is the style of examples and the illustrations. It is probably best to just "start" and explain as I go along.
5. Chapter 30, Verse 1: The sayings of Agur son of Jakeh--an oracle: This man declared to Ithiel, to Ithiel and to Ucal:
  - a) Verse 1 lists four people. One is Agur, the writer of this chapter. The second is Agur's father Jakeh. The verse declares that the sayings of "Agur" were declared to Ithiel and Ucal, whoever they are. As I stated, if you read through bible commentaries, they have no idea who any of these four people are. These names have no other reference anywhere in the bible, or in any historical documents.
    - i) Here's the basic argument why this "Agur" person is not Solomon: The style of Hebrew (the original language) is different from the rest of Proverbs and appears to be older in text. Second, Agur claims in Verse 3 that "I have not learned wisdom, nor have I knowledge of the Holy One." That doesn't sound like Solomon as He spoke to God and was known as the wisest man of his time (As stated in Book of 1st Kings 10:23.)
  - b) The alternative theory, which comes from some Jewish theologians and accepted by a small percentage of Christian scholars, is that "Agur" is a nickname for Solomon and the other three names are there for a specific reason. Let me lay out the theory and we can each decide for ourselves if this is correct:
    - i) The first name given in Verse 1 is "Agur". The word "Agur" means "To collect" in the Hebrew. The argument is that "Agur" is a symbolic name. Solomon was known as a collector of things, especially proverbs.
      - a) In 1st Kings 4:32, it states Solomon spoke over 3,000 proverbs. If you add up all the proverbs in this book, it is only a few hundred. The point is the word "Agur" means "collector" and Solomon collected proverbs!
    - ii) The second name in Verse 1 is "Jakeh", who is the father of Agur. The name Jakeh means "religious" or "pious" one. Since David was Solomon's father, "Jakeh" is Solomon's nickname for David here. David was known as a "lover of God" based on all the Psalms written by David.
    - iii) The third name is "Ithiel" means "God comes", or God is with me". Let me move on to the fourth name, and then I'll discuss with this name means. The name is similar to the word "Immanuel". A name given to Jesus in Matthew 1:23.

- iv) The fourth and final name is "Ucal". It is a verb meaning "to be consumed".
  - v) Now if we put the words for last two names together, the idea of "God comes" to be "consumed" is tied to when Jesus came to be consumed for our sins! John 6:52 says, "Jesus said to them, I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you." (NIV).
  - vi) The point is Solomon wrote these proverbs from the perspective of God coming down to earth not only to die for our sins, but to teach us wisdom.
  - vii) This theory about Solomon as the author originated with the Jewish scholar named Rashi (who lived in the 11th Century AD), who obviously does not believe the "Jesus" part. An early Christian scholar Jerome, who organized the original Latin bible, accepted this theory and wrote about the "Jesus" parts.
- c) The key point for you and I is not whether or not the author is Solomon. The point is there is something to be learned from the four names given in these verses. The four names have means that are important to understand for the next set of verses.
6. Verse 2: "I am the most ignorant of men; I do not have a man's understanding.
- a) The idea here is not that the author (be it Solomon or someone else), is dumb or lack's wisdom about man. The idea is that the writer is ignorant of man from God's perspective. The line is written from God's perspective and not man's.
  - b) Think about Verse 2 in light of "biblical wisdom". If this verse is claiming the author is the "most ignorant of men", why should we care what he thinks? If this author has no knowledge of God, why would his opinions be part of the bible?
    - i) That's why I think this is Solomon. Despite the fact that Solomon was a collector of proverbs, he (or whoever the author is here), admits his ignorance of mankind from God's perspective or fully understand God's purpose for mankind.
  - c) The other way to look at this verse is to say, "This chapter is written from God's perspective and I (as God) don't have man's flawed understanding of life.
    - i) My point here is don't let this negative statement in Verse 2 prevent us from studying this chapter as the author is naive about man! Once you understand the point of this sentence, it is saying that we cannot fully understand what God is up to and we don't have God's wisdom to comprehend everything!
7. Verse 3: I have not learned wisdom, nor have I knowledge of the Holy One.
- a) The word "nor" is not in the original text, it was added by the translator's. What this sentence is saying is whoever the "I" is, He (God) was not taught wisdom! The idea is this verse is written from a Godly perspective in that whoever is speaking always had wisdom, but did not learn it. This writer has knowledge of the Holy One (God) because He (the entity) is God!
    - i) My point is Verses 2 and 3 are teaching that the "real" author of this chapter is God in that the text is God-inspired. It is saying I am God and therefore I don't have the understanding of a human man and I don't have to learn wisdom.
  - b) The point is these early verses are saying that the real author is God and it is as if God Himself is teaching this chapter!
8. Verse 4: Who has gone up to heaven and come down? Who has gathered up the wind in the hollow of his hands? Who has wrapped up the waters in his cloak? Who has established all the ends of the earth? What is his name, and the name of his son? Tell me if you know!
- a) Verse 4 is continuing to describe God Himself in terms of what He has done (the creation of the world) and what He is capable of doing.
  - b) The first question of Verse 4 asks, "Who has gone up to heaven and has come down". The question is being asked as if it is waiting for "us" to respond.
  - c) Notice the "order" of the first question. It asks who has gone up to heaven and then come down? It is not in reverse order.

- i) In Genesis 28:12, Jacob had a dream. In that dream he saw angels ascending up to heaven on that ladder and descending. If the angels were ascending the ladder, how did they get down here in the first place? In the Gospel of John 1:51, Jesus said, "You shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man." Jesus is claiming He is the ladder of Genesis 28:12.
- d) Getting back to the verse, the idea is God came down from heaven to create the world as we know it. The rest of the verse can be read in that light:
  - i) The second sentence says, "Who has gathered up the wind in the hollow of his hands?" Try to grasp the wind in one's hand. It can't be done. It is similar to a proverb in the last lesson where it talked about how one cannot grasp oil with one's bare hands.
  - ii) The third sentence says, "Who has wrapped up the waters in his cloak?" The idea is that God controls the borders of the oceans and He is in control of its "lengths" and "boundaries" of the waters on the earth.
  - iii) The next sentence says, "Who has established all the ends of the earth? Like the borders of the oceans and seas, it is saying that God knows the borders of the land as He established it in the first place.
  - iv) To sum up this section, it is a reminder that God Himself created the world and therefore He understands its boundaries and borders.
- e) If you are confused, just remember that this lesson is written from God's perspective. ☺
- f) On to the next and key sentence of this verse: The last sentence says, "What is his name, and the name of his son?" The verse ends with the question, "Tell me if you know!"
  - i) This verse is preaching the existence of God and the existence of His son. Remember that Proverbs was written roughly a 1,000 years before Christ.
  - ii) A point here is that the existence of "God the Son" is not just a New Testament concept. There are hints of "The Son" going back to the early chapters of Genesis!
    - a) For example, Genesis 1:26 says, "Then God said, "Let us make man in our image". The great question of Genesis 1:26 is "Who is God talking to?" The classical Jewish answer is either 1) God was talking to angels (which is wrong as angels we're not involved in the creation process) or 2) God is so "big in concept" that God is talking to Himself.
    - b) Obviously Christianity sees Genesis 1:26 and Verse 3 here in Proverbs 31 as Old Testament clues as to the existence of God the Son.
  - iii) The New Testament sheds some light on this: John 1:3 teaches that the world as we know it was made through Jesus. Colossians 1:16 teaches the same thing.
  - iv) OK, this verse is saying Jesus was there when the world was created. How do Jewish people interpret this verse? The "Midrash", an official Jewish commentary simply says "The Son" reference is a poetic way of describing the nation of Israel as "His son".
- g) OK John, all of this is interesting, but what's the point of it all? That's Verse 5!
- 9. Verse 5: "Every word of God is flawless; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him.
  - a) One of the main points being made in these early verses is that God's word can be trusted. God is the one who made the heavens and the earth in the first place. If we can trust God to make the world we live in, then we can trust Him with our lives as well.
  - b) Notice it says, "Every word of God is flawless". At this time, the Old Testament as we know it was not complete. This verse may be referring to just the five books of Moses or it may be referring to some of the early other writings of the Old Testament as well.
    - i) The point is the bible as we know it and even as the Israelites knew it at that time can be trusted, every word of it.
    - ii) To take refuge in God's word is to take refuge in God Himself.

- c) Tying the first five verses together, the point is whoever wrote it was taking dictation from God whether they realized it or not. When these verses are saying are, "I (God speaking) do not have a man's understanding", the idea is not that the writer is stupid, it is saying that this knowledge is coming from God Himself who is "above" the sinful level of mankind.
  - d) The other point is the way for people to have redemption is to follow God and His words!
10. Verse 6: Do not add to his words, or he will rebuke you and prove you a liar.
- a) There are a couple of places in the bible where it teaches us to not add to the bible. That concept is stating twice in Deuteronomy (4:2 and 12:32), here in Proverbs and one of the last verses in Revelation also preach against adding or taking away from God's word!
  - b) Does that mean you or I will add a book to the bible? That's not what it means. We "add" to God's word when we put our own commentary on equal footing with God's word. We "add" to God's word when we put our own viewpoints or our own view's of life on equal footing with God's word. Bible commentaries are not bad things, they just have to be read on a lower level and not equal to the word itself.
  - c) How does God "rebuke us and prove us to be a liar"? When we make our own viewpoints as being equal to God, He finds a way to put down those views to show He is right and we are wrong at those moments.
11. Verse 7: "Two things I ask of you, O LORD; do not refuse me before I die: <sup>8</sup> Keep falsehood and lies far from me; give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread. <sup>9</sup> Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you and say, 'Who is the LORD?' Or I may become poor and steal, and so dishonor the name of my God.
- a) Chapter 30 has a purpose other than reminding us who God is. It is to teach us attributes about God and give us additional examples of wisdom. That is why this chapter does belong in the book of Proverbs. Remember the main topic of the book is about how to live a life pleasing to God. One way, as indicated in Verse 6, is to not add to His words.
  - b) Now in Verse 7, we move on to a new topic within the context of "wisdom". The writer is now speaking from a human perspective. The writer is asking God for two things in his life. The first is to keep "falsehood and lies" from me and the second is to be given neither riches nor poverty. We'll now discuss both principals.
  - c) Understand that whoever is making this statement is not on his deathbed. The point is not that this man is about to die and he is making a request before God. ☺ The point is here are the things he is asking from his life.
  - d) The first request is to keep him away from "falsehood and lies". This was a common topic all through the book of Proverbs. We have had many proverbs on the issue of honesty and avoiding people who spent their time teaching lies.
    - i) Of all the things to ask for in life, why did the author pick this one? I believe the answer is far bigger than encountering people who lie. The idea is about sticking close to God's truth and avoiding those who draw us away from God!
    - ii) It is not possible for humans to go through life without making mistakes. I don't think that's the point here. The request being made here is for guidance to keep us close to God and help us to get away from things that draw us away from God.
  - e) Let's move on to the second part of this four-line proverb. The second request is that the person is asking God to make me neither too rich nor too poor. If one has too much money, the temptation is to say, "I don't need God as I have everything I need". If we are too poor, the temptation would be to steal and we would dishonor God by stealing!
    - i) This actually leads back to the question of who is the author: Solomon was a king and a rich one at that. Many question whether or not this is Solomon as the writer of this chapter is asking not to be "too rich". Solomon was a wealthy king!
    - ii) The main point is the writer of this section is saying it is dangerous to be either too rich or poor as either one can drive a person away from God.

- iii) Remember God is not against us having wealth or earning a living. The key here is perspective about that wealth. The point is we should never let money draw us away from God by either depending upon it for our lives or stealing it to survive. Our dependence for life is on God and not our wealth.
  - f) From Verse 7 to the end of the chapter are examples and illustrations about how we should live. We're back to the topic of "wisdom". This first example reminds us of the basics, which is about sticking close to God and don't let either foolishness or money drive us away from our relationship with God.
- 12. Verse 10: "Do not slander a servant to his master, or he will curse you, and you will pay for it.
  - a) From Verses 10-17, we get a bunch of one or two line proverbs, each making a different point about the way we as humans should (properly) act in life.
  - b) Verse 10 says that when it comes to servant and master relationships, we should not slander a servant to his master. Obviously we would not make that accusation unless we thought the "master" was doing something wrong.
  - c) The point of Verse 10 is the "master" is in charge of the servant and not us (the one's interfering between the master and the servant). The underlying point of this proverb has to do with meddling in someone else's business. In other words, it is not our job to get involved with that relationship. If the master is mistreating the servant, we let God work it out, not us. In the modern world, we might bring the issue to the authorities. The point is about avoiding meddling in affairs that are not ours.
- 13. Verse 11: "There are those who curse their fathers and do not bless their mothers;
  - a) Verses 11-14 each begin with the Hebrew word "dor". That words means, "a class or group of people". Each of these four verses teaches us about negative human behavior. The point is the next four verses are designed as a group.
  - b) Verse 11 is there to remind us that there are those in society who curse their parents. This verse has nothing to do with parents who abuse their children. This is about grown children who are not grateful to their parents and don't respect them. The point is about grown children who run off to do their own thing and ignore their parents! The verse could refer to one defaming their parents or just "treating them lightly".
  - c) Both the Old and New Testaments have references to grown children showing respect and taking care of their older parents. It is part of the 10 commandments in Exodus 20. Paul also brings up this point in 1st Timothy 5:3 and 5:16.
- 14. Verse 12: those who are pure in their own eyes and yet are not cleansed of their filth;
  - a) We are now on the second proverb about types of behavior to avoid.
  - b) This verse is about people who think they are right in their own views (not God's). In other words, they refuse to ever confess anything as wrong. They refuse to turn to God for forgiveness. They don't realize they are full of sin and refuse to acknowledge they need God's help.
- 15. Verse 13: those whose eyes are ever so haughty, whose glances are so disdainful;
  - a) The verse refers to having an arrogant attitude toward others. The idea of "haughty eyes" is about looking down upon people who they disagree with. The idea is a person who doesn't care for the things of God and they look down on those that do!
  - b) One of the ideas taught throughout the book of Proverbs is that the concept of sin begins with a desire in the heart. Since we can't always know what people are thinking on the inside, we watch their behavior. One sign that gives away what someone is thinking is to watch their "eyes" and how they look at and treat others.
- 16. Verse 14: those whose teeth are swords and whose jaws are set with knives to devour the poor from the earth, the needy from among mankind.
  - a) Here's the final in this four-proverb section about behavior to avoid.

- b) Verse 11 started by saying such people curse their own parents. Verse 12 says such people refuse to acknowledge they do anything wrong. Verse 13 adds that such people look down upon others.
  - c) Finally here in Verse 14, the point is to watch what comes out of their mouths. Such people say things to "devour" others. Such people are mainly interested in material wealth since they have no interest in God and "devour" others. The idea of "devouring the poor and the needy" is not so much about those who are physically poor but those who are naïve about God. The point is such people want to draw others down the same path as themselves and lead others away from God as well as themselves.
    - i) Yes this verse can refer to those who physically put down others and abuse the poor. The bigger picture is not only are they working toward hell, but trying to draw others in as well.
17. Verse 15a: "The leech has two daughters. 'Give! Give!' they cry.
- a) It is best to explain the background first, and then explain what it means. A leech is the size of a large snail. It sucks blood. If one gets a leech on one's skin, it can start to suck out our blood. This verse is not talking about a literal leech but a person who has two daughters. Both daughters are crying out "give, give".
    - i) The point is the daughters are acting just like the parents. The parents "leech" off people (like a blood sucking leech) and the daughters act just like the parents.
  - b) The point of the proverb, as it will become clear, is that the writer of proverbs is describing people and situations that are never satisfied with what they have and always want more. A "leech" is never satisfied with the amount of blood taken and wants more. The offspring of leech types of people are not satisfied either and also, "just want more".
    - i) The condemnation is about people who live mainly for material things in life.
  - c) Note that this is not the entire proverb. The rest of Verse 15 goes with Verse 16. There is a good reason why the second half of this verse is included with Verse 15.
    - i) The point is, it is not just the four things in Verse 16 that says, "Never enough", is also the concept of the leech. Both Verses 15 and 16 are describing things that never say, "I'm satisfied". The verses are describing things that always want more.
18. Verse 15 (cont.): "There are three things that are never satisfied, four that never say, 'Enough!':<sup>16</sup> the grave, the barren womb, land, which is never satisfied with water, and fire, which never says, 'Enough!'
- a) The basic point is there are certain things in life that are never satisfied. The examples given in Verse 16 are the grave, the barren womb, land, as it never says "enough water" and an active fire that never says, "OK, I'm done consuming, I'll put myself out now."
  - b) Let me explain each one, and then I'll talk about the point of this proverb.
  - c) The idea of the "grave" is that until Jesus returns and human life as we know it ends, people will continue to die. The "grave" is never satisfied and we will continue to die.
  - d) The idea of the "barren womb" is that a woman who can't have children feels a sense of emptiness and is not happy until that woman has a child.
    - i) What about women who don't want children. Yes, many such women exist and some also accept the idea they will never have children.
  - e) The idea of "land and water" is that a patch of land never says, "I have enough water". The water it takes from the rain (or whatever source) eventually sinks deep in the land and works its way down to underground water sources. The point has nothing to do with droughts and floods. The point is that eventually land (especially land used to grow crops) need more water in order for those crops to grow. There is never enough water to satisfy the land on a long-term basis. It must continue to be watered to thrive.
  - f) The final example is a fire. That fire does not go out until it runs out of things to consume or until firemen put it out. The point is fires never say, "I've consumed enough" and stop.

- g) OK, what's the underlying point of all of this? The point is there are some things in life that say, "I've had enough". It started with the leech-people who cry out for more. As to the other examples, the next one is the grave. The next one is the barren womb. The third is land and water, and the final example is about fire.
- i) What does this mean? As to the "leech's" it is a reminder that no matter how much stuff we, there is never a sense of satisfaction. People always want more.
  - ii) As to the grave, it is a reminder that no matter how hard we try, we will die one day. We need to live our lives with the possibility every day could be our last.
  - iii) As to the "barren womb", this is a statement of fact about most women. Most want to have children and there is a sense of emptiness when they can't. I don't think this is written for us to do something about it, but to understand the fact.
  - iv) As to the earth, water and fire, it is again to understand how the "world" and its forces work. This verse does not mean we should avoid watering the field or fighting fires. It is about accepting certain facts about the world and "dealing with them" the best we can.
  - v) So why are these verses here? To remind us of things we can do in life and the things we have to accept as true whether we like them or not!
19. Verse 17: "The eye that mocks a father, that scorns obedience to a mother, will be pecked out by the ravens of the valley, will be eaten by the vultures.
- a) I don't believe this verse is meant to be taken overly literal. The point is the type of person who is disobedient to their parents will suffer the consequences in the end.
  - b) This type of warning is not about typical teenage rebellion, which is normal. It is about the person who grows up and ignores the godly wisdom that was given to them by their parents. May God give us the wisdom as to how to treat our parents.
  - c) The idea of "eyes being pecked out" is a colorful way of saying such disobedient children don't see the truth and suffer in life for it. They have a destiny in hell from turning from God all of their adult life.
  - d) After a bunch of verses reminding us of the reality of this world, here we have one final verse on the importance of listening to the godly advice of good parents.
20. Verse 18: "There are three things that are too amazing for me, four that I do not understand: <sup>19</sup> the way of an eagle in the sky, the way of a snake on a rock, the way of a ship on the high seas, and the way of a man with a maiden.
- a) The writer of this chapter is now giving another set of comparisons for us to think about:
    - i) The analogies include the way an eagle can fly in the sky, the way a snake can move on a rock (without the use of arms and legs), the way a ship can move and be controlled by a relatively small rudder and the way a young man can act sexually with his "maiden" (i.e., bride).
  - b) As to the eagle, if you have ever watched one, they can fly a long time based on a short amount of "flapping". They are a graceful bird to watch in flight. As to the snake, it is amazing to think how they can move given the lack of arms or legs. As to a ship, it is interesting to contemplate how it can change direction by turning the rudder. The point of these three examples is that some things are hard to impossible for us to comprehend.
  - c) The final example is "A man with a maiden". Most men are not taught anything about how to act sexually in bed. They (we) learn by trial and error. The point here is that men just figure it out, naturally and easily. Like the eagle and the snake, it is a gift from God and that gift is often unappreciated.
  - d) The point of this two-line proverb is that God provides "techniques" that we don't always appreciate. God makes it possible for an eagle to fly, for a snake to "walk" on a rock, for a ship to move across the sea and for a man to have sexual pleasure in bed. The idea is to learn to appreciate the details God goes through as for us to appreciate nature and our own life. It is a reminder that God is working in ways we don't always comprehend.

21. Verse 20: "This is the way of an adulteress: She eats and wipes her mouth and says, 'I've done nothing wrong.'
- a) Verse 20 begins a new set of comparisons. It is about things that are "wrong" in life due to the sinful actions of humans.
  - b) The first example is the adulteress. This proverb is not about food. The point is the adulteress commits some sort of sexual sin by sleeping with someone's husband or just having sex outside of marriage. The point is she refuses to think about her action as being wrong. She never learns from her sinful actions and just moves on the next affair.
    - i) A few years back, I heard the testimony of a woman who gave her life to Christ who was a former prostitute working in Hollywood. She now has a ministry to reach out to other prostitutes and to show them the error of their ways. My point here is once someone goes down that path, it is hard, but not impossible to change! Sometimes God calls us into ministries that our related on our past sinful actions!
22. Verse 21: "Under three things the earth trembles, under four it cannot bear up: <sup>22</sup> a servant who becomes king, a fool who is full of food, <sup>23</sup> an unloved woman who is married, and a maidservant who displaces her mistress.
- a) These three verses tie to Verse 20. These three verses give four things that go wrong in the world due to "human error". It is describing things that should not happen. That is why Verse 20 ties to these four. This chapter has this style of listing one thing, and then listing four more examples right after that. The idea is to think about all of these examples together and to learn from them! With that said, let's discuss these three verses.
  - b) Verse 21 gives this poetic statement of "three things that (make) the earth tremble and four it cannot bear up". There is a style of Hebrew poetry that comes out in the bible every now and then to list three things, "and a fourth". The idea is not that this is a complete list, but to give a handful of examples. By saying "and a fourth" is a poetic way of saying this list is not complete. With that said, let's look at this little list:
    - i) The first is about a "servant who becomes a king". The problem is about one who is trained all of their life to be a servant is not trained to become a king. The point is about raising people up to a role of authority in which they were not trained for that position. The issue is about being prepared for a job.
    - ii) The second is a "fool who is full of food". The proverb is not about eating. ☺ The point is about a fool who is satisfied with the things of life. A fool by definition is one who doesn't care for the things of God. If they are now satisfied with the things of this world, they have no desire to learn anything new and they become a nuisance (at the least) to those of us who do care about God.
    - iii) The third is an unloved woman who is married. This is about a woman who is unloved by the one she is married to! The idea is her husband does not show any love to her! That type of suffering can last a lifetime.
      - a) I could give a whole sermon here on the role of spouses to love each other as that is what God called us to do. A marriage commitment requires us to love our spouse. It is a "decision", not a feeling.
    - iv) The final example is the "maidservant who displaces her mistress". The idea is the maidservant has an affair with the mistresses' husband and becomes the new wife. The warning is against adultery and taking the place of someone we shouldn't.
  - c) Putting all four examples together, the idea is that there are things in life that are not right and everybody involved in that situation suffers because of it.
    - i) When a servant becomes a king, that servant will not rule well and everyone suffers who is around and under that king.
    - ii) When a fool is satisfied, everyone around that fool has to put up with him.
    - iii) When the unloved woman is married, both the husband and wife suffer from a lack of love and they end up hurting each other.



- iv) When the maidservant "harms" her mistress, be it by disloyalty or having an affair with the husband, the point is everyone there suffers for it.
  - d) The summary of all this is to watch out for situations that are "not right" and displeasing to God as they not what He desires for that situation.
23. Verse 24: Four things on earth are small, yet they are extremely wise:
- a) Now we have another set of "four things". In this next set, it is describing four types of small animals that survive and thrive despite the smallness of their size.
24. Verse 25: Ants are creatures of little strength, yet they store up their food in the summer;
- a) The first of the four examples is the ant. Despite the fact the ant is very small in size, an ant can lift things up to nine times his body weight (if my memory is correct!). Ants also work as a team to store up their food during the summer months.
    - i) How do ants know how to work as a team? How do they know their limits of what they can carry? It is another example of how God created the little, as well as the big things of the world. We can learn from the ants in that by their "planning for the winter" so we can also plan for rough times when they come!
25. Verse 26: coney are creatures of little power, yet they make their home in the crags;
- a) The second example is a "coney". This is a rabbit like animal that is native to the Middle East. This animal does not have any way to protect itself against predators. The way it survives is to find holes in the rocky environments so predators cannot attack them.
  - b) The point for us is if a small coney can find a way to protect itself, so can we when danger approaches. As one can tell, the point of all these animal examples is for us to learn from them and apply it when say, dangerous situations arise.
26. Verse 27: locusts have no king, yet they advance together in ranks;
- a) The point of this example is that locusts do not have a king or leader that says, "go this way", despite a lack of any leader, they stay in "ranks" and all generally go the same way.
  - b) How does a locust know to stay in rank? We don't know. It is an instinctive thing given to locusts by God.
  - c) What is to be learned from them? There are times when we need to follow orders of those in charge of us. We have leaders and still disobey at times, and yet here is this creature that has no leader and in that sense, acts better than humans as they do what they are supposed to do.
  - d) I can't leave this verse without commenting on something in Revelation.
    - i) Revelation Chapter 9 describes a "locust creature" that harms people during the great tribulation period. Chapter 9, Verse 11 says these locust-like creatures have a king over them, who is the "angel of the Abyss".
    - ii) My only point here is I'm convinced the locusts of Revelation 9 are not literal locusts. That is because Proverbs 30:27 says the locusts do not have a king. The "locusts" of Revelation 9 have a king.
27. Verse 28: a lizard can be caught with the hand, yet it is found in kings' palaces.
- a) The final animal example is the lizard (also translated spider in some bibles). The idea is a creature so small, it can fit in one's hand. At the same time, they work their way into any building including a king's palace. Their only defense is their ability to run away!
  - b) So what are we to learn from this? Other than to beware of what is crawling around our house, is the idea that if a lizard can make its way into a king's palace, so we can aspire to anything in life it is God's will and we set forth the effort. I am convinced the biggest obstacle that prevents people from accomplishing great things in life is that they (we) convince ourselves we can't do it. The point is if a lizard can make its way into a king's house, so we can do "great things" if 1) it is God's will and 2) we apply the effort and believe it can be accomplished.
  - c) Tying the last set of verses together, the point is we can learn from small and essentially helpless animals as examples of how to live and how we can do things to succeed in life.

28. Verse 29: "There are three things that are stately in their stride, four that move with stately bearing:
- a) Verse 29 begins the final set of "three, no make it four things" for us to contemplate. The four things are in Verses 30 and 31. The point of these four is how well they "move".
29. Verse 30: a lion, mighty among beasts, who retreats before nothing;
- a) The first of these four things is the lion. The point is the lion has no natural enemies and a lion can move freely and can "stride well". If you have ever watched a lion walk (hopefully at a zoo, behind a big fence), they spend a lot of time walking around. They seem to "stride" well as they walk. They have no enemies and don't fear anything.
  - b) Let me list the rest of the examples, and then we'll discuss the meaning.
30. Verse 31: a strutting rooster, a he-goat, and a king with his army around him.
- a) The next example is the rooster. If one ever watched a rooster around some chickens, the rooster has a walk that communicates, "I am in charge around here". There is a sense of pride to his walk as the rooster realizes he is the dominate male of that group.
  - b) The next example is the "he goat". There is debate among the bible scholars what exactly is meant by the "he goat". Whatever the animal is, the idea is that he is strutting around with the realization that he is in charge.
  - c) The final example is the "king with the army around him". What makes the king powerful? It is the army that protects him. The king is the "real" point of this proverb. Just as certain male animals strut around in dominance in the pack around them, so a king struts around in dominance over the army that follows and protects him.
  - d) So, what are we to apply from this? For starters, it is another reminder of how life works. There is usually a dominate male strutting around in charge. Our job as "servants" is to be loyal to that king. One can first of all apply it God and our loyalty to Him. On a human level, God does call on us to respect human government. If we elect our leaders, we may disagree with their politics, but they are still our leaders and must be treated with respect for that reason.
31. Verse 32: "If you have played the fool and exalted yourself, or if you have planned evil, clap your hand over your mouth! <sup>33</sup> For as churning the milk produces butter, and as twisting the nose produces blood, so stirring up anger produces strife."
- a) The final two verses are a reminder to us that if we have done something wrong, we are to do our best to correct the situation before it is too late.
    - i) The example is describing a person who is acting as a fool in some situation. Among the foolish things they (or we) are doing is exalted themselves or they have planned evil. The solution given is to "clap our hand over our mouth".
    - ii) This is another proverb that is not designed to be overly literal. The idea is if we are doing something wrong and we catch our self in the act of doing that wrong thing, we are make every effort to stop and change our way.
  - b) Verse 32 gives a final warning against doing the wrong thing. It says that just as churning milk produces butter, and twisting a nose produces blood, so stirring up anger produces strife. The idea here is to avoid things that are wrong in life and avoid the strife that comes with those bad decisions.
32. Let's put together this whole chapter and see the bigger picture.
- a) The first few verses discuss the author himself. Some say it is Solomon writing under a code name. Others say it is some other person and this text was added to this book.
    - i) The point of the early verses is that this is "the wisdom of God and not men" that is somehow behind the wisdom of this chapter.
  - b) After about six verses describing the character traits of the author, verse 7 begins to describe characteristics we should strive for or avoid as humans. The first one is the danger of being too rich or too poor. The danger of being rich is one then depends upon money and not God. The danger of being too poor is the temptation is give to steal.

- i) So why is this given first? It is a great lesson on how to live one's life. My personal view is that having money is not bad, but how one uses money and one's attitude toward money and possessions that is the key. Having too much or too little is a danger and God is teaching us the wisdom of avoiding the extremes.
  - c) The chapter then goes on to give us both positive and negative examples about how life works. The chapter uses examples from the animal kingdom to teach us how to act in certain situations. The point is the verses are not just there to teach us about animal life, but to give us examples of how to act in certain situations.
  - d) The chapter also gives examples of bad behaviors to avoid in life. The idea is to teach us the consequences of these bad things and how they can harm our lives if we are involved in those types of actions.
  - e) The chapter also gives examples of "how life works". For example, the strutting animals and the strutting king with his army is a reality of history. The proverbs about the barren womb and the fire that never goes out on its own are examples of how life works if left on its own. The bible is not saying these things are right or wrong, but are giving examples of the reality of our world, whether we like it or not.
    - i) What the bible is teaching us is there are some things we can change in our world and some things we cannot. God is trying to give us the wisdom to recognize the things we can deal with and the one's we have to accept.
  - f) The chapter ends on the note of avoiding doing the wrong thing as there are consequences for those bad decisions. The last two proverbs say in effect that if we catch our selves doing something wrong, stop before it is too late and change for the better.
  - g) With all that said, may God help us to make good decisions in life so that our lives are pleasing to Him in all that we do.
33. Let's tie this in with the fundamentals of our relationship with God:
- a) Yes, salvation is about accepting the idea that God exists and rules over our life. Yes, it also requires the acceptance of the idea that God Himself paid the price for our sins so we can be forgiven and live with Him for eternity.
  - b) With that said, the book of Proverbs does touch on the basics every now and then, but it's main point is how to live a life pleasing to God after we realize those basic facts.
  - c) The Christian life does not end when one is born-again, it is the beginning of a journey. Proverbs is full of positive and negative examples of how to live that journey in life.
  - d) Chapter 30 is a special chapter in that it sums up some key examples and principals of how to live a life pleasing to God.
34. The next lesson is Chapter 31. Like Chapter 30, it is a special stand-alone lesson and is in many ways different from the rest of the book. More on that in the next lesson.
35. Let's pray: Father, thank you for these lessons on how to live our lives for you. Help us to properly apply the good and bad examples. Help us to learn what You want us to learn from these proverbs as to live a life pleasing to You. Help us to remember that Your words are true and commentaries are just giving some examples on how to apply them. Help us to live for You in all that we do. We ask this in Jesus name, Amen.
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