

(Through the Bible) Proverbs 26-31

by Chuck Smith

This sermon explores the wisdom of Proverbs 26-31, emphasizing the characteristics of fools, the importance of diligence, and the value of true counsel.

Duration: 1:26:06

Scripture: Proverbs 13:24, Proverbs 29:17-20, Revelation 22:18

Topics: "Wisdom Literature", "Family Values"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes that there are several things in life that never say they are enough. He mentions the examples of people dying every day, the barren womb, the dry earth, and fire. The preacher also discusses the consequences of mocking one's parents and disobeying them, using the imagery of ravens and eagles. He then reflects on three things that he finds wonderful but cannot fully understand: the way of an eagle in the air, the way of a serpent on a rock, and the way of a ship in the sea. The sermon concludes with the preacher discussing various aspects of life, including the behavior of an adulterous woman, the disquietude of the earth, the wisdom of small creatures like ants and locusts, the dangers of seeking quick wealth, the importance of rebuking rather than flattering, and the consequences of robbing one's parents and having a proud heart. Throughout the sermon, the preacher references biblical verses to support his points.

Transcript

Shall we turn now to Proverbs 26 to begin our study this evening. The first 12 verses of Proverbs 26 we trust doesn't apply to any of you tonight because it's sort of addressed towards fools. As snow in summer and as rain in harvest, so honor is not seemly for a fool.

The thing about snow in summer and rain in harvest is that they are just out of place. So honor is out of place for a fool. So it's just something that is out of place.

As the bird by wandering and as the swallow by flying, so the curse causeless shall not come. The swallow's flight seems to be quite erratic. The word translated bird is the word for sparrow.

And the idea is that if a person tries to curse you without a cause, don't worry about it. It's not going to be fulfilled or come to pass anyhow. A lot of people are worried because someone's, you know, threatened to put a curse on them or this kind of thing.

You don't have to worry about that. A curse causeless will not come. Now that doesn't say anything about if you deserve one, but a curse causeless shall not come.

A whip for the horse, a bridle for the ass, and a rod for the fool's back. So he didn't have much regard for the fool. The next two seem to be inconsistent.

Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou also be like unto him. In other words, don't really engage in an argument with a fool. It's a waste of time.

There are some people you just should never argue with. So don't answer the fool according to his folly. If he makes some fool remark, and if you make some fool remark back, you're answering the fool according to his folly, and he begins to classify you in his category.

The next one, as I said, seems to be saying the opposite thing, but in reality it doesn't. Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit. In other words, if you answer a fool, answer him according to the folly that he has declared, putting down the statement that he has made.

Lest he thinks, oh, I'm very wise, and he's wise in his own conceit. So if you answer the fool, answer him according to the folly that he has declared. In other words, correcting the folly that he has declared, lest he thinks himself wise.

He that sends a message by the hand of a fool, cuts off the feet and drinks damage. In other words, you're just, what value is it, you know? The legs of the lame are not equal, so is a parable in the mouth of fools. As he that bindeth a stone in a sling, so is he that gives honor to the fool.

Now, it would be stupid to bind a stone in a sling. You know, you put your stone in there, and then if you wrap it all up and tie the stone in there, you could swing that thing forever, and the stone's not going to let go. So it would be a very ridiculous thing to do, is to bind a stone in your sling.

But it is also ridiculous to give honor to a fool. As a thorn goeth up into the hand of a drunkard, so is the parable in the mouth of fools. Now, it is thought that this, as the thorn goes up in the hand of the drunkard, doesn't mean that a drunkard is pierced by a thorn and doesn't realize it.

But a drunkard with a thorn or something in his hand could be a very dangerous person, because he's not really responsible for his actions. He's got a thorn in his hand. It makes him a dangerous person.

So that a parable in the mouth of a fool can be a very dangerous thing. The great God that formed all things both rewardeth the fool and rewardeth transgressors. In other words, they will get their just dues in time.

As a dog returns to his vomit, so a fool returns to his folly. Peter seems to make reference to this particular verse in 2 Peter 2.22. Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? Now, we said all these things about fools, but there's only one who's worse off than a fool. A man who is wise in his own conceit.

Seest thou a man who is wise in his own conceit? There's more hope for a fool than of him. So you think that maybe these first 11 verses were sort of the buildup for verse 12. In other words, by the time you get to verse 11 and all of the, you know, the things for which a fool is of no value and all, then you get to the verse 12 and there's one thing worse, and that's a man wise in his own conceit.

Now he turns from the fool to the slothful man. And as you have noticed through the Proverbs, we've had a lot to say about fools, a lot to say about the slothful, the lazy person. The slothful man said, there is a lion in the way.

A lion is in the streets. We had one similar to that in our considerations last week. In other words, any excuse to keep from going to work.

Oh, there's a lion out there. He might eat me if I try to go to work today. I think that the next one is a very picturesque, very picturesque.

As the door turns on its hinges, so doth the slothful upon his bed, rolling over and taking a few more. Thus, and this is the height of laziness. I mean, you can't get any, when you get this bed, you're soon gone.

The slothful hides his hand in his bosom. It grieves him to bring it again to his mouth. Man, you're so lazy.

You can't even get your hand to your mouth anymore. You've about had it. Your laziness has about done you in.

The 16th verse, the sluggard is wiser in his own conceit than seven men who can give you a reason. In other words, how blind is a person wise in his own conceit? He thinks himself actually wiser than seven men who can render a reason. Verse 17, he that passeth by and meddleth with strife that doesn't have, that he has no business in, is like one who will take a dog by the ears.

I mean, you're going to get into trouble. As a madman who casteth firebrands, arrows, and death, so is the man that deceives his neighbor and says, hey, aren't I a sport? As a madman who just shoots fire darts, arrows, and death, he's like the man deceives his neighbor and then says, hey, what a sport, you know. Where no wood is, the fire goes out.

So where there is no tailbearer, the strife ceases. Proverbs has a lot to say against bearing tails. As coals are to burning coals, and wood to fire, so is a contentious man to kindle strife.

Now, if you want to light coals, one of the best way to light coals is to set it beside the burning coals. Coals are sort of hard to ignite unless you set them by burning coals. If you add wood to a fire that is going, it is easily kindled.

And this is the idea. As coals to burning coals, wood to fire, so is a contentious man. He just adds to the strife.

He kindles the strife. The words of a tailbearer are as wounds. They go down into the innermost parts of the belly.

Burning lips and a wicked heart are like a potsherd covered with silver dross. Now, the silver dross was a leaden substance that they would put over their clay pots to give them a glaze, a shininess. And it looks better than it really is.

It looks like it's really valuable, but it's nothing but a clay pot that is covered with this lead oxide or lead silver dross. It's a leaden kind of a material. So, burning lips, a wicked heart.

He that hateth dissembleth with his lips and lays up deceit within him. When he speaks fair, believe him not, for there are seven abominations in his heart. Whose hatred is covered by deceit, his wickedness

shall be showed before the whole congregation.

So, the dissembler, the hater who with his lips dissembles, lays up deceit. Whoso digs a pit shall fall therein, and he that rolls a stone, it will return upon him. Your sins will come back to you.

Be sure your sins will find you out. A lying tongue hateth those that are afflicted by it, and a flattering mouth worketh ruin. How many people have been ruined by the flattering mouth.

Boast not thyself of tomorrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth. Very good. This is, of course, taken up, the idea is taken up in the New Testament.

Book of James, he said, go to now ye who say, tomorrow we'll do this and that and the other. He said, you should rather say, if the Lord wills, tomorrow we will do this, that and the other. Because you really don't know what tomorrow is going to bring.

It's all in God's hands. You don't even know if you're going to be here. Jesus speaks about the man who said, what am I going to do? I'm increased with goods.

I have need of nothing at all. I know what I'll do. I'll tear down my barns and build bigger and so forth that I may hold all of my goods.

And the Lord said, unto him thou fool this night thy soul shall be required. So don't boast of tomorrow what you're going to do. Boast not thyself of tomorrow, for you don't know what the day is going to bring forth.

Also, Jesus tells us that we are not to worry about tomorrow. Taking anxious thought for tomorrow, what I'm going to eat, what I'm going to drink, what I'm going to wear. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

So don't be all worried or concerned about tomorrow or don't boast about tomorrow, what I'm going to be doing tomorrow. You don't know what God has in mind for you. Next proverb is a very good one.

Let another man praise thee and not thine own mouth. A stranger and not thy own lips. Don't go around praising yourself.

A stone is heavy, the sand weighty, but a fool's wrath is heavier than them both. Wrath is cruel and anger is outrageous, but who's able to stand before envy? Now, wrath is cruel enough. Anger is outrageous, but man, someone who's envious, who can stand before it? How totally devastating envy can be? Open rebuke is better than secret love.

And this next one also, so powerful. Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of the enemy are deceitful. Faithful are the wounds of a friend.

The full soul loatheth a honeycomb. You know, if you're full, even something as sweet as honey just is, you know, I'm so full, I don't want anything. But to the hungry soul, every bitter thing is sweet.

As a bird that wandereth from her nest, so is a man that wandereth from his place. Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart, and so doth the sweetness of a man's friend by hearty counsel. Oh, how great it is to have a friend who will come in and give you honest counsel.

There are many people who ostensibly seek counseling. That is what they are ostensibly seeking. But in reality, they are not seeking counsel.

They say they are seeking counsel. They come and say, oh, I want to talk to a counselor, under the guise of desiring to be counsel. But in reality, they don't want counsel.

Quite often, I have people come to me, and they say, oh, I need to talk to you. And I try to explain to them that I have very little time that isn't taken up with something. You see, in the early church, they had problems that rose as the church began to grow.

Because the people were bringing their complaints to the apostles, and they were saying, our widows who are following the Hellenistic culture are being discriminated against by the men who are distributing the church's welfare program. And the pressure was to get Peter and John and those guys to come and to stand there as the widows would come in and apportion them out so that the thing would be equal. And so the elders said, hey, let's appoint men that are filled with the Holy Spirit, men of good report, men who are honest, to oversee this distribution of the church's welfare in order that we might give ourselves continually to the Word of God and to prayer.

So they appointed godly men, Stephen, Philip and others, to oversee the distribution of the church's welfare program in order that they might be free to do the things that God had called them to do, that is of waiting upon the Lord in prayer, in the study of the Word, that they might be able to instruct the whole body of Christ. Now, it is wonderful that here at Calvary Chapel we've been able to establish priorities. And in the establishing of the priorities, God really hasn't called me as a counselor.

He hasn't gifted me as a counselor. I don't have the patience to be a counselor, nor do I have enough understanding. God has called me to minister the Word.

It would be very easy, the pressure is on me to fill up my whole calendar from 9 o'clock Monday morning till 8 o'clock Friday night, solid, with counseling appointments one after another. There aren't that many people who call who need to talk to me. It's urgent, it's desperate.

So that I would have absolutely no time for my family, no time for the Word of God, no time for prayer, no time for waiting upon the Lord, so that when I stood up in front of you, I'd have nothing to say. So, God has established the various priorities. And people sometimes, though, come to me, oh, I need to talk to you.

Well, we have counselors here at the church. Oh, well, I talked to them. Oh, wait a minute.

If you've talked to them, then why do you want to talk to me? Probably because they didn't agree with what you wanted to hear, you know. They didn't say the things you want to hear. So you're hoping to find someone that's going to say the thing that you want to hear.

Well, that isn't true counseling. And you're not really seeking counsel if you're only seeking confirmation for the dumb things you want to do. You're not really looking for counsel, you see.

And so many people who ostensibly are seeking counsel are only seeking confirmation in the actions that they have decided upon. They really don't want real counsel as such. So, yet, hearty counsel is a wonderful thing.

It's like perfume. Thine own friend, verse 10, thy father's friend, forsake not. Neither go to thy brother's house in the day of your calamity.

For better is a neighbor that is near than a brother that is far off. Now, this assumes, of course, that your brother is way down someplace. And better to just go to a neighbor or to a friend for help than go across to the country to your brother.

A neighbor that is near is better than a brother that is far off. My son, be wise and make my heart glad that I may answer him that reproaches me. A prudent man foresees the evil and hides himself, but the simple pass on and are punished.

We had basically this same thing in the 22nd. But you remember, these are Proverbs that were gathered together by Hezekiah's men. And in gathering them, they did repeat some that were declared earlier.

Take his garment that is a surety for a stranger and take a pledge of him for a strange woman. That also was an earlier proverb in 2016. He that blesseth his friend with a loud voice rising early in the morning, it shall be counted a curse to him.

And that is the guy that's still in the sack. Man, I don't want any blessings at five in the morning, you know. I just called you up to give you a blessing, brother.

Well, in Bible college, we used to have a guy that roomed in the room next to mine. And he won some kind of contest in Los Angeles years ago, a singing contest, and won a scholarship to some voice school to train him for opera. And so he was always using his operatic voice.

And he had some peculiar idiosyncrasies beside that. And we used to give him this proverb because he would wake up early and decide to storm heaven with his prayers. And just so loud, he was so loud.

You can't believe how loud. This guy did have a voice. See, I mean, he was loud.

And he used to always, you know, well, bless the Lord. You know, just really, you know, put the whole thing into it. You do that early in the morning and it really doesn't come across as a blessing.

It comes across as a curse. A continual dropping in a rainy day is like a contentious woman. It could be irritating and annoying, I would imagine.

Whosoever hideth her, hideth the wind. That would be the contentious woman. And the ointment of his right hand, which bereth itself.

Iron sharpeneth iron. So a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend. We sharpen each other.

Whoso keepeth the fig tree shall eat the fruit thereof. So he that waiteth on his master shall be honored. As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man.

Like looking into a clear pool of water and seeing your reflection. Hell and destruction are never full, so the eyes of man are never satisfied. Very important proverb.

Hell and destruction never full. The eyes of a man. If a man is bent towards chasing, bent towards running around, he'll never be satisfied.

His eyes are never satisfied. Always looking for a new conquest. Never satisfied.

As the fining pot for silver and the furnace for gold, so is a man to his praise. And though thou shouldest pound a fool in a mortar among wheat with a pestle, yet will not his foolishness depart from him. You can't

beat it out of him.

Now the next five are coupled together. Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks and look well to thy herds. For riches are not forever.

And doth the crown endure to every generation? The hay appeareth and the tender grass showeth itself and the herbs of the mountains are gathered. The lambs are for thy clothing. The goats are the price of the field.

And thou shalt have goats milk enough for thy food, for the food of thy household and for the maintenance of thy maidens. So the idea is diligence in looking over your own welfare, keeping your own flocks and herds. 28.

The wicked flee when no man pursue it, but the righteous are as bold as a lion. The contrast of the wicked and the righteous. We had an awful lot of that early in the Proverbs.

29. For the transgression of a land, many are the princes thereof. But by a man of understanding and knowledge, the state thereof shall be prolonged.

And when the land is bad, there's many changes of dynasties, governments, when evil existing. But a man of understanding and knowledge, the state, his position will be prolonged. 30.

A poor man that oppresses the poor is like a sweeping rain which leaves no food. They that forsake the law praise the wicked, but such as keep the law contend with them. Evil men understand not judgment, but they that seek the Lord understand all things.

This calls to mind the second chapter of Corinthians. First Corinthians, where Paul declares that the natural man understandeth not the things of the spirit, neither can he know them. They are spiritually discerned, but he which is spiritual understands all things.

Though he is not understood of men. So evil men understand not the judgment, but they that seek the Lord. God gives to us an understanding, an oedipus, a intuitive knowledge of things.

Better is the poor that walks in his uprightness than he that is perverse in his ways, though he be rich. An honest poor man much better than a perverse rich man. Whoso keepeth the law is a wise son, but he that is a companion of riotous men will bring shame to his father.

He that by usury and unjust gain increases his substance, he shall gather it for him that will pity the poor. God will take it away from you and distribute it among the poor. He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be an abomination.

Prayer at some times, in some places, is an abomination. Now we look at prayer as really the highest function of a Christian duty or experience. You know, a man in prayer, you see that as the highest a form of the communion of a man with God.

But it is possible that even our prayers can be an abomination. And if I'm not regarding the law of God, if I turn away my ear from obedience to the law of God, my prayers are useless. The Bible says that God's hand is not short that he cannot save, neither is his ear heavy that he cannot hear.

But your sins have separated you from God. The psalmist said, if I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord hears me not when I pray. So my prayer becomes almost deceitful.

It's an abomination. I say, well, I know I'm not so good. I know I'm not doing what I should, but man, I still pray.

Well, hey, if your hands are filled with blood and you raise those bloody hands to God in prayer, God's not going to hear you. Your sin has separated between you and God. It isn't that God can't hear you.

He won't hear you. So prayer becomes an abomination. It becomes a deceitful thing.

I think, well, I'm not too bad because I still pray, but yet my prayers are worthless. They're an abomination. Whoso causeth the righteous to go astray in an evil way, he shall fall himself into his own pit, but the upright shall have good things in possession.

The rich man is wise in his own conceit, but the poor that hath understanding searcheth him out. When righteous men do rejoice, there is great glory, but when the wicked rise, a man is hidden. He that covereth his sins shall not prosper, but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.

A lot of people seeking to cover their sins. You try to cover your sin, you're not going to prosper. Be sure your sins will find you out, God said, but whosoever will confess them and forsake them.

In John, we read of a man who says he has no sin. He's only deceiving himself. The truth is not in him, but if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Just confess and forsake your sin. God will be merciful to you. And it shows you the folly of going on and trying to cover your sin.

You're not going to prosper. You're not going to get away with it. The best thing as far as sin is the confession and the forsaking, because then you can have and find mercy.

Until you confess and forsake, you're going to have to answer for them. Happy is the man that reverences always, but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief. As a roaring lion and as a ranging bear, so is a wicked ruler over the poor people.

The prince that wanteth understanding is also a great oppressor. That is the prince who lacks an understanding will be a great oppressor of the people. But he that hateth covetousness shall prolong his days.

A man that doeth violence to the blood of any person shall flee to the pit and let no man stop him. Who so walketh uprightly shall be saved, but he that is perverse in his ways shall fall at once. He that tills his land shall have plenty of bread, but he that follows after vain persons shall have poverty enough.

A faithful man shall abound with blessings, but he that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent. To have the respect of persons is not good, for for a piece of bread that man will transgress. James rebukes us for having respect of persons in our assemblies.

And he points out how that if a person comes in in rags, you have a tendency to push him off into the corner. But if a guy comes in, you know, flashing diamonds and everything else, say, oh, you know, come

on down here, take this place of honor. He says, hey, you have respect of persons, that's not good.

God is no respecter of persons. And for us to have respect of persons is not good. The person who has the respect of persons for a piece of bread, he'll transgress.

He that hasteth to be rich, the get rich quick schemes, has an evil eye and considers not that poverty shall come upon him. There are a lot of get rich schemes, or I should say get rich scams, that are all over the place today. If you haste to be rich, you're looking for a get rich scam, you're going to lose your shirt.

So many people trying to go to Vegas to get rich quick. Because every once in a while, some person hits a jackpot down there. And when they hit the jackpot, they make news.

The papers publish the fact that this guy hit the jackpot on the dollar machine, won \$287,000 and everybody around the country hears it. They don't tell you about the 280,000 that went away from Las Vegas, selling their watch to the service station attendant in Barstow to get enough gas to get home. For every one winner, there's a thousand losers.

He that hastes to get rich, he was looking for a get rich scheme, going to end up in poverty. He that rebukes a man afterwards shall find more favor than he who flatters with the tongue. That is, he who rebukes a man afterwards, he'll find more favor than the man who is flattered with his tongue.

Whoso robs his father or his mother and says it's no transgression, the same as a companion of the destroyer. He that is of a proud heart stirs up strife. But he that putteth his trust in the Lord shall be made fat.

Oh, I love that. I've determined that we have a ungodly obsession with skinniness. I don't find any scripture that talks about the blessing of skinniness.

He that trusts in his own heart is a fool. Now, that's interesting, isn't it? Why? Because the scripture tells us in Jeremiah that the heart is deceitful and desperately wicked. You don't really know it.

So, if you trust your own heart, you're a fool. But whoso walketh wisely shall be delivered. He that gives unto the poor shall not lack.

But he that hides his eyes, that is, from the poor, shall have many a curse. When the wicked rise, men hide themselves, but when they perish, the righteous increase. He that being often reprov'd hardneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.

That is a heavy, heavy proverb. The person that is often reprov'd by God. How many times God has reprov'd you for your evil? God has reprov'd you for your sin.

And you've hardened your heart to God's reproof. You go right back into the same thing. You do it over again.

And God has reprov'd you. He that being often reprov'd, you begin to harden your heart against that reproof of God. Now, what's going to happen is that you're going to be destroyed suddenly, and that without remedy.

That is really heavy duty indeed. The sudden destruction that will come upon you without any remedy. It's terrible when God says, hey, there's, that's it, there's no remedy, and lets a person go.

When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice. But when the wicked are ruling, the people mourn. Whoso loveth wisdom rejoices his father.

But he that keeps company with harlots is wasting his substance. The king by judgment establishes the land. But he that receiveth gifts overthroweth it.

A man that flattereth his neighbors spreadeth a net for his feet. And in the transgression of an evil man, there is a snare. But the righteous doth sing and rejoice.

The righteous considereth the cause of the poor, but the wicked regards not to know it. Scornful men bring a city into a snare, but wise men turn away wrath. There are cases of this in history, in the Bible, where the scorners brought the city into battle, into war.

But there are other cases where wise counsel saved the cities from destruction, or people from destruction. You remember when David was desiring some food for his men from Naboth. And he had been, his men had been with Naboth's men.

Uh, he'd been around them and David had, you know, sort of overseen the guys. They were protecting them and all. And so when David needed food, he came to Naboth.

And Naboth cursed David and said, you know, who's David? And so forth, that I should give him food and was just really rank about it. So David armed his men and he was going to go after old Naboth, going to wipe him out. And his wife Abigail came and said, oh, my husband, he's a dunce.

Don't pay any attention. Why should you waste your time with a character like that? Now, you know, here, take this. She brought him a bunch of food and all.

And told David just not to, her wise counsel, he said, oh, blessed is your counsel. You know, because if it weren't for you, I would, you know, spill that guy's blood. I mean, I was mad at him.

I was going to do him in. So through wise counsel, the wars are averted, a city is spared. But through scornful men, the city can be brought into snare of destruction.

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 till afterwards.

If a ruler hearkened to lies, all of his servants are wicked. The poor and the deceitful man meet together. The Lord lightneth both their eyes.

The king that faithfully judgeth the poor, his throne shall be established forever. And now we have a couple here that have to do with children, 15 and 17. The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame.

Correct thy son and he shall give thee rest. Yes, he will give delight unto thy soul. Going back now to 16.

When the wicked are multiplied, transgression increases, but the righteous shall see their fall. 18. Where there is no vision, the people perish.

God help us, we've got to have a vision. For the Lord's work and for the accomplishing of the Lord's work. People that are without a vision perish, but he that keepeth the law happy is he.

We've heard this, where no vision is the people perish. That's a very often quoted proverb. A servant will not be corrected by words, for though he understand, he will not answer.

Seest thou a man that is hasty in his words, there's more hope for a fool than for him. So be slow to speak. He that delicately bringeth up his servant from a child shall have him become his son at the length.

If you take real care in bringing up a servant from a child, it becomes like a son to you. An angry man stirs up strife, a furious man abounds in transgressions. A man's pride shall bring him low, but honor shall uphold the humble in spirit.

And whoso is a partner with a thief hates his own soul. He hears cursing and bereath it not. 25.

The fear of a man, the fear of man bringeth a snare. But whoso puts his trust in the Lord shall be safe. The fear of man brings a snare.

It will cause even great men, the fear of man will cause even great men to do untoward things. Because of the fear of King Abimelech, Abraham tried to toss his wife off as a sister. It was the fear of Abimelech that caused Abraham to say, she's my sister.

The fear of man brings a snare. My great hero David was afraid of King Achish, who was the king of the Philistine city of Gath. And David suddenly became afraid that Achish would maybe imprison him or something.

And so David began to act like a madman. Look what the fear of man will do to otherwise great men. Here is David slobbering all over his beard, screaming and scrabbling, trying to climb the walls, just because he was afraid of Achish.

The fear of man brings a snare. But whoso puts his trust in the Lord, he shall be safe. So we need not have the fear of man, but we surely need to put our trust in the Lord.

Many seek the ruler's favor, but every man's judgment cometh from the Lord. The real decision-making process comes from God. You seek the ruler's favor, but the judgment really proceeds from the Lord.

An unjust man is an abomination to the just, and he that is upright in the way is an abomination to the wicked. This is the end of the Proverbs that were gathered by Hezekiah's men. Now, in the 30th chapter, we have the words of Agur, whoever he is.

He tells us who he is, but it really doesn't help. He's the son of Jeketh, but I don't know who Jeketh is. Even the prophecy, the man spake unto Ithiel, even unto Ithiel and Ucal, and men that I don't know.

So, yet God has seen fit to put this here in the Scriptures. And Agur declares, surely I am more brutish than any man. I have not the understanding of a man.

I neither learn wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the holy. In other words, the guy isn't making any claims for himself, PhDs or anything else. I've not learned wisdom, nor do I have the knowledge of the holy.

I'm more brutish than any man. I don't have the understanding of men. But now he asks some very searching questions.

Who hath ascended up into heaven or descended? Talking about men. Who has gathered the wind in his fist? Surely no man. Who has bound the waters in a garment? Surely no man.

Who has established all of the ends of the earth? Not men, he's talking about God. He's talking about the things that are in God's category. Paul tells us, he who has ascended is the same one who first of all descended.

And when he ascended, he led the captives, or led captivity captive and gave gifts unto men. So, who hath ascended up into heaven or descended? Who has gathered the winds in his fist? Who has bound the waters in a garment? Who has established all the ends of the earth? What is his name? Interesting. But even more interesting, he said, what is his son's name? Referring to God's son.

And so, it is an interesting question. He is speaking of the characteristics and the things that belong unto God. He said, what is his name? The name, of course, is Yahweh.

And what is his son's name? Yehovah Shua, Jesus, if you can tell. For every word of God is pure. He, that is God, is a shield unto them that put their trust in him.

Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar. Don't take upon yourself to add to the word of God. Now, in Deuteronomy, after God gave the law, God gave a warning that a person wasn't to try to diminish the law.

Taking away from the commandments that God had given. Or a man wasn't to seek to add to it. Yet, the Jews in their Talmud added some 60 volumes of interpretation to that law.

The Mishnah and the Talmud. Here again, the word of God is pure. Now, he says, don't add to it, lest God reprove you, and you be found a liar.

In the end of the book of Revelation, God pronounces a special curse upon any man who would add to the words of that book, or take away from the words of that book. Unto him who would dare to add to the book, to him shall be added the plagues that are in the book. He that would dare to take away from the words of the book, his name shall be taken out of the book of life.

It is a very heavy thing for a man to presume to speak for God. And God gives some very serious warnings to anyone who would presume to speak for God. Warn to them who say, thus saith the Lord, when I have not spoken, saith the Lord of hosts.

And God tells all the things he'll do to that person who dares to speak in the name of the Lord when God hasn't really spoken. Now, in Peter's epistle, he said that God hath given to us all that pertains to life and to godliness. Really, you don't need any more than the word that God has already given.

All that we need for life and for godliness has already been given to us in the word of God. We don't need some modern day revelation from God. Now, the problem of men speaking for God, as there are men who purport that they do.

The Catholic Church has placed an aura around the Pope and the papal infallibility. So that he supposedly is speaking for God. And his word is acknowledged as being the word of God.

Or with the Mormons, their prophets and their president speaks the word of God. And they have to accept it as scripture. And they can give you, you know, argumentation.

Why should God quit speaking to men and so forth. And, you know, that God is speaking to us today through the prophets and all. The thing is, as is declared here, lest he reprove thee and thou be found a liar.

Now, those men who have purportedly spoken for God, the thing that happens is that the next guy comes along and often times will disclaim what they have said. And he's speaking for God when he disclaims what the previous person said. Brigham Young, one of the prophets and the leaders of the Mormon Church, supposedly speaking for God, said an awful lot of radical things that the church denies today.

The Mormon Church denies much of the doctrine that Brigham Young proclaimed. He actually proclaimed that Adam was their God. The only God with whom they had to do.

He proclaimed that there are some sins for which the blood of Jesus Christ cannot atone. A person has to shed their own blood to atone for particular sins. The blood of Christ is not sufficient.

And he preached this in many a sermon. And how you can do those friends a favor by shedding their blood in order that their sins might be expiated. Now, the Mormons today deny this kind of a shedding your own blood for the atonement of your own sins.

But yet one of their prophets declared it, speaking for God. Now, God doesn't change his mind. Thus, when a man purports to be speaking for God, when God hasn't spoken, that man is usually discovered to be a liar.

So, the Word of God is pure. It doesn't change. It isn't altered.

But men so often purportedly speak for God when indeed God hasn't spoken. Two things have I required of thee, deny me them not before I die. Remove far from me vanity and lies.

Now, this is more or less the prayer of this augur unto God. Just two things, Lord, I desire don't deny me them before I die. Remove me far from vanity and lies.

Give me neither poverty nor riches. Feed me with food that is convenient for me. Lest I be full and deny thee.

Or lest I be and say, who is the Lord? Or lest I be poor and steal and take the name of my God in vain. He's really seeking just sort of a moderate kind of a life. I don't want riches.

Lest I would say, who is God and deny God. Or I don't want to be poor either that I would be tempted to go out and steal in order to take care of my needs. So, God just give me that in the middle average life.

Don't accuse a servant to his master lest he cursed you and you be found guilty. Now, there is a generation that curses their father and does not bless their mother. There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes and yet they're not really washed from their filthiness.

There is a generation, oh, how lofty are their eyes and their eyelids are lifted up. There is a generation whose teeth are as swords and their jaw teeth as knives to devour the poor from off the earth and the needy from among men. A wicked generation indeed from verse 11 to 14.

The different generations that do these wicked things. Now, the horse leech has two daughters crying, give, give. And there are three things that are never satisfied.

Yes, there are four things that say not it is enough. Four things that you can't really satisfy. First, the eye that mocketh at his father and despiseth to obey his mother.

I beg your pardon, let's jump. Four things that say it isn't enough. The first is the grave.

It never says it's enough. People are dying every day. The second thing, the barren womb.

The earth that is not filled with water, the dry parched earth and the fire. They, none of them say it is enough. Now, the eye that mocks his father and despised to obey his mother.

The ravens of the valley shall pick it out and the young eagles shall eat it. Now, there are three things that are too wonderful for me. Yea, four, which I know not.

The way of an eagle in the air. The way of a serpent upon a rock. The way of a ship in the midst of the sea.

And the way of a man with a maid. Such is the way of an adulterous woman. She eats and wipes her mouth and says, I've done no wickedness.

There are three things on the earth that are disquieted and for four, which it cannot bear. Four odious things. The servant when he reigns, a fool when he is filled with meat, an odious woman when she is married and a handmaid that is the heir to her mistress.

There are four things which are exceed, which are little upon the earth, but they are exceeding wise or wiser than wise. Four little things, yet so very wise, wise beyond their own wisdom. The ants are a people not strong, yet they prepare their meat in the summer.

The conies are but a feeble folk, yet they make their houses in the rocks. The locusts have no king, yet they go forth all of them by bands. The spider takes hold with their hands, or the gecko, and is in the king's palaces.

From the ant, we learn the wisdom of preparing for the future, how that it lays up its food in the summer. Because somehow the ant has an awareness that the time is coming when it won't be able to get out and lay up food, so it stores up the food while it has the opportunity to do so. Jesus said in a interesting parable, make use of the unrighteousness of mammon, so that when you, when they fail, you will be received into the everlasting kingdom.

In other words, use what you have now for your eternal benefit. That's wise. Many people don't have that wisdom.

The ant teaches us the wisdom of preparation for the future. The cony, the little hyrax, teaches us the wisdom of recognizing our own weakness and feebleness, and to take shelter in that which is stronger than we are. Makes his home in the rocks, recognize our own weakness, and hide ourselves in that rock, Jesus Christ.

The locust shows wisdom in his cooperative efforts. By himself, the locust can do no harm. As he goes forth in bands, he can be devastating.

Oh, that the church would learn the lesson of working together, cooperative endeavors for the kingdom of God. And finally, the gecko shows its wisdom by taking hold with its hands, and as a result, dwells in king's palaces, even as we are to take hold of the promises of God, as they of the Old Testament did, that we might dwell one day in the king's palace. There are three things which go well, yea, four are beautiful in their going.

The lion, which is the strongest among beasts, and doesn't turn away for any. The greyhound, and the goat also, and a king against whom there is no rising up. If you have done foolishly in lifting up yourself, or if you have thought evil, lay your hand upon your mouth.

Surely the churning of milk bringeth forth butter, and the ringing of the nose bringeth forth blood. So the forcing of wrath will bring strife. And such are the words of Agur.

Agur, who is the son of Jacketh, who makes no claims for himself. Now the 31st proverb are the words of King Lemuel, the prophecy that his mother taught him. So these are really the words of King Lemuel's mother unto him.

The advice of a godly mother to her prince son, who one day is to reign over the people. There are those who think that Lemuel is indeed Solomon, and that these are the words of Bathsheba unto Solomon. Whether or not that is so is a matter of argument among the people.

Of which I have no desire to enter into. The words of King Lemuel, the prophecy that his mother taught him. What my son, and what the son of my womb, and what the son of my vows.

Give not thy strength unto women, nor thy ways to that which destroys kings. For it is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine, or for princes strong drink. Now in the scriptures, in the New Testament, we find that wine was forbidden for a man who was an overseer in the church.

If any man desires the office of the bishop or overseer, he desires a good thing. But he's not to be given to wine, no striker, taking care of his own family and so forth. So wine was prohibited for any person who has a position of leadership in overseeing in the church.

Here we are told that wine is not for kings, anyone in the ruling capacity. Why? Because God doesn't want your mind to be colored by any kind of a false stimulant. He doesn't want anything to cloud your judgment.

He wants your mind to be perfectly clear. God doesn't really want to communicate with a foggy mind. It's hard to communicate with people who come to you and who are on drugs, or who are, say, drunk.

You know that they don't know what they're really saying. You know that they don't really mean. You don't really know who you're talking to.

You're not dealing with the real person. And to try to counsel them is futility, because you're not really dealing with the true issues and with the real person, until their mind is totally clear. I love having a clear mind.

I love having a mind that is not under the influence of any outside kind of a stimulant, or force, or whatever. I love being able to think clearly. I can't understand why a person would want to fog up their mind, or alter their conscious state.

I love so much the clear ability to reason, to think, to see things clearly. I don't want to fog up my mind and perhaps destroy my ability of judgment. So, as the king, wine wasn't for a king, because it has the possible altered conscious state.

The same was for the bishop, the overseer in the church. The same was true for the priest in the Old Testament, when he offered sacrifices before the Lord. He wasn't to drink wine, lest he be serving God under some kind of a false fire, a false stimulant.

Aaron's sons were destroyed because of the false fire that they offered unto God, strange fire that they offered. And God doesn't want strange fire. So, these things are spoken.

The mother was speaking to Lemuel and said, Hey, wine isn't for kings or strong drink for princes, lest they drink and forget the law, and pervert the judgment of any of the afflicted. Lest through your drinking, your state of consciousness is altered, and you are not clear in the judgment that you make. Give strong drink to him who's ready to die, and wine unto those who are of heavy hearts.

Let him drink and forget his poverty and remember his misery no more. But open thy mouth for the dumb in the cause of all such as are appointed to destruction. Open thy mouth, judge righteously, and plead the cause of the poor and the needy.

So, the exhortation of Lemuel's mother to him as he is to be a king over his judgment and in the responsibility that will be his in offering and in giving judgment. Now, who can find a virtuous woman for her price is far above rubies? So, it is possible that at this point, if indeed this is Solomon, and Bathsheba's talking to him, it would, with all of his wives, it would be interesting if he had found a virtuous woman among them. Her price is far above rubies.

Her description, the heart of her husband does safely trust in her so that he shall have no need of spoil. You just can trust your wife completely. It's so glorious to have a wife that you can have total trust in.

You don't have to be suspicious, you don't have to be questioning, but you can just have that total confidence that they are true, that they are pure, that they are honest. Virtuous woman, price is above, far above rubies. She will do him good and not evil all of his days.

She seeks wool and flax, works willingly with her hands. She is like the merchant's ships in that she brings her food from afar. She shops the ads, gets the best buys in the various markets.

She rises up also while it is yet night and gives meat to her household and a portion to her maidens, industrious. She considers a field and buys it and the fruit of her hands she plants a vineyard. She girds her loins with strength and strengthens her arms.

She perceives that her merchandise is good and her candle goeth not out by night. I mean, she is just a very industrious woman indeed. She lays her hands to the spindle and her hands hold the distaff.

She stretches out her hand to the poor, yea, she reaches out her hands to the needy. She is not afraid of the snow for her household, all of her households are clothed with scarlet. She makes herself coverings of tapestry, her clothing is silk and purple.

Her husband is known in the gates when he sitteth among the elders of the land. Now the gates were an important place in a city, for the gates were the place of judgment when persons had any kind of business

to transact, legal business and all. They would always come into the gates of the city and the men who sat in the gates of the city were the renowned men of the city and they would come to them for judgments.

Her husband is known in the gates, he sits among the elders of the land. She makes fine linen and sells it and delivers girdles to the merchant. Strength and honor are her clothing and she shall rejoice in time to come.

She openeth her mouth with wisdom and in her tongue is the law of kindness. She looketh well to the ways of her household and eats not the bread of idleness. Her children arise up and call her blessed, her husband also and he praises her.

Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all. Favor is deceitful, beauty is vain, but a woman that reverences the Lord, she shall be praised. Give her the fruit of her hands and let her own works praise her in the gates.

What a beautiful, beautiful tribute to the woman, to the truly beautiful woman, the one that God honors because she honors God. Her children rise up and call her blessed, her husband praises her. Guys, aren't we lucky that all of us have found these beautiful women.

How thankful we are to God for our wives. What a blessing they are to us. What a value, what a joy, what an asset.

You couldn't buy her with rubies. Her value is far above them. What an asset they are to the husband, to the family, and to God.

Thank God for a virtuous wife. Over and over I thank God for Kay and what she means to me and what she means to our family. How privileged and each one of you men, as you think of that wife that God has given to you, a precious jewel indeed.

You're told in the scriptures, cherish her, nourish her, love her, even as Christ loved the church and gave himself for it. Thank God. What a beautiful picture we have here.

But this verse for you young ladies, favor is deceitful, beauty is vain. Some of you are bemoaning the fact, oh, I'm not beautiful. It seems like there are very, very, very few women who are satisfied with their looks.

Most women think of themselves as rather ugly. Most women have a low self-esteem, very, very few women. There are some, but they are rare, who really think that they are beautiful.

And those that think they are beautiful are usually odious. They're hard to be around. You know, they're intolerable.

Women who really think she's beautiful, you don't want her. You'll never be able to keep her up. But the true beauty, so don't worry if God hasn't, you know, put the perfect face on you, because beauty is deceitful, favor is deceitful, beauty is vain.

It's empty. And it's so true. You listen to some of these Hollywood beauties and what's more empty than the head of a Hollywood beauty queen? Some of those that primp and think they're so beautiful and are posing constantly.

But you listen to their words and they just express the empty head. They've never had to think. You see, everybody's always flattering them and all, and they've never had to really develop character.

And they're about as shallow as you can be. You just listen to them talk and you find out how empty and shallow they are. They've never seen any need for developing character.

Beauty is vain. But a woman who really reverences the Lord, a woman who lives a godly life, a woman who loves the Lord, there's nothing more beautiful in all of the world than a woman who is righteous and loves God. Oh, how beautiful.

That's true beauty. You see, that woman who is relating to God, the beautiful life is the one that is in the right relationship with the Lord. The woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised.

You guys that are looking for a gal, don't look for the pretty face. You're liable to find an empty head. Look for the one who knows how to pray.

Look for the one who is interested in the things of the Lord. Look for that one who is seeking God and seeking her life to be conformed into the image of Jesus Christ. You'll have a wife that will be true and faithful and loving and glorious all of your life.

You'll be happy. She's the one that you're really wanting. She shall be praised.

But you know, you know, God is so good that God makes them to look more beautiful to us than anybody else anyhow. That's just God's little plus benefit. Father, we thank you for the wisdom, the instruction, the knowledge that you have given to us even in these little pithy sayings and in the Proverbs.

We thank you, Lord, that we can learn how to live through thy word. What to seek and what to shun and help us, Lord, to seek thee, thy kingdom, thy righteousness above everything else. Now, Lord, hide away in our heart these truths, and may they become the guiding principles of our lives.

In Jesus' name, amen.

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