

# (Proverbs) ch.4:9 - 6:11

by Zac Poonen

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of having a right heart, submitting to spiritual authority, and obeying God's word to live a life of righteousness and grow in wisdom.*

**Duration:** 1:00:45

**Topics:** "Righteous Living", "Holy Spirit"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of having a right heart before God. He uses the examples of David and Solomon to illustrate how God looks at the heart and reveals Himself to those whose hearts are right. The speaker then focuses on Proverbs 4, where Solomon passes on wisdom to the next generation. He encourages them to watch their mouth, eyes, and feet, and to stay on the path of righteousness. The sermon concludes with the reminder to listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit and to stay focused on the goal of living for eternity.

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## Transcript

Proverbs chapter 4, we were considering these first few verses and we saw in our last study how it was David who encouraged Solomon to seek for wisdom. And that comes out only in Proverbs chapter 4 so that we understand why Solomon asked God for wisdom when God appeared to him one night and asked him what he wanted, which we read in 1 Kings chapter 3. Now we know that Solomon was the wisest man that lived, but David was the man after God's own heart. And even though Solomon built the temple of God, if you turn to 1 Chronicles chapter 28, you see something there, which I don't know whether you have noticed.

1 Chronicles chapter 28 verse 11, it says here that David gave to his son Solomon the plan of the porch of the temple, its buildings, its storehouses, upper rooms, inner rooms, the room for the mercy seat, and the plan of all that he had in mind for the courts of the house of the Lord, for the surrounding rooms, and everything, it goes on right down the list to verse 18. And then it says in verse 19, all this said David, the Lord made me understand in writing by his hand upon me all the details of this pattern. Now humanly speaking, we would think that if there are two people, you would choose the wiser man to make a plan for the temple, and Solomon was the wiser man.

But it's very interesting that God did not give the plan of the temple to Solomon, the wisest man that lived, but to David, whose brain was not as good as Solomon's, but whose heart was better. And that's a very important thing for us to understand, that when God gives revelation of his will, he does not necessarily

give it to the man who is clever, but to the man who is one after his own heart. So we can say that David was the architect, and Solomon was only a contractor, doing what the architect told him.

We must never forget that. And even the wisdom that Solomon asked God for, we read in Proverbs chapter 4, that it was David who exhorted him to seek for that wisdom, saying that this wisdom will really give you grace and glory. You read that in Proverbs 4.9, think that David was the one who told Solomon about these wonderful new covenant words called grace and glory.

He said, if you seek for wisdom, you'll get grace and glory. So that's a tremendous thing. And it teaches us, as I said, that God looks at the heart, and it's the man whose heart is right, to whom God can give revelation.

That's what we learned from David and Solomon. Now, back to Proverbs chapter 4, we find that Solomon, having received the influence of this godly father, now seeks to pass on the same instruction to the next generation. And so in Proverbs 4.10, we read of Solomon exhorting the next generation, calling them my son, hear my son, and accept my sayings, and the years of your life will be many.

I have directed you in the way of wisdom, I have led you in upright paths. Let me read that to you in the Living Bible, it says, a life, I would have you to learn this great fact, Solomon says. What is this great fact that Solomon wants us to learn? A life of doing what is right is the wisest life there is.

The wisest life that any human being can ever live is a life of doing right. Verse 11, and if you live this life of doing right, in all situations, turning away from what is wrong and doing what is right, which is the wisest life that one can ever live, then, here is a promise, it's one of the fantastic promises in the Old Testament. When you walk, verse 12, your steps will not be impeded, and if you run, you will not stumble.

Or as the literal translation of the Hebrew in that verse reads like this, as you go, step by step, I will open up the way before you. That's the meaning of verse 12, that if you choose the wisest life that any human being can ever live, which is a life of doing right, in other words, you keep a clear conscience in every step you take in life, then God's promises to all those who live by a clear conscience, that as you move forward, you may look as though the way is closed up, but as you move forward, like these automatic doors, as you move near the automatic doors, they open by themselves, and you think the door in front of you is closed, it is, but as you go near it, that opens up too. As you go, step by step, I will open up the way before you.

It is never God's will that we get stuck somewhere. We get stuck when we haven't chosen a life of doing right, when we have gone against our conscience somewhere. So there is a wonderful promise for all those who keep a clear conscience, there will be enlargement in their life, your way will open up before you, means there will be enlargement and there will be no stumbling.

He is able to keep us from stumbling. Therefore Solomon exhorts the next generation, take hold of instruction, verse 13, and do not let go, God her, for she is your life. Do not enter the path of the wicked, and do not proceed in the way of evil men.

You know that David had already said that in Psalm 1, verse 1, blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stand in the path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers, and he taught that to Solomon, and Solomon says the same thing, don't enter the path of the wicked, do not proceed in the way of evil men, avoid it, do not pass by it, don't say, I'll go that way and I'll overcome, no, that's not the way, avoid it altogether, run away from temptation, and do not proceed in the way of evil men, turn

away from it and pass on, go some other way, if you find there's temptation down that street, take the other street.

That's what scripture says, flee youthful lusts, for these evil men, they cannot sleep unless they do evil, so we must stay far away from the way they walk, don't even go one step on it, don't even say, well I want to know what they do, the knowledge of iniquity is not wisdom, the knowledge of sin is not wisdom, we don't have to know what all sinful people do, avoid it, don't take one step on it, for they are evil, they cannot sleep unless they do something evil, they are robbed of sleep unless they make someone stumble, I thought of, think of the opposite of that, think if it can be said about us that they cannot sleep unless they have done some good to someone during the day, that's the opposite of verse 16, that a person cannot sleep unless he has done some good to someone, if the evil

man is the one who cannot sleep unless they do evil, the righteous man is the one who cannot sleep unless he has done some good to someone, they are robbed of sleep unless they make someone stumble, think of the opposite of that, they are robbed of sleep unless they have really helped someone to stand and encouraged someone, for they eat the bread of wickedness and drink the wine of violence, and here's another fantastic Old Testament verse, the two beautiful verses in this chapter, one is verse 12, the other is verse 18, this is really a new covenant promise, the path of the righteous, we know that a person is righteous only when he comes to faith in Christ, when his sins are forgiven and he is declared righteous by God, justified with the righteousness of Christ clothing him, but then

it is not God's will that his life should be just like the sunrise, it says the path of the righteous is like the sunrise, but you know when the sun rises, there's light, but the light is still not at its brightest, this light shines brighter, think of the sun rising in the sky, brighter and brighter and brighter until the noon day position, when there is perfect brightness, we can say that the shadows decrease as the sun rises, the shadow of our self-life keeps on decreasing, decreasing, decreasing, and finally the sun is overhead, where the shadow disappears altogether, that is God's will for us, that from the time we are born again, it is not God's will that any child of His should have an up and down experience, now most Christians have an up and down experience, and when we hear that

other people have up and down experiences and some preacher has some up and down experience, we are comforted in our defeat, and we get our standard from some carnal believer or some carnal preacher instead of from the word of God which says the path of the righteous is not up and down, it's not bright and then dark, and then bright again and dark again, on top of the mountain, down in the dumps one day, praising the Lord and rejoicing, gloomy and miserable the next day, well, if that's our experience, we just want to say that's not God's will, that is not the path of the righteous, the person who is walking that way, we can clearly say he is not walking the path of the righteous, the path of the righteous is called in the New Testament, the new and living way, it's not a doctrine to

understand, but it's the path of the righteous, and now we hear of people who believe in the new and living way, I got a letter this week about someone who spoke about new and living way brothers and sisters, what's a new and living way brother and sister, not somebody who sits in Christian fellowship center, not someone who understands the doctrine, but someone who is not going up and down, person who is up and down is not new and living way, that's the old dead way, new and living way is brighter, brighter, brighter, brighter, that is the only new and living way the New Testament speaks about, the path of the righteous, this down in the dumps business only proves we understood the doctrine, but we haven't got on to the way at all, the path of the righteous is like the sunrise that

shines brighter and brighter and it doesn't go back and forth, the sun, doesn't change its mind suddenly, just keeps going steadily, and that is God's will for our lives brothers and sisters, that is the will of God, that it become better and better and better and better, that means I get more and more light on what dwells in my flesh, I get light on what dwells in my flesh now, which I did not know six months ago, if we are not in that condition, we are not on the path of the righteous, let's get that very clearly so that we don't deceive ourselves just by understanding some doctrine, no, it is the path where the light gets brighter and brighter and brighter and brighter, where I get more and more light on my flesh, like 1 John 1.7 says, if we walk in the light as God is in the light,

God is light, and if I walk in that light, the closer I get to God, the light is getting brighter and brighter, that means I am getting more and more light on what dwells in my flesh, I am able to put more and more to death in my life, and I am becoming wiser, that is how Jesus grew in wisdom, He walked the new and living way, and it says in Luke 2.52, He grew in wisdom, and that is what Solomon is saying here, inspired by the Holy Spirit, or like it says in 2 Corinthians 3.18, the Holy Spirit shows us the glory of Jesus, that is the light, and it becomes brighter and brighter, and changes us into that same likeness from glory to glory, here is the Old Testament verse, which corresponds to 2 Corinthians 3.18, if you want to understand this verse, you got to turn to 2 Corinthians 3.18 and

see there, from glory to glory to glory to glory, and brothers and sisters, if we accept this substandard half depressed half gloomy life as God's will for our lives, we will always live there, defeated, and thinking that is the new and living way, that is garbage, throw it into the garbage bin, say that I know the doctrine but I am not walking the way, if we walk the way, this is it, there is no question of somebody finding you in a bad mood one day, where is the question of bad moods on the path of the righteous?

No, there are many things we may not have light on, that we will get light as we walk along, but there is no question of going back, of backsliding, of going back to some sin which we once conquered, that is not the path of the righteous, no, far from it, so that is something we have to keep very clearly before us, in contrast to that, verse 19 is another path, that is the old and dead way, the way of the wicked it is called, is like darkness, and darkness, you know how it is, when you are walking in the darkness, it is all pitch dark, you can't see a thing, and you are walking steadily, suddenly you stumble, and then you get up, and you are walking steadily for some time, suddenly you stumble again, you are not stumbling all the time, it is this up and down, and up and down, and up and down, and up and down experience, stumbling and getting up, and stumbling and getting up, that is called here the way of the wicked, that is not the new and living way, that is the way of a person who is not wholehearted, who hasn't learned to hate his own self-life, who hasn't learned to hate the flesh as evil, that is why he is stumbling, there is darkness there, now darkness doesn't mean not knowing God's will, even Jesus did not know God's will in the garden of Gethsemane, he said, Father, if it is your will, which means he didn't know God's will, should I drink this cup or not drink it, so darkness does not mean perplexity concerning God's will, darkness means I don't keep a clear conscience, that is what brings darkness into my life, I don't learn to hate myself, I hate the other person instead of hating myself, that is darkness, whoever hates his brother walks in darkness, whoever hates himself and puts his own flesh to death walks in the light, all those who are critical and judgmental of others, they are walking in darkness, they haven't understood to judge themselves, then of course they stumble, they get up, they stumble, they get up, depressed and happy one day and down in the dumps the next day, we have to see very clearly what God's word says in verse 18 and 19, here is the new and living way and here is the old and dead way, and we have to choose which way we want to go, but the way of the righteous is like light and that is the way God wants us to walk, to be wholehearted and

to hate only my own self-life, nothing else, no one else, only my own flesh and then it gets brighter and brighter and brighter and brighter, more and more victory, more and more light on areas in which I don't know anything yet.

It's wonderful, this old testament book that teaches us about the new and living way, verse 20, my son, notice that word of submission to spiritual authority, my son, give attention to my words, those who have not learned how to submit to spiritual authority can never come and understand wisdom, because the book of Proverbs, more than any book in the entire old testament speaks, my son, my son, my son, it's the submission of a son to a spiritual father, taking spiritual authority, submitting to spiritual authority, Solomon says, my son, give attention to my words, incline your ear to my sayings, do not let them depart from your sight, keep them in the midst of your heart, notice the emphasis again, not in your mind, it's not a question of understanding it, he got instructions from a man

who was a man after God's own heart, his father David, and he told him, keep it in the midst, in the central place in your heart, don't just think that you can understand and explain the doctrine and that doesn't prove that we are any better than the devil, but to keep it in the midst of your heart, the central place, and when we do that, it not only makes our path brighter and brighter and brighter, that our spiritual life goes from glory to glory to glory to glory, it also says, verse 22, not only is it life, that is spiritual life, eternal life, the divine nature, verse 22, to all those who find them, but secondly, it is also help to their whole body, it brings physical healing too, the word of God, obedience to God's word brings spiritual life and physical health, that's what God's

word says, according to your faith, be it unto you, spiritual health and physical health, and that's why when we get sick, or when we have a physical problem, the first thing we need to do is to ask ourselves, have I disobeyed God's word somewhere, that health is not coming to my body, that's a question we need to ask ourselves, according to this verse, watch over your heart with all diligence, notice again, the emphasis on the heart, it's just like Jesus said, from the heart, verse 23, flow all the springs of life, out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks, that's why after speaking about the heart in verse 23, he speaks about the mouth in verse 24, put away from you a deceitful mouth, put devious lips far from you, but he begins with the heart, and you really see that Solomon

had some supernatural revelation, that to speak about these new covenant concepts, watch your heart, he says, it's not just a question of doing right on the outside, it's not just a question of saying, I've kept the commandments, but why am I still sick in my body, Solomon says, just look into your heart and see if there's something wrong there, some wrong attitude towards someone, some wrong motive in that right thing that you're doing, yeah, watch your heart, and then he says, be careful with your mouth, like James says, if a man's got religion, the proof of it is that he can control his tongue, if a person cannot control his tongue, James 1.26 says, the person's religion is worth zero, any person who cannot control his tongue, whatever doctrine under the sun he preaches, God's word

says in James 1.26, his religion is worth zero, a person who cannot control his temper, cannot control his tongue, his religion is worth nothing, he's got absolutely holy doctrine, put away from you a deceitful mouth, no crooked or crafty speech, or guile, saying things to give a wrong impression, deceitful mouth, devious lips, and then he says, watch your eyes, this is just like the sermon on the mount, watch your eyes, look directly ahead and let your gaze be fixed straight in front of you, don't look that side where you are tempted to look, because there's something attractive there which you know God has forbidden on that side, don't look that side, look straight in front, notice that here it gets to the heart of spirituality, watch

your heart he says, watch your tongue, watch your

eyes, and then watch the path of your feet, where you go, the homes you visit, the type of people you go and spend time with, if you can watch these, your heart verse 23, your tongue verse 24, your eyes verse 25, your feet verse 26, that you turn your feet away from evil, don't turn right or left from the new and living way, you'll be a spiritual man, growing in wisdom.

You see how much of this is really New Testament stuff, and so it says there in verse 26 and 27, watch each step and think before you move forward, is this a right path for me to go? Walk that new and living way, don't turn to the right or left, that's the time when you hear the voice behind you of the Holy Spirit saying, no you have missed the road there now, turn, turn back, and when you hear that voice saying humble yourself, go and set that right, turn back to the new and living way, come back to the new and living way.

Don't turn right or left, don't get sidetracked, keep your goal, so many people start off well, but then they get sidetracked somewhere, instead of keeping as their goal, I have to become more and more like Jesus as each year goes by in my life, that is my goal in life, I press toward the mark like Paul says, one thing I do, I don't have 25 things to do, only one thing, to the price of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, that's the meaning here, don't turn to the right or left, pull back, turn your foot from evil means pull back your foot from danger and sin, again chapter 5 verse 1, my son give attention to my wisdom, incline your ear to my understanding, which means bow down your ear, and that teaches us to get spiritual wisdom, we have to humble ourselves, we have to bow down our

ear like James 1.21 says, receive with meekness the engrafted word, the word can be grafted into me if I receive it with meekness, you know like a branch grafted into another tree, and then the two have become one, like that it says in James 1.21, with meekness I can receive the engrafted word, the word can be engrafted into me if I receive it with meekness, if I don't receive it with meekness, it's like a seed that falls in and the birds take it away the next day, it's not engrafted, if I receive it with meekness, if I incline my ear and say Lord I humble myself before your word, I want to tremble at your word, teach me, humble yourself, humble your understanding, particularly human cleverness, incline your ear, bow down, and now he gives us a lot of instruction in the next two or three

chapters about our relationship with the opposite sex, and it's very interesting that Solomon has such a lot to say about relationships with the opposite sex, a very important thing, an important area where we need wisdom, particularly young people, the book of Proverbs is mainly written for young people, and young people, I encourage them to read the book of Proverbs, when you get into your teenage years, read the book of Proverbs again and again and again and again and again, young men, young women, and in relation to the opposite sex, the first thing he says is that you may observe discretion, discretion means to be discreet, that means to be a little reserved, you can be free with people of your own sex, the sisters of the sisters and the brothers of the brothers, but when it comes to

the opposite sex, be a little reserved, that's the meaning of discretion, that's the first thing he says, he says, my son, do you really want some wisdom, do you want to humble yourself, do you want to bow down your ears, then learn something, be a little reserved in your relationship with the opposite sex, and your lips may reserve knowledge, that means don't use your tongue so freely to crack jokes and be so familiar with people of the opposite sex, it's just practical wisdom, don't become so familiar, be careful, he doesn't say be a sanyasi and never see them, but just be a little careful, keep a little aloof, and if you find someone

being too free with you, just be a little cold, so that they learn to keep their distance, and you won't regret it in later years, and if you are a

brother desiring to be a man of God, have this testimony, that you are a brother who is reserved with the opposite sex, that the opposite sex feel you're a little cold towards them, a little aloof from them, I've heard that accusation many many times against me, I hope to live in that accusation all my life, to be a little aloof, a little cold, be a man of God, keep that distance, don't be too familiar, take the book of Proverbs seriously, those who are whole hearted, take it seriously, keep a little reserve, and keep a little distance, you want to crack jokes, crack them with people of your own sex, not with the opposite sex, be careful, now that's not what the world says, the world says, oh you're too narrow minded, alright, you can choose the way of the world if you like, but just see

what will happen after a few years, you'll come back in sorrow, wishing you had listened to the words of wisdom in the book of Proverbs, that's what he says later on, and then he speaks about the lips of a strange woman, of a bad woman, it says a strange woman in the margin, a drip honey, yeah, this is the flirting type who says so many nice things to you, and you don't know how to keep that reserve, and smoother than oil is her speech, and you know when you see oil on the ground what do you do?

You walk carefully, oh, if I have to walk here I've got to be careful, and when you find that someone's speech is smoother than oil, young men be careful, there's oil on the floor, be careful, many have slipped here and fallen, flattery, honey flowing out from their lips, oh you look so nice, or that's a beautiful dress, or you're looking so handsome and finished, that's enough to knock out some young men, stupid young men who haven't taken the word of God seriously, listen, be careful, but speak very frankly in the church about these things because we want to protect, I also want to say whenever you read about this bad woman in Proverbs, remember also it refers to Babylon, the harlot, the mother of harlots, it refers to that flirtatious young girl who's trying to tempt you, it also

refers to Babylon who's trying to tempt you and to lead you away from the true church, the bride of Christ, there also they speak nice things, rebuke and correction is not found in that mother of harlots, that's found only in the bride, so we see here in verse 4, in the end she is bitter as wormwood, that's what happens finally, sharp as a two-edged sword, do you know that the devil's got a two-edged sword, we know what God's two-edged sword is, God's two-edged sword is the word of God that brings life, that cuts out the cancer, that removes the evil, verse 3 and 4, Proverbs 5, 3 and 4, the lips of a strange woman, drip honey and smoother than oil is her speech, it all sounds so nice but in the end she's bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword, the devil's two-edged sword, a

strange woman who leads you astray from God, young men be careful, be careful, her feet go down to death, her steps lay hold of Sheol, through flattery, flattery is her two-edged sword, through flattery she leads people to hell, through rebuke and correction God's word leads people to heaven, but through flattery Babylon leads people into eternal darkness, her steps lay hold of Sheol, she does not understand the path of life, and people in Babylon don't understand the path of life, their ways are unstable, she does not know it, now then my sons, listen to me, look at the earnestness that Solomon has, listen to me he says, do not depart from the words of my mouth, don't ever forget what I'm telling you this evening, keep your way far from her, whenever you see a flirtatious type of girl,

keep well clear of her, there's oil there on the floor, there's honey dripping from her mouth, be careful, keep your way far from her, you may not be able to avoid her, you're in college or school or somewhere

with her, but just steer clear, be a little cold, be a little aloof, be a little reserved, be a man of God, and don't go near the door of her house, look at the exhortations, don't go near the door of her house, avoid it, lest finally you give your vigor, your strength to others, and you're yours to the cruel one, that's the devil, and strangers are filled with your physical strength, in other words, if I were to paraphrase those words, in your hard earned goods, go to the house of an alien, this woman finally gets married to you and ruins your money, and you groan at your latter

end when your flesh and your body are consumed, sexual sin finally destroys the body, and there are different degrees of it, and young men can play the fool with a small little thing in this area of sex, they know their conscience disturbs them, it's wrong, there's something wrong there, it's a sexual sin, it's not so serious, it's destroying the body, your flesh and your body will be consumed, because you're violating God's laws for that body, by that dirty habit, or there are different degrees, you go little further, little further, little further, till there are forms of, filthy forms of perversion, avoid it right at the outset, avoid it, lest your flesh and your body are consumed, and you groan at your latter end, and you waste your money, it says in verse 10, speaking of avoiding

prostitutes, and also avoiding all types of women who seek to lead you astray from God, keep a reserve, keep a reserve, yeah speak to them but keep a little reserve, keep a little aloof, you have to keep your heart for God, and then finally when you suffer, you say, how I have suffered, how I have suffered, hated instruction, this is many years later, this teenager who didn't care for what, those who were older to him, warned him and advised him about, finally he suffers, and his body is consumed, he gets on sickness, and he says, I wish I had listened, how my heart spurned reproof, brother I want you to think of that verse, verse 12, does your heart spurn correction, our reaction to correction is a pretty good test of our spiritual condition, when someone who is above us, in the Lord,

corrects us, it's not a question of how you appear on the outside, outwardly you don't spurn it, you act humble, and you say, yeah, thank you brother, but in your heart, verse 12, your heart, you don't take it seriously, be careful, one day calamity can strike, reproofs are the way of life, the way of reproof and correction is the way of life, you come to that in Proverbs many times, Proverbs speaks about wisdom, and I'll tell you this, one of the great contrast in the book of Proverbs, between Babylon the bad woman, and Jerusalem the bride, is flattery and reproof, flattery is found in the strange woman, reproof in the church, flattery has never led anybody to wisdom, reproof and correction have led people to wisdom, and so, what's your reaction to correction, those who hate correction,

are in danger, I've not, verse 13, listened to the voice of my teachers, and I've not inclined my ear, I've not humbled myself, to my spiritual instructors, and who is your spiritual instructor, first of all, your father and your mother, your first spiritual instructors are your father and your mother, listen to them, Proverbs says that many times, you young man, you who think you know everything, you're very smart, and your father and mother are old, and you think they don't know anything, you don't know the first thing about wisdom, wisdom is first of all, humble yourself, listen to those whom God has placed over you in your home, your father and mother, and then when you belong in a church, those who are elder to us spiritually, listen to them, not anybody who is older to us in age,

but one whom we can inwardly acknowledge as one who is spiritually ahead of us, whether young or old in age makes no difference, such a person, then listen to him, if you accept a brother as an elder brother, listen to him, if you don't accept it, then it's another thing, but God gives us older brothers for our protection, and if you are a wife to your husband, there are three relationships, children to their parents,

younger brothers to older brothers, and wives to their husbands, how do you take a word of correction, a young brother from an older brother, a child from a parent, a wife from a husband, can you take a word of correction from your husband, and not despise it, can you take a word of correction from your parents and accept it, from an older brother and accept it, then you are

on the way of life, it doesn't just apply to sexual sin, but so many areas, the way of correction is the way of life, and he says here, because I have not listened to the voice of my teachers, verse 14, I was almost in utter ruin, in the midst of the assembly and congregation means, that even publicly God allowed me to be disgraced and humiliated, and the ministry that I could have had in the assembly and the congregation, I lost, because I did not take correction seriously, I wanted to listen to those who flattered me, and said brother you are a wonderful brother, and we are all ready for the rapture, and Jesus is coming, and we are all going, we sit and listen to all that, and we don't realize which way we are going, we need the word of correction, otherwise we end up in ruin, and we

lose the ministry God has for us in the church.

Verses 15 to 23, speaks particularly to married people, this is for married people now, few words of exhortation first to young teenagers, young people in their twenties, and now to married people, there is words of exhortation here for married people, drink water from your own sister means, you got a well in your house, don't go to somebody else's well, be satisfied with the well you have in your own house to drink water, in other words, God has given you a wife, be happy with her, don't go to somebody else's well, don't go looking at other people's wives, don't go admiring other people's wives, we say I never do that, just a minute, have you ever told your wife something like this, do you know what she does for her husband, what is that, that's adultery in the mind, it is covetousness,

it is coveting somebody else's wife, in the mind only, she is better than my wife, what is that, it is sin, so what if she does that for her husband, you be satisfied with the one God has given you, with all her limitations and all her weaknesses and all her good points, that's the one God has chosen for you, and those who are newly married, I want to exhort you, think to be able to live all through your life without ever, ever, ever, you husbands having to tell your wife the good point of some other sister, she is like that, no, be satisfied with the one God has given you, drink water from your own cistern and fresh water from your own well, in other words, your relationship with your wife should be fresh in love, and don't fool around with other women, that's the meaning of verse 16,

should your springs be dispersed abroad and streams of water in the streets, don't get interested in other women down other streets, be satisfied with the well God has put in your own house, it's a tremendous word of warning and exhortation to married people, and your children let them be yours alone and not for strangers with you, that you go around fooling around sexually with someone else, and he goes on to say in verse 18 and 19, let your fountain be blessed, rejoice in the wife of your youth, as a loving hind and a graceful doll, let her breast satisfy you at all times, be exhilarated always with her love, what it basically means is, be thrilled with loving your wife, the wife whom you married when she was young and you were young, the wife of your youth, now you're not young, she's

not as attractive as she looked 20 years ago when you married her, and that's why some people want to turn their eyes and look at other attractive young women, that proves that right from the beginning they were not spiritual, they did not understand that beauty is a temporary empty thing that passes away, they never understood that, they got taken up with beauty and when the wife has lost her beauty, they become

interested in other women, it's a terrific warning, rejoice in the wife of your youth, and be, it says here in the margin, be intoxicated with her love, what a word, it says here literally the word is intoxicated, you know the man who gets drunk, he gets so drunk and he just wants to drink more and more and every time he passes by the saloon, he wants to go and have another drink

and another drink and he's never tired, and he had one morning, noon and it's night now, another drink to the saloon, think to love your wife like that, just think of that drunken man as an example, it says here, the way to love your wife, that you just get taken up with her, with her, morning, noon and night, you just have no time for other things, this drunken man doesn't even have time to go to work, he's so taken up with this intoxication, think to be so taken up that we have absolutely no time or space in our heart to think of any other woman, it's very down to earth and practical, be taken up with her embrace and her love, that means with being occupied with loving her and seeking to do more and more, do that more and more as Christ loved the church, and then he goes on, he says

here in verse 20, for why should you my son be taken up with a strange woman and embrace the bosom of a foreigner, the one whom God has not given you, and then a warning, for the ways of a man, and in one translation it says, the ways of all husbands are before the eyes of the Lord, the Lord is watching all husbands, even when their wives are not watching them, that's the meaning, your wife is not watching you at that moment, but the Lord is watching you brother, and he is watching all his ways, that means long before, it speaks about the outward action in the second part of verse 21, he watches his paths, the paths are the outward action, but long before the paths, he starts taking those paths that are ways in his heart, he sits and he plans, I think I'll just go that way, or maybe drop

in and visit that person, and the Lord's already watched, this thing that's going on in the mind of this husband, the Lord watches, and the Lord doesn't stop him, the Lord doesn't bring an earthquake or lightning to stop him, yeah, you go, if you don't fear me, go any way you like, you can go to hell if you want, it's an amazing thing that God allows millions of people to go to hell every day, have you thought of that, every day, he sees millions going to hell and he doesn't stop them, because he's given them the word, he sees believers living in Babylon, living after the lust of their flesh, thinking they've accepted Christ, going to hell, and he doesn't stop them, yeah, if you want to deceive yourself, deceive yourself and go, I've given you my word, you haven't taken it seriously,

yeah, his own iniquities will capture the wicked, it's not that God sends him to hell, it's his own iniquities take him there, and he will be held with the cords of his sin, that's another thing young people must remember, that once you get into a sin, you commit a sin once, and it binds you, and then it draws you to do it again, binds you once more, and then draws you, binds you once more, each time, one more knot, one more knot, one more knot, one more knot, think of that, every time you sin in this area, a lustful thought, a dirty sexual deed, one more knot, one more knot, one more knot, what an idiot a man has got to be to give himself to the devil like this, little by little by little by little by little, and that's how the world's full of people, and even so called Christians, I'm

sorry to say, there is not the fear of God that there should be among believers, they don't see that God is watching them, all they know is their wife is not watching them, alright, word of God says he will die, because he didn't take correction, and in the greatness of his own folly, he will go astray into an eternal hell, because anyone lives after the flesh, he shall die, that's clear, it's a very strong warning that Solomon gives here to young people, amazing, a very strong warning, now he goes on to another subject, let me just say this in passing, the sad thing is that the man who wrote this book, you know what happened to

him, he did not live according to what he taught others, he who said don't go near those women, control yourself, don't go one step that way, steer clear, you

think this is a really wholehearted brother, sometimes we can be deceived when we hear people get up and share the word, and we think they are wholehearted brothers, and if you had heard Solomon get up and preach something like this, you'd think he's really wholehearted, and he was perhaps in the beginning, but he began to take it easy, and slipped up, and finally went in deep, more deep than any of the other kings, deep into the very sin that he warned other people against, with women.

What does it teach us? We can preach the greatest high-sounding doctrines in the whole world, and if we don't keep our body under control, we can preach to others, and be cast away ourselves, that's what Paul says, lest I preach to others, and I be a castaway myself, so don't think just because we understand it, and we are sharing it with so many, therefore we are spiritual, far from it. The question is in my daily life, am I subduing my body, am I controlling my eyes, am I controlling my thoughts, am I controlling my tongue, am I hating my own self-life, do I mourn, do I hunger and thirst for righteousness, if I'm not doing all this, I can talk more wonderful things than Solomon, and end up worse than Solomon, and Solomon will rise up in judgment against me one day, and say, hey, I didn't know about the new and living way, you fellows talked about something higher than even me, and what was your final end, what type of life did you live in private, what type of thought life did you have, and Solomon will rise up in judgment against us. He who has ears to hear, let him hear, self-control, a very important area of wisdom, he will die for lack of instruction, says in verse 23, in some translations it says, he dies because he's got no self-control in his life, no self-control.

Brothers and sisters, the fruit of the spirit is self-control, one of the most important verses for charismatic, Pentecostal, spirit-filled people, the fruit of the spirit is self-control, self-control over your tongue, self-control over your eyes, self-control over your thoughts, self-control in your eating, self-control in many, many things, the fruit of the spirit is self-control, and he will die because he's got no self-control in his life. Now he moves on to another subject, and that is the subject of being a surety for a stranger, that means agreeing to pay somebody else's debt, somebody wants an agreement signed for something and he needs somebody who will stand as a guarantee, saying in case this fellow doesn't pay up, I will pay up, and doesn't that sound like a very loving thing to do?

Yeah, human, we have so many human understanding of love is quite different from a divine understanding of love, and he says, my son, if you have become surety for your neighbor and have given a pledge for a stranger, here is a person whom you don't know too well, he's a friend, at the same time he's a stranger, you know, that's the type of people we have relationship with most of the time, person who lives next door and yet you don't know him so well, you can't say you don't know him at all, he's a neighbor and a stranger, that's what it says here, for your neighbor but he's a stranger, and you have decided to stand guarantee for him, he says that's a stupid thing to do, don't do it, have you been snared with the words of your mouth, you sat there and he said so many nice things to you,

the honey dripped from his mouth and you just agreed to it, and you came back home and you realized you are caught, you have been caught with the words of your own mouth, you gave your promise to that man, what shall you do now, you know what the word of God says, go and retract that promise, go back and tell him, sorry, please forgive me, I can't do that, I gave a little more thought to it, don't be so foolish to think, oh, I gave my word, now I have to stick to it, well, you gave your word foolishly, now you've got a little more wisdom and you realize it's a foolish thing to do, go back, do this my son and deliver yourself, that's not a mark of love, it's a foolish promise made, go and retract it, deliver yourself because you have

come now under the power of your neighbor and God does

not ever want us to be under the power of another man, you have been bought with a price, don't become the servants and slaves of men, you have committed yourself and you are bound to that person now, he's got power over you, go, it says, humble yourself, I think it's the only place, only book in the Old Testament where you find this new covenant exhortation, humble yourself, really a new covenant book this, go humble yourself, don't stand on your dignity and bodily think of me that I'm a person who goes back on my word, never mind what he thinks of you, go, humble yourself and plead and beg with your neighbor, I'm sorry for giving my word but please let me take it back, I can't, when are you going to do it, you came back home at 10.30 at night, after talking to this person, you say

you'll go next morning, he says, no, don't give sleep to your eyes, go immediately, verse 4, don't give slumber to your eyelids, go right now, deliver yourself, do you see how earnestly he says, don't go and say that you will pay somebody else's debts, that's not a mark of love, there's a lot of foolish love, so called love, foolish love in the area of money, in helping other people financially, we find a tremendous amount of folly even among believers, particularly when they are young, they are so stupid, that's why you find in the Acts of the Apostles chapter 4 that those early believers never gave their money directly to the poor, they gave it to the apostles and the apostles gave it because they had a little more wisdom, but of course today we are very smart ourselves, we don't need

anybody else and we do a lot of foolish things, we can think of all the people who have come here and swindled so many people even in our own assembly, when will we learn, when will we learn, you know there's an area where we got to learn wisdom, all this foolish love, humble yourself brother, acknowledge that you are quite stupid, you got money but you got no wisdom, how to handle it, if you want to help the poor, give it to someone who knows how, who's got a little more wisdom than you, to be able to help in a wise way, go humble yourself, don't think that love is to stand, I will support you and I will take care of your debts, no, don't give sleep to your eyes, deliver yourself like a gazelle from the hunter's hand and like a bird from the hand of the fowler, urgent, get out of a trap,

you are in a trap, now don't get stuck there, get out of it immediately, so there's an exhortation if you have given a guarantee to support someone, maybe financially or to pay someone's debts, get out of it, then another area he says about laziness, I told you that the book of Proverbs has got a lot of things to say about fools and about lazy people, they both go together, lazy people means spiritually lazy, those who are not wholehearted, and he says go to school, go to the ant or sluggard or like one translation says, go to school with the ant, go to school with the ant and learn something from that ant, now when God created Adam, he said you are going to have dominion over all the animals and birds and fish and everything, but it's a pretty pathetic state that man has come to now,

that he has to now go to the ant and say, please teach me sir, I have got something to learn from you, man has become such a fool spiritually, and this is particularly to those who are lazy, those who are not wholehearted, observe her ways, open your eyes he says, and see that ant, how hardworking it is, how hardworking it is, you want to learn wisdom, learn it from the ant, who has no elder brother, verse 7, nobody to give any exhortations, no overseer, but without all that, that ant does the job of preparing her food in the summer and gathering her provision in the harvest, that means this ant prepares for the future, it knows that small little thing, the brain is even smaller than that, inside that brain it has got a little bit of intelligence, time may come and there may not be so

much food around, so I better stack up some, and I suppose that there must be ants somewhere, in Palestine or somewhere, that do exactly like this, gather up food in the summer and in the harvest time, and keep it somewhere, without any exhortation or any elder brother, it thinks about the future, of course that ant's future is only here on this earth, it just thinks about the winter, that's the future, but for us, we are not ants, we have got a future in eternity, he says, think about that, think, have you laid up some treasure for eternity, are you going to be a beggar for all eternity, because you just enjoyed yourself now, that's the primary exhortation, to think about the future in terms of eternity, but also it has relation to our life on earth also, because we are not going to die

tonight, we may live for a few years, and we want to think, I don't want to live in such a way, carelessly spending everything I get, so that six months from now I have a sudden extra need, some hospitalization, some expenditure that I cannot avoid, and then I have to beg, I have to borrow, I have to go to the money lenders, because I did not learn from the ants, I thought I was so spiritual, I was like George Muller, and I discovered in the moment of need, I was worse than the ants, I had to beg, and borrow, because I don't know how to discipline myself, I don't know how to lay up a little bit for the future, now we find there is a tremendous need for that exhortation, how long will you lie down, so sluggard, when will you arise from your sleep, a little sleep, a little slumber, a little

folding of the hands to the rest, finally you become poor, and poverty grabs you, it's amazing what we can learn from the ant in that heat of summer, it works hard, I have seen these two ants helping to carry a little piece of sugar, one bearing the loads of the other, without any overseer, without any exhortation, they know how to bear one another's burdens, and really carry the food there, and we got to eat it up a little later, think of that, observe her ways, and be wise, hardworking, always looking, where can I get something to eat, and lay up something for the future, think to be like that in terms of eternity, Lord, I want to live for the future, I want to live for that which is eternal, not for that which is just going to pass away, I don't want to just enjoy my life and have a

comfortable life here, I want to think, has my life counted for God, have I laid up treasure in heaven, then let me learn something from the ant, and the question is, verse 9, when will you arise from your sleep, or paraphrase it like this, when will you become whole hearted brother, when will you become whole hearted about eternal things, when will we finish with being occupied with temporal things, when will we become whole hearted, there is a spiritual laziness that these words rebuke us out of, think of eternity, think of the future, and lay up treasure like Jesus said, where moth and rust cannot corrupt, where we can have something when we go up into eternity.

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