

Proverbs Chapters 20-21 - John Karmelich

1. My subtopic for this lesson is about avoiding things that can hurt us.
 - a) A lot of the proverbs in this lesson "speak in the negative", which is about warning us of things to avoid or things that can hurt us. These proverbs are teaching us how to behave by giving us "negative" examples!
 - b) On a related note, we have a bunch of proverbs in this lesson reminding us not to be lazy and that God is always watching our behavior and judging us!
 - c) Some of these proverbs just focus on the behavior of the wicked. Others are given as warnings to believers. For example, we have a couple of proverbs about dealing with a quarrelsome spouse.
 - d) I'll come back to this topic through the lesson. There are 61 proverbs in these two chapters, so I want to get a running start.
2. Chapter 20, Verse 1: Wine is a mocker and beer a brawler; whoever is led astray by them is not wise.
 - a) The bible never condemns the act of drinking, but does condemn getting drunk.
 - i) At the same time, the bible never has good things to say about drinking.
 - b) The point of this proverb is that whoever is "led" by alcohol is not wise. This is describing a person who drinks on a regular basis.
 - c) If a God fearing person has a glass of wine, I don't have a problem with it. If one is getting drunk on a regular basis, from God's perspective, one does have a problem that has to be dealt with!
 - d) I take the view of when in doubt, don't do it! Ask yourself, who is watching me drink and how will it affect my behavior? Again, when in doubt, avoid it! ☺
3. Verse 2: A king's wrath is like the roar of a lion; he who angers him forfeits his life.
 - a) This is similar to some other proverbs we've had in the past. The idea is that one never knows when a king (or anyone in authority) is going to get mad and it could cost us our lives if we have to face that anger.
 - b) The idea is either to avoid such a leader's wrath or if one has to face it, try to calm it!
4. Verse 3: It is to a man's honor to avoid strife, but every fool is quick to quarrel.
 - a) A sign of a wise person is they do their best to avoid strife, while a sign of a fool is that they are quick to get into an argument.
 - b) This verse does not mean a wise person always avoids a fight or a foolish person doesn't on occasion try to talk his way out of it. It means that more often than not, a wise person will do his or her best to avoid strife in their life.
 - c) Getting back to my opening comments, notice the pattern of proverbs with negative behavior. Many of these proverbs are describing behavior to avoid.
5. Verse 4: A sluggard does not plow in season; so at harvest time he looks but finds nothing.
 - a) We're now back to describing a "lazy person", like we have been in previous lessons. A sign of a lazy person is that when it is time to plow their fields, they are too lazy to work and then get nothing at harvest time.
 - b) Even if the sluggard is not a farmer, one can apply this to whether or not a person is making any sort of effort in life to "pull their own weight" as opposed to always having to be dependant upon others to eat.
6. Verse 5: The purposes of a man's heart are deep waters, but a man of understanding draws them out.
 - a) A person may have the ability to give great advice, but it takes a man (or woman) of understanding to draw that good advice out of that person.
 - b) In a broader concept, a person may have something on his or her heart that needs to be said, but a "man of understand" will help draw out that information.

- c) One can read this proverb as either one needing advice, or one trying to help get information from another who is a good councilor. The point is about one person helping another get information out of the one who should be saying something.
7. Verse 6: Many a man claims to have unfailing love, but a faithful man who can find?
- a) Many or most men claim to have "unfailing" love for someone. It could be talking about a man/woman relationship, a friendship or even a relationship with God. The point is many men claim they have such a relationship, but in reality, it is hard to find.
 - b) Let's look at this from a man/woman perspective. Most men will claim at some point in their life of their "true love" for a woman. The point is there are a lot less faithful men out there than those men who claim to be faithful all the time.
 - c) Let's look at this from a man and God perspective. Many men claim they are loyal to God, but their actions don't always follow through. Men and women who are truly loyal to God are less common, and that is a point of this proverb.
8. Verse 7: The righteous man leads a blameless life; blessed are his children after him.
- a) Verse 6 talked about a man who was truly loyal. It naturally follows that the next proverb speaks of the blessing on that man's life, including his children.
 - b) The first half says "The righteous man leads to a blameless life". In other words a man who lives his life always trying to do the right thing won't get into trouble with the law. Further, such a person is respected by God and by his peers for his honesty.
 - c) The second half says blessed are his children. It doesn't mean the children always turn out good, but such a good man becomes a good influence on his children. The point is the children are lucky to be living in such a home and have a good example.
 - d) As the bible teaches elsewhere, no one is perfect before God. Still, there are many who are honestly making an effort to live as blameless a life as possible. When a godly man or woman does mess up, they remember is to confess the sin and make every effort to turn from that sin!
9. Verse 8: When a king sits on his throne to judge, he winnows out all evil with his eyes.
- a) When a king or a judge sits on their judgment seat, sometimes "just a look" at the accused can help to separate the guilty from the innocent. The idea of "winnowing out all evil with his eyes" is an expression that means a look from the king or judge at those on trial can help judge the case correctly.
 - b) It doesn't mean a king can solve all cases perfectly, but in a judgment situation, those who are guilty do fear punishment and in that case the king is "separating evil with his eyes".
10. Verse 9: Who can say, "I have kept my heart pure; I am clean and without sin"?
- a) Back in Verse 6, we got into the issue of "who can be pure in God's eyes". That concept is followed up here in Verse 9. This verse asks the question, "who is pure and without sin?"
 - i) The answer is no one. The danger in life is to think "I'm not making any mistakes or I'm not guilty before God".
 - ii) The point of this proverb is that all people fall short before God in that we all make mistakes whether we realize it or not and whether or not we confess it.
 - b) There is an old joke in Christianity that even the best people "fall way short to God's standards of right and wrong". God's laws are still the "standard" to get into heaven. An unrighteous person may take a leap toward God and only land two feet away. A person who lives a better life may be able to leap 5-6 feet, but it still falls way short of God's standard of perfection. The true Christian is one who says, "Yes I'm guilty, but Jesus agreed to pay my penalty." It doesn't matter how far I can leap on my own.
 - c) The whole reason the "confession" process is set up is because everyone falls short of God's expectations for mankind. The danger is to think "I don't need to confess" or "I haven't done anything wrong". God wants us to confess our sin, vow to turn from it and move on. Even if we still mess up with the same sin over and over again, the process for forgiveness is the same.

11. Verse 10: Differing weights and differing measures-- the LORD detests them both.
- a) Here's another proverb that we've already had a few times in the Book of Proverbs: The concept is about being honest in our dealings with others. It is symbolized here in this proverb about the importance of having "honest sets of weights and measures".
 - i) The point here is that some people in the business world have one set of weights and measures when they buy a product and another when they sell a product. That is the idea behind having "different weights and measures".
 - b) Think about this proverb in context of the last one: The last one (Verse 9) was about how all people fall short of God's standards. Well, no one is perfect, but that is not an excuse to go out and sin on purpose, which is an underlying point of Verse 10.
 - i) Occasionally, you will meet a person who goes to church but still thinks, "It is ok to sin in the business world as that is the "world" and not "church". The correct answer is God expects us to be honest in all of our dealings!
 - c) God wants us to be consistent and fair in all of our dealings. ☺
12. Verse 11: Even a child is known by his actions, by whether his conduct is pure and right.
- a) It's pretty easy to judge how a person lives: It is simply a matter of watching their life for a while. One can even judge a child this way. Of course with children, we may have a lower standard than we do for an adult. The point is no matter what the age, one can judge a person based on how they live out their lives.
 - b) The last proverb was about being honest in business. This proverb takes it a step further by saying, "whether we realize or not, we are being judged by how we live our lives". People are judging us and God is judging us. You and I are not getting away with anything in life!
13. Verse 12: Ears that hear and eyes that see-- the LORD has made them both.
- a) The last proverb says in effect that "everyone" is under watch by God and other people in that it is relatively easy to judge others simply by observing them.
 - b) Verse 12 is the "follow up" that says God has made our eyes and ears if for no other reason, than to observe what is going on around us.
 - c) The point of this proverb is because we have eyes and ears, we can observe other people and make judgments about their lifestyles and choices. In fact, in life it is easier to see and judge others than to see ourselves. We tend to be much tougher on others than ourselves.
 - d) The secret of life is to think about this proverb in "light" of the fact God is going to judge us based on our actions. Just we are to judge other's behavior, but only to the extent of our interaction with them. As far as judging for eternal salvation and eternal condemnation, that is God's business alone. At the same time, we are to judge other people's behavior for the purposes of our interactions with them.
 - e) To put this proverb another way, "God has given us good ears and eyes", use them appropriately and watch what is going on around us.
14. Verse 13: Do not love sleep or you will grow poor; stay awake and you will have food to spare.
- a) The idea of "love sleep" here is not about having to work around the clock. The idea is about avoiding being lazy in life and then one will have enough food to spare.
 - b) The idea is that God calls us to support ourselves and our family. That means getting a job or career and working hard at it! One can aspire to a higher level in life and there is nothing wrong with that.
 - c) The point of this proverb is about avoiding being lazy in life. It is about the person who loves sleep to the point of not working and supporting themselves!
15. Verse 14: It's no good, it's no good!" says the buyer; then off he goes and boasts about his purchase.
- a) Here's another one of those proverbs that explains "How life works". There are many buyers of a product who are complaining during the negotiation process how bad the product is, but later boast about their purchase once they are no longer facing the seller.

- b) The point of this proverb is, if one is in a negotiation situation, to not always trust what the other person is saying. If they were really unhappy about the purchase, they would not have made the deal in the first place!
 - i) Unfortunately in life, there are some people who like this tactic, as they think the next time they can get a better deal if they complain enough.
 - c) The "truth is" in the business world, the best deals are one where both sides come out happy about the results. If one successfully cheats the other side so that one side doesn't make out very well, they will just resent the other party at the next transaction.
 - d) Dear God, help us to be honest in all our business dealings and not try to cheat others. ☺
- 16. Verse 15: Gold there is, and rubies in abundance, but lips that speak knowledge are a rare jewel.
 - a) The point of this proverb is that as much as people may treasure things like gold and rubies, but a "more rare and valuable jewel" is someone's lips that speak knowledge.
 - b) This proverb is not condemning the practice of trading in jewelry, but making the comparison of wise words to that of gold and rubies. The point is one who speaks "God's truth" is a far more valuable thing in life than material possessions! This verse is about putting God's word in perspective to things "man" considers valuable.
- 17. Verse 16: Take the garment of one who puts up security for a stranger; hold it in pledge if he does it for a wayward woman.
 - a) Many chapters ago, we talked about those who put up security for a stranger and the danger of that practice. Here in this proverb, that principal is taken one step further: If a person does put up security for a stranger, we should not trust that person: In fact we should take their garment (or some valuable) and hold it as a pledge to keep their word.
 - i) In other words, the type of person who puts up security for a stranger cannot be trusted in business dealings and therefore, when we have to deal with such a person, we need to collect their money up front or take something of theirs in a pledge to keep their word.
 - b) The idea of "doing it for a wayward woman" takes this concept one step further. Suppose a man wants to give part of his garment (or something valuable he owns) to an adulterous woman. Once again, that person shouldn't be trusted. The proverb is warning against the danger of having dealings with this type of person.
- 18. Verse 17: Food gained by fraud tastes sweet to a man, but he ends up with a mouth full of gravel.
 - a) Here's another proverb explaining how life works. Those who steal from others may enjoy the moment when they gain the prize, but they will still lose in the end.
 - b) For those who steal, at the least, God will judge them and they face eternal condemnation. What also usually happens is a person who lives such a lifestyle usually ends up in jail or dead "early" due to living such a lifestyle. The point of this proverb is that there is often some temporary reward when one steals, but the emphasis is fact it is only temporary.
- 19. Verse 18: Make plans by seeking advice; if you wage war, obtain guidance.
 - a) If one is making plans for their life, it is best to seek the council of one or more good advisors prior to beginning those plans.
 - b) If one is getting involved in a war, either literally or figuratively speaking, again, it is best to obtain good council prior to commencing that action.
 - c) The reason to seek such council is often one is not aware of the true cost of our plans prior to beginning the action. Such council helps us to be aware of what we are getting ourselves into with such actions.
 - i) Jesus himself commented on the importance of this principal (Luke 14:28).
- 20. Verse 19: A gossip betrays a confidence; so avoid a man who talks too much.
 - a) Speaking of good council, this is a related proverb. The idea is also to avoid "bad council", which is the type of person who would betray our confidence and "talk too much". The idea is to beware of people who share our secrets with others!

- b) This proverb is warning us about who we should and should not trust in life. A person who talks a lot should not be trusted as a close confident!
21. Verse 20: If a man curses his father or mother, his lamp will be snuffed out in pitch darkness.
- a) Twice in the Torah, it is commanded that a person who curses their parents should be put to death. (Exodus 21:17 and Leviticus 20:9). Jesus Himself even commented on this principal, although Jesus point was different.
- b) The interesting thing about this principal is there are no examples in the bible of this law ever being put into practice. While this law is on the books, the reality is parents "put up with kids saying bad things about them".
- i) The other point of this proverb is that if a man does such an action against his parents, God can send that person to hell for his bad treatment of his parents.
- ii) What if the parents abuse a child? That's the exception, not the rule. This proverb is about children who ignore their parents discipline and turn away from the parents advice. This proverb is another example of "foolish" behavior.
- c) This verse is not talking about kids who are mad at their parents for some punishment. It is about older kids or young adults who don't respect their parents.
22. Verse 21: An inheritance quickly gained at the beginning will not be blessed at the end.
- a) When young people get an inheritance early in life, it is rarely a blessing at the end of their life. It is usually wasted away. A young person is not mature enough to appreciate the financial blessing of an inheritance and often squanders it away.
- b) One can also apply this proverb to a spiritual inheritance. Young people always think "they understand life" and no longer need their parent's advice as they get older. This proverb can apply to passing on one's spiritual knowledge to a young person, who then in turn, "walks away" from their parents and their blessing.
- c) Is passing on an inheritance to children acceptable? The answer is yes, but at the proper time. I advice all parents to make out wills in case they die young so other Godly parents can finish raising their children. Yes one can pass on an inheritance, but it is best to wait until the children are grown and mature enough to appreciate it.
23. Verse 22: Do not say, "I'll pay you back for this wrong!" Wait for the LORD, and he will deliver you.
- a) Another biblical principal is to let God deal with those who hurt us! This is from Deuteronomy 32:25. That verse is also quoted twice in the New Testament: (Romans 12:19 and Hebrews 10:30).
- b) Let's say someone did us wrong in the business world or say, our spouse did something to hurt us. The correct response is to let God deal with revenge and not us. As to our spouses or someone else close to us, our job is to love them just as they are and let God deal with the issues of punishment!
- c) It is ok to bring up the issue so that the other person understands our perspective. That is different from actually taking revenge for an action.
24. Verse 23: The LORD detests differing weights, and dishonest scales do not please him.
- a) Here's a repeat of a proverb from earlier in the chapter. So why is it repeated?
- i) The previous proverb was about being cheated. Let's suppose we are cheated in the business world. The temptation is to cheat them back. Thus, here is another warning against having "different weights and scales".
- b) The concept is God wants us to have the same set of standards with everyone we deal with, even those who cheat us. We let God deal with revenge. In the meantime we are to be honest in all our dealings, even to those who cheat us. Grant it, we are to watch the cheaters closely. God does not want us to let them walk all over us over and over again. That is different from "taking revenge!"

25. Verse 24: A man's steps are directed by the LORD. How then can anyone understand his own way?
- a) The point here is God "directs" our lives whether we realize it or not.
 - b) This proverb is not saying we can't make plans for our life. It is saying God can, and does at times overrule those plans and interferes in our lives. We cannot fully "plan" what happens to us as God does interfere in the affairs of mankind.
 - c) When our plans go astray, help us to remember You have some alternative plans for us.
26. Verse 25: It is a trap for a man to dedicate something rashly and only later to consider his vows.
- a) The "main" application has to do with things we dedicate to God. The Old Testament, particularly Leviticus is full of ceremonies about dedicating things for God's use or, on a similar note, giving up things we own so God's dedicated priests could use them. In the New Testament, this would be about giving up things for the use of the church.
 - b) The point is for us to carefully think about what we are dedicating. God takes vows very seriously. Jesus does not call on us to take "vows", but when we do, He expects us to keep them. The main point is, "If we are not trustable to keep our words, why would anyone ever believe us when we talk about God? Therefore, God expects us to follow through on any type of vow we make."
 - c) The "related" point is about making any sort of promises to God we cannot keep or don't want to keep. We need to think about those promises and the cost before we make them.
27. Verse 26: A wise king winnows out the wicked; he drives the threshing wheel over them.
- a) I don't believe this proverb is meant to be overly literally. The main idea is that when a king (or a leader) confronts evil people, he or she doesn't tolerate them, but puts them in jail for the sake of society.
 - b) The idea of "driving the threshing wheel over them" is the idea of not being tolerate of their actions, for the sake of society. When a leader determines someone as wicked, say in a courtroom setting, the sentencing is key. It is unfair to the victims of the crime if the judge or ruler simply has mercy on the criminals and let's them go. For the sake of society and the one's who were hurt, such people need to be punished.
28. Verse 27: The lamp of the LORD searches the spirit of a man; it searches out his inmost being.
- a) Here's a verse that says in effect, "God exists, and He checks out the inward spirit of men and women on a regular basis". In order to find out what a person is really like, they need to be examined.
 - b) Sometimes we wonder why God allows certain "bad" things to happen in our lives. Often the answer is simply so God can watch us and see how we react to things. In other words, people are being tested by God with certain situations.
 - c) A great, simple prayer in difficult situations is for "God's will to be done and help us to accept whatever is happening as God's will". If someone we love is in pain and they ask for our help, there is nothing wrong with helping or getting, say, the best medical care possible. For all we know, part of God's will may be using doctors to get the person through the situation. The issue of "God's will" is about all of us to accept the situation at hand, and at the same time, doing our best to get through it."
29. Verse 28: Love and faithfulness keep a king safe; through love his throne is made secure.
- a) My question of this proverb is what "love" is it talking about? The proverb is saying that through love and faithfulness, a king will be kept safe. Is it talking about a king (or a leader) love relations with his "subject's" or God?
 - i) The answer is both. Let's start with the people issue first: Remember it is God that ordains people in power, even the one's we didn't vote for. We may agree or disagree with their politics, but the point is they are in charge and must be respected as leaders.

- ii) The second part of this proverb says, "love makes their throne secure". The idea is that the king (or leader) should be loving in their decisions. That could mean showing proper justice in courtroom situations. It could also mean passing laws that are fair to the people. If a king shows "love" in his ruling ability, he will be respected by those under him, and there will be no rebellion.
 - iii) Again, since we don't have many kings today, it can apply to anyone in power.
 - iv) As Christians we are called to pray for our leaders to make good decisions and rule fairly over the people. (Romans 13:1-7).
 - b) Next, let's talk about "kings and God". Since God ultimately decides who does and does not have power, the other idea is to have love in the throne room for the God who put that person in power in the first place.
30. Verse 29: The glory of young men is their strength, gray hair the splendor of the old.
- a) Here's another proverb on "how life works". Younger men don't have the wisdom of older men, but the younger men are physically stronger. The point is younger men tend to rely on their physical strength and older men on their "intellect" in any give situation.
 - b) This proverb is not commenting on either one being more right or wrong than the other. It is simply a commentary on how life works.
31. Verse 30: Blows and wounds cleanse away evil, and beatings purge the inmost being.
- a) This verse is condoning the use of physical beatings on convicted criminals. In our world today, we as a society tend to be way too on criminals. In our efforts to respect rights, we don't punish people as they need to be punished in order to make them better people.
 - i) The truth is, for convicted criminals, blows and wounds are a time tested method, and when done properly can even help them become better people.
 - b) Now let's talk about beatings as applied to children: In this regard, it is not talking about doing things that cause permanent damage. The bible does condone physical beatings on children if done properly. It should never be done in anger. Further, it should only be applied to the behind. I don't believe it's possible to do any sort of permanent damage to hit a child in the behind.
 - i) A problem with society today is we're too afraid of hurting children's feelings as opposed to focusing on raising children right!
32. Chapter 21, Verse 1: The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD; he directs it like a watercourse wherever he pleases.
- a) Here's another proverb about how God "directs" people. The point is the king's heart is controlled by God whether the king realizes it or not. It is also irrelevant to the point of this proverb about how "good or bad" is this king. The point is God intervenes with mankind often through its leaders. Sometimes God does it for the sake of the leader himself and sometimes it is for the sake of the people under that leader.
 - b) Does this mean a king or a leader shouldn't make plans? No, of course not. It just means that God can and does intervene in the life of that leader and one has to accept the fact that whether or not the leader realizes it or not, God intervenes in those plans.
33. Verse 2: All a man's ways seem right to him, but the LORD weighs the heart.
- a) One of the ways God judges us, is based on our motivation to do things. Let's face it, every decision we make in life, we think we are "right" about it, or else we wouldn't have made that decision in the first place! Therefore, the only "fair" way to judge people is for God to look at the motivation behind those decisions.
 - i) We need to regularly ask the question: Are we motivated to please God, or is it some sort of self centered motivation? Remember the goal of those who are putting their trust in God is to please Him in all that we do, and therefore motivation is important.

34. Verse 3: To do what is right and just is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice.
- a) This is a principal taught through the bible. For example, Micah 3:9, God is addressing the leaders of Israel and reminding them to do what is right when leading over Israel. Another example is Zechariah 11:7 which condemns the leaders of Israel who "deserted" their duty of watched over the people.
 - b) Don't get me wrong, "sacrifice" is a key issue in the bible. The Old Testament is full of pictures about sacrifice that ultimately tie to Jesus. The point here is not to ignore doing what is right for the sake of sacrifices to God.
 - c) For God, giving a choice of watching a man or woman do something "right" is more important than watching them make some sort of sacrifice for Him. My view is that the issue at hand is not salvation, but simply "doing things" for God. In such situations, God wants us first to do what is "right" as opposed to making some sort of sacrifice for Him.
35. Verse 4: Haughty eyes and a proud heart, the lamp of the wicked, are sin!
- a) This verse gives examples of "signs" that lead to sin in a person's life: If a person has haughty eyes and a proud heart, the point is they are probably about to do something God does not approve of. The idea of "haughty eyes" is a rebellious look in their eyes.
 - b) The last cliché is the "lamp of the wicked". This is not referring to a literal lamp, but the idea of what is inside of a person. The idea of all three idioms is it is describing a person who is probably about to do something God does not approve of. It could be describing any type of actual sin. The point here is the "signs" prior to the action beginning.
 - c) Remember my theme for this lesson is about behavior to avoid!
36. Verse 5: The plans of the diligent lead to profit as surely as haste leads to poverty.
- a) In many verses in this lesson, we have dealt with the issue that "God interferes with the plans of people". Yet here in this verse, we read that the plans of the diligent lead to profit. The first point to get out of this proverb is that it is acceptable for people to make good plans in life.
 - b) Does this mean that every good plan we make in life will come as expected? No. It does mean if one plans for good things (i.e., things God would approve of), more often than not, in the long run it does work out for our benefit.
 - c) The point of this proverb is that it is worth the time and trouble to make good plans for our lives. Usually those plans do work out if we stick to them and assuming it is nothing illegal and the plans are "do able". ☺
 - d) This proverb is another example of "how life works".
37. Verse 6: A fortune made by a lying tongue is a fleeting vapor and a deadly snare.
- a) Let's say a person makes a lot of money by "lying". This proverb is saying such riches are a "fleeting vapor" (in that they don't last forever) and are also a deadly snare. The point of the last cliché is that such riches may make you rich in this lifetime, but they don't lead to eternal life. Such riches "snare" one into caring more about the things of this world than about caring about God.
 - b) Remember that God is not against financial success. God cares a lot about our methodology and whether or not we are honest in our business dealings in life. The condemnation here is against a specific method used (lying) to achieve financial success.
38. Verse 7: The violence of the wicked will drag them away, for they refuse to do what is right.
- a) The "wicked" refers to someone who spends his or her life turning from God. The "violence" refers to the actions of the wicked. The idea is such a person mentally refuses to do the right thing. They are drawn to violent actions against others. Why do they commit such violence? Often it is to get some sort of illegal "gain" in life such as a financial benefit. The point is they do what is "physically wrong" to try to get ahead!
 - b) The idea of the "right thing" is about being honest in their dealings with others. The "wicked" refuse to act in ways that are appropriate to society and to God!

39. Verse 8: The way of the guilty is devious, but the conduct of the innocent is upright.
- a) The idea of this proverb is that a person is known by their actions in life.
 - b) The person who constantly turns from God to do what is wrong is "devious" in his or her actions. Those that are innocent (i.e., generally trying to do the right thing) are "upright" in their lives.
 - c) Let me give an illustration: Suppose in the business world, we are trying to make an honest living and not cheat anyone. That would be an example of the "innocent". The "devious" is describing the person who will do anything to get ahead and they don't care who they hurt or what they have to do to have success.
 - d) God, help us to be honest in our dealings with others and be pleasing to You in that aspect of our lives!
40. Verse 9: Better to live on a corner of the roof than share a house with a quarrelsome wife.
- a) Every now and then, Solomon gives a proverb about the dangers of living with a quarrelsome wife! Remember Solomon had hundreds of wives. If anybody ever understood this lesson it would be Solomon. Personally, I have learned that trying to make one wife happy on a regular basis is a full time job. One of the reasons God set up the "one man/one woman" style of relationship is that multiple partners never works. Any story in the bible involving a man and multiple women always turned out bad!
 - b) Notice the proverb is not calling for divorce. The advice to the husband is sometimes to separate himself than deal with the quarrels. I'll add to that the importance of praying for one's spouse in those times and to just talk to them in a loving manner and not try to fix them. In those few moments where I have followed my own advise, it has worked well.
 - c) Last bit on this, one can reverse the sexes as well and apply the same advise.
41. Verse 10: The wicked man craves evil; his neighbor gets no mercy from him.
- a) If a person is wicked by nature, they develop an instinctive need to do evil. The idea of wicked is one who desires to hurt people for their own gain or their own pleasure. They are not content to say, earn a living by some sort of legal manner, but desire gain at the expense of others.
 - b) The idea of "neighbors getting no mercy" means the neighbors of the wicked are never safe from the wicked person's schemes.
42. Verse 11: When a mocker is punished, the simple gain wisdom; when a wise man is instructed, he gets knowledge.
- a) The point of both halves of this proverb is that "somebody benefits" in each situation. When a mocker gets punished, those that watch or are aware of the punishment "benefit" from seeing that punishment and thinking, "I don't want to end up like that mocker."
 - b) Remember what a mocker is, "It is someone who doesn't care for God or things of God. They mock at situations that give glory to God." A simple person is defining one who doesn't know the difference between right and wrong. They can learn from the mocker being punished.
 - c) The second half is about when a wise man is instructed, that wise man gets smarter. The point is to contrast what a mocker does with knowledge versus a wise man!
43. Verse 12: The Righteous One takes note of the house of the wicked and brings the wicked to ruin.
- a) The Hebrew word translated "Righteous One" can refer to God and that is the "easy interpretation", but not necessarily the right one. More likely, the proverb is referring to a righteous king or judge and "brings down" the wicked one or brings him to judgment.
44. Verse 13: If a man shuts his ears to the cry of the poor, he too will cry out and not be answered.
- a) This is a "promise" by God that if we ignore the poor around us, God will ignore our cries for help in our times of need.

- b) What does that mean practically? Does that mean we have to give all we have to the poor? Does that mean we have to give to everyone who asks of us? The answer is no to both questions. At the same time, God watches us to see if we do "anything" for the poor as opposed to just hoarding our wealth for our own personal gain.
 - c) Along that same note, I don't believe God calls on us to do everything, but at the same time, He condemns the notation of doing nothing. If you're not sure what to do, ask God to show you the "what and where" of how to help.
45. Verse 14: A gift given in secret soothes anger, and a bribe concealed in the cloak pacifies great wrath.
- a) Here's another proverb explaining "how life works". The point here is that if one has a gift one can give to soothe over anger or wrath, one should give it.
 - b) This verse is not saying one has to give gifts in all "anger" situations, but the fact that giving such a gift at such a time as this can alleviate or "solve" the anger situation.
 - c) So why is this proverb here? There are times we are in situations where the person we are dealing with is angry. The idea is to present a gift to pacify that anger!
46. Verse 15: When justice is done, it brings joy to the righteous but terror to evildoers.
- a) Here's a pretty straight-forward proverb: The idea is when "justice" is done in a situation, it brings joy to the righteous and terror to the ones who like to do evil.
 - b) In other words, if there is a way for us as individuals or society to bring justice to a situation, we should do it. The idea is to eliminate as much terror as possible to our lives!
47. Verse 16: A man who strays from the path of understanding comes to rest in the company of the dead.
- a) Here's a "salvation oriented" proverb. The idea is that if a person strays enough from the path God desires for his or her life, one will end up in the company of the eternally dead.
 - b) The idea here is that if one goes down the wrong path in life and ends up "hanging around" people who don't care about God, they end up going down the wrong path in life and end with the "eternally dead".
48. Verse 17: He who loves pleasure will become poor; whoever loves wine and oil will never be rich.
- a) The idea here is not about living a life devoid of pleasure. This proverb is about one's focus in life. The point here is what are we "living for". There is nothing wrong with say, a Christian couple going out for a nice meal or a vacation. The mistake is describing the person who is ignoring God as to spend more money for these pleasures.
 - i) The other interpretation is describing a person living above their means.
 - ii) Either way, proverbs is describing a behavior pattern to avoid in life.
49. Verse 18: The wicked become a ransom for the righteous, and the unfaithful for the upright.
- a) At face value, this proverb doesn't make sense. Righteous people don't hold the wicked for ransom. So what does this proverb mean? Most likely, it refers to the concept that the wicked often suffer the plight that they ended for righteous people.
 - i) As a biblical example, think of Haman being hung on the gallows he built to hang Mordecai (in the story of Esther).
 - ii) I like to point out the cartoon character "the coyote" as being an example here. That character always suffers the fates that he designed for the roadrunner!
 - b) A similar thought is that when God punishes a community or a nation, it is due to the actions of a wicked majority even if every last person is not wicked.
50. Verse 19: Better to live in a desert than with a quarrelsome and ill-tempered wife.
- a) This is similar to Verse 9. Verse 9 said it is better to live in the corner of the roof than with an ill-tempered wife. In Verse 19, the analogy goes one step further and say it is better to live in the desert than a quarrelsome and ill-tempered wife!
 - b) In Verse 9, the underlying idea is "if one cannot get along one's spouse, one retreats to a corner of the house and bring the situation to God as opposed to trying to fix it.

- i) In Verse 19, the situation is "worse". The idea here is just to "get away" is better than trying to face the wrath. Like Verse 9, the verse is not calling for divorce, but just to separate for awhile and then try to remedy things.
 - c) Both Verse 9 and Verse 19 on the surface give the impression it is the "wife's fault". Reality is rarely this way. It is usually both spouses who are unwilling to forgive. Both spouses are pointing the finger at each other, when both need to deal with their own problems and let God deal with the spouse!
51. Verse 20: In the house of the wise are stores of choice food and oil, but a foolish man devours all he has.
- a) The idea is the wise person saves "something" for a rainy day, while a fool uses up what they receive as soon as they get it.
 - b) One commentator (McKane) said a fool, "Lets their money run through his fingers and does not use it to create a material environment for gracious living".
 - c) The verse basically means that the wise gain wealth but the foolish squander it.
52. Verse 21: He who pursues righteousness and love finds life, prosperity and honor.
- a) Here's another "truism in life". The idea is if we go after good things from God's perspective, we find good things, which is "life, prosperity and honor".
 - b) Does this mean that every person who goes after righteousness and love, get long life, prosperity and honor in this lifetime? Of course not. What it does mean is that those who seek God's love and righteousness get eternal life and I suspect eternity prosperity and honor. I'll also add that "as a general rule", those that spend their life seeking God's approval in all they do, get a good life with prosperity and honor.
 - c) God, help us to pursue the things that You want for our life!
53. Verse 22: A wise man attacks the city of the mighty and pulls down the stronghold in which they trust.
- a) The verse is not literally talking about a wise man climbing over a wall, but is comparing wisdom to good military strategy. In the ancient world, armies relied upon walls to keep them and their families safe.
 - b) So other than military walls, how do we apply this proverb? Let me give some examples:
 - i) Suppose your teenage children don't want you to find out what their up to and create some elaborate lie to cover their plans. We need to climb their walls and discover their plans. The issue is not how much freedom the kids should have, but the issue is deception and preventing deception.
 - ii) Suppose a business competitor creates an elaborate plan to prevent competition. In such a situation, one has to "climb their walls" figuratively speaking to challenge their plans.
54. Verse 23: He who guards his mouth and his tongue keeps himself from calamity.
- a) The idea here is the person who is careful with what they say are much less likely to get into trouble than a person who speaks out loud everything that happens to him or her!
 - b) The problem with people (including myself) is we spend way too much time talking and not enough time listening to those around us. This is another proverb encouraging us to be careful not to speak too much, if for no other reason than to keep our self from trouble.
 - c) Lord help us to speak less and listen more. ☺
55. Verse 24: The proud and arrogant man--"Mocker" is his name; he behaves with overweening pride.
- a) I've spent a lot of time in these lessons describing what is a mocker, so I won't repeat myself here. The main point here is a mocker or an "arrogant" person behaves in a way with a lot of self-pride, as opposed to considering God's desire for the outcome.

- b) In other words, such a person spends most, or all of their time trying to get outcomes that only benefit themselves as opposed to carrying about what is the "right" thing to do in any situation. Such a person doesn't care about hurting other people, but only about doing things that benefit them personally.
- 56. Verse 25: The sluggard's craving will be the death of him, because his hands refuse to work.
 - a) The idea of a "sluggard" is a person who is too lazy to work. The point is such a person still has cravings for food and things, but is too lazy to do anything about it.
- 57. Verse 26: All day long he craves for more, but the righteous give without sparing.
 - a) This verse continues the thought of Verse 25. The idea here is to compare the desires of the "sluggard" with the "righteous". The sluggard "craves stuff" but is too lazy to go work and do something about it. The righteous makes enough money to take care of him or herself and have enough left over to give to others without sparing.
 - b) The other idea of Verse 26 is the "righteous" are not so tight with their money that they hoard it for themselves, but also help those in need.
- 58. Verse 27: The sacrifice of the wicked is detestable-- how much more so when brought with evil intent!
 - a) Here's a proverb similar to one we've had many chapters ago. The idea is that when a wicked person does make a sacrifice to God, it is "detestable" to God.
 - b) The idea here is the wicked person has no intent of changing their lifestyle, but wants to "make a good impression among the community" by going through a sacrifice ritual. This is not about the honest person trying to repent, but about someone that truly don't care about God and are trying to make a "good face" in the community.
 - c) They wicked take it one step further by having an "evil intent" with their offering. This would be some sort of offering designed to do further harm to those receiving it.
- 59. Verse 28: A false witness will perish, and whoever listens to him will be destroyed forever.
 - a) Here's a "double-bad" proverb, describing two types of bad people: The first is a false witness. The second is one who listens to that false witness. The proverb is giving the impression that it is worse to "listen and accept" the words of the false witness and the person who listens is worse than the person who speaks it in the first place!
 - b) You would think the false witness would be the worse of the two! The point is not who is more guilty, but who does the most damage to their lives. The person who listens to the false witness may not have been on the wrong path in life, but now he or she is being influenced by a false witness.
- 60. Verse 29: A wicked man puts up a bold front, but an upright man gives thought to his ways.
 - a) The focus of this verse is on the upright man. When listening to the wicked man speak, the righteous man considers the whole lifestyle of the wicked man, not just the wicked man's words at the moment of confrontation.
 - b) There may be some key moment when this wicked man is on trial or be tested of his words. The righteous man is not impressed by how well the wicked man acts at that one moment, but considers everything he knows about the wicked man!
- 61. Verse 30: There is no wisdom, no insight, no plan that can succeed against the LORD.
 - a) This proverb lists three things that will not succeed against God: wisdom, insight or plan!
 - b) The point is in the end, the wisdom, insight and planning of man will lose to God's plans! What about when we see wicked people get away with things for awhile? One has to remember that God is in control and ultimately allows that for His greater purposes.
 - i) Sometimes the words of certain people sound impressive, but it doesn't mean they are right. Jesus preached that some of the great Jewish bible interpreter's were wrong. They may have sounded impressive in their words, but Jesus said their interpretation of the bible as wrong! God Himself is always the final word as to what is ultimately right or wrong?

- c) So how do we determine if one's wisdom, insight or plan is God based or rebellion? The first issue is whether or not it is biblically sound. If not sure, ask God for discernment. If one cannot get great discernment on an issue, sometimes just "time" gives us an answer!
- 62. Verse 31: The horse is made ready for the day of battle, but victory rests with the LORD.
 - a) Until the last 100 years or so, the horse was a key factor in a battle. An open field battle was often determined by who made the best use of horses or who had the most horses!
 - b) The point here is one can prepare one's horses as much as possible, but God ultimately decides the outcome of a battle.
 - c) The point for us is to remember that God ultimately decides the victor in any war for His purposes, no matter how well we prepare. Further, one can apply this to any sort of contest. The point is God is ultimately in control of the outcome!
 - i) One also has to remember that just because God allows one side to win a battle, doesn't necessary mean the other side is more righteous, it just means that for some reason, God wanted the "other side" to win that day!
- 63. Let's pray: Father, Help us to apply the lessons of these proverbs! Help us to learn from the negative ones as well as the positive ones. Help us not to see proverbs as appropriate for other people, but for ourselves! Help us to live a life pleasing to You in all that we do. We ask this in Jesus name, Amen.