

## Proverbs Chapters 22-24 - John Karmelich

1. In this lesson, we actually finish this section of Proverbs that started back in Chapter 10.
  - a) Chapters 10-24 form one big section of the book.
  - b) It is not the end of the book of Proverbs, but it is the end as Solomon originally intended it to be. The next 5 chapters are also proverbs written by Solomon, but they were not added to this collection until centuries later.
  - c) The entire book of Proverbs was not completely organized until several centuries after Solomon lived. From Chapters 1 through 24 is how Solomon originally intended the book to be. Remember the Chapter breaks were not added until the Middle Ages.
2. Around the middle of Chapter 22, Solomon starts a “wrap up process”. He says to the reader, here are thirty principals that I want you to remember. Those principals run from the later part of Chapter 22 to near the end of chapter 24. Solomon then gives some final proverb like thoughts after those 30 principals.
  - a) As we go through these thirty “sayings”, we will discover there is little new ground covered. It is essentially the same themes being discussed since Chapter 10. It’s almost as if Solomon is saying, “Here is a summary of what we’ve been discussing all this time.”
  - b) What does change in this section is that instead of just one line proverbs, each proverb can take up to six lines. The proverbs in this section range from one to six lines each.
  - c) This collection of 30 “sayings” doesn't begin until the middle of the chapter. Until then, Solomon gives some additional one-line sayings to add to his collection.
  - d) Finally, the 30 “sayings” in this section ends about 10 verses short of the end of Chapter 24. Solomon adds some final things over and above the “30” that wrap up this section.
  - e) May God help us to learn what He wants us to learn from this lesson. ☺
3. Chapter 22, Verse 1: A good name is more desirable than great riches; to be esteemed is better than silver or gold.
  - a) The idea of this proverb is that it is more important in life to have a good name (a good reputation in one’s community) than to have lots of money or lots of stuff.
  - b) A great question here is, “What does one do when they have their name slandered?” Does one go to court? If one is falsely accused of wrongdoing, it may be necessary. If it is something that can be worked out between two people, try that method first. Sometimes, if one is falsely accused, we may just have to let God deal with it.
  - c) The important point is to watch what one says in life and make every effort to always say the truth and one “just will” develop such a reputation for having a good name.
4. Verse 2: Rich and poor have this in common: The LORD is the Maker of them all.
  - a) There is a danger in life to think, “God didn’t make me rich or famous. He may not care for me as much as that other person over there”. One must remember that God made and cares for everyone and wants us all to repent and turn to Him. Some people don’t and that’s hard to reconcile with the concept of God’s love. Our job is not to try to “out-think” God, but just to be witnesses for Him in all that we do. The point of this proverb is to realize that God cares for you and me no matter what is our social status in life.
5. Verse 3: A prudent man sees danger and takes refuge, but the simple keep going and suffer for it.
  - a) Sometimes there are situations in life where one sees danger and has to “run and hide”. Those who are not wise just keep going forward and ignore the danger and suffer for it.
  - b) Need a few examples? Suppose the economy is changing for the worse. A prudent person plans for rough times as well as good times. Another example might be a bad leader coming to power. A prudent person seeks some sort of refuge to wait it out. A simpler example might be a rainstorm on the horizon. A wise person might be traveling and say, “Let’s stop our traveling for a bit and wait out this storm!”
  - c) In life it is best to hope for the best and reasonably plan for the worst. ☺

6. Verse 4: Humility and the fear of the LORD bring wealth and honor and life.
  - a) The secret of “eternal life” is to get our priorities straight in this lifetime. If one lives with a healthy “humility and fear of God”, it brings eternal wealth, honor and life. More often than not, it also leads to a good life here on earth where one is respected in their community as one who is trustworthy.
  - b) Let’s tie the first four proverbs together. The first was about the importance of developing a good name in life. The second is the reminder that God cares for all people. The third is the reminder to seek refuge when there is danger a foot. These three proverbs all make the point that God is in charge of our lives and we are to seek Him for guidance. That leads to the fourth one, which is the reminder of “how” to live life before God: That is to live in a sense of humility before God and fear of His judgment.
7. Verse 5: In the paths of the wicked lie thorns and snares, but he who guards his soul stays far from them.
  - a) A wicked person will not only suffer for eternity, but in most cases suffers in this lifetime for the life they have chosen. The idea of “thorns and snares” is because the wicked live a life of stealing, so they are always in danger of being caught and having to hide from authorities. Thus they suffer for their crimes.
  - b) The second part simply says that the person who cares about their soul stays far away from such a person!
8. Verse 6: Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.
  - a) This is one of the most quoted and often most misunderstood proverbs in the book.
  - b) The main point is teaching a child about the proper “way to go” in life is never a waste of time. When the child is grown, he or she will remember all of that good training and it will eventually pay off.
  - c) So what is the misunderstanding? The proverb says to train up a child in the way he (or she) should go. It does not say to train up a child in the way you want them to go. What is the difference? Let’s say as a father and mother, the family business is farming. Yet, the child has a natural gift for some other calling in life. The point is to train up a child in the way they should go, not the way you want them to go.
    - i) So how do you know which way a child should go? You watch them and see what is their natural ability. The point is we are to encourage what they are good at as opposed to the career path we want for them.
9. Verse 7: The rich rule over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender.
  - a) Here’s another proverb that teaches, “How life works”. The point of the proverb is that in this world, the rich people rule over the poor and the borrower does what the lender tells them to do.
  - b) This verse is not teaching to be one type of person or another, just stating facts.
  - c) If one can have money or be a lender, it is better than being poor or a borrower. Again, this is a non-salvation issue, just a statement of how the world works!
10. Verse 8: He who sows wickedness reaps trouble, and the rod of his fury will be destroyed.
  - a) Here’s a proverb about what happens to people in life that focus on being wicked. They “reap trouble” and what they “develop” will be destroyed.
  - b) Part of this proverb is about the “next world”, in that if such a person wastes their life with wicked deeds, they will be punished in the hereafter. Over and above that, I believe this proverb is teaching a principal about what generally happens to such people in this lifetime: That is the deeds of such wicked people get put down, as society doesn’t want to put up with them!
11. Verse 9: A generous man will himself be blessed, for he shares his food with the poor.
  - a) We’ve had a few proverbs in this book stating that one who gives to the poor will be blessed. The general idea is that God rewards those who share with the poor. God will reward our generosity when we share with the less fortunate.

- b) What does that mean practically? Do we give all we have to the poor? This proverb does not say that! The point is those who are financially blessed are expected to do “something” as opposed to doing nothing to help the less fortunate. If you’re not sure what, ask God for advice on this!
  - c) Notice proverbs likes to go back and forth between the type of behavior to avoid and the type of behavior God wants of us. This book is constantly going back and forth between good and bad examples of behavior that God likes and detests!
12. Verse 10: Drive out the mocker, and out goes strife; quarrels and insults are ended.
- a) If one can eliminate the “mocking” person from our lives, it will cut down on the amount of strife, quarreling and insults we have to deal with!
  - b) Suppose the “mocker” is a close relative and we have to deal with them. This proverb is teaching to cut down on our dealings with them as much as possible. What if the mocker is a member of our immediate family? Then pray to God to help that person and help us in our dealings with them!
  - c) All relationships go through difficult periods and that’s a separate topic. Proverbs like this are describing the kind of person withy no interest in getting along with the Godly!
13. Verse 11: He who loves a pure heart and whose speech is gracious will have the king for his friend.
- a) Does this mean that every person with a “pure heart” and with gracious speech will be a personal friend with the king (or leader)? No. It does mean such a person will have a good life and will be the type of person a king wants around him.
  - b) The bible teaches that no one is perfect before God. Notice the text does not say one is perfect all the time, but they have a “love” of a pure heart. The point is such a person is always interested in pleasing God and living a life pleasing to Him. To have “gracious speech” is about saying what is right and speaking positive things as much as possible.
  - c) Personally, if I were a king or a leader, I’d want a person like this as a friend!
14. Verse 12: The eyes of the LORD keep watch over knowledge, but he frustrates the words of the unfaithful.
- a) The point is God acts to “vindicate the truth”. When we are living a life pleasing to God, He somehow “gets involves” in the process and watches over us. It doesn’t necessary mean God is going to verbally comment on what we say, but somehow He “watches over us” when we speak the truth and helps the “truth” come out and “be truth!”
  - b) God “frustrates” the words of the unfaithful. To those who live a life where they don’t care about God, somehow he “frustrates” those words. What it most likely means is that over the long term, God doesn’t allow their words to come to pass. They may appear to be “winning” in the short run, but in the long term, they lose.
15. Verse 13: The sluggard says, "There is a lion outside!" or, "I will be murdered in the streets!"
- a) The point of this proverb is a sluggard is one who is too lazy to go out and “make a difference” (be it get a job or get involved with life), as they are too afraid of negative things that might happen to them.
16. Verse 14: The mouth of an adulteress is a deep pit; he who is under the LORD's wrath will fall into it.
- a) Back in the early chapters of Proverbs, there were whole chapters dealing with the dangers of adultery. We’re now back to that topic. The idea of the first half of this proverb is that one who is an adulteress likes to talk a lot and draw men into her trap.
  - b) The important point is the second half. This proverb is teaching that those who are under the Lord’s “wrath” are susceptible to this trap. It means that those who turn from God are more likely to get involved with such a woman.
  - c) I will argue that for married people, the only close relationship with the opposite sex should be with one’s spouse. Marital problems occur when others get too close.

- d) What about all the Christians we hear of having affairs? This proverb is not stating any sort of salvation principal, just the way life works. I have found that when God-fearing men fall into the trap of adultery, it usually starts with problems at home and then escalates into an affair. Good marital relationships require constant attention to make them work. (For what it is worth, I am grateful that I have a wonderful wife and this is not an issue for me, and I hope it never will be!)
17. Verse 15: Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline will drive it far from him.
- a) Here's a proverb on the importance of disciplining one's children. The term "rod of discipline" does refer to using some sort of stick instrument to say, hit one's children on the bottom. The two key rules are 1) Don't hit children when you are angry and 2) only hit them on the bottom. If one can manage do only do those two, one can't go wrong with disciplining one's child.
- b) Getting beyond that issue, the point of the proverb is that children are naturally drawn to "folly" in their behavior. The real point of the proverb is about the importance of disciplining one's child to drive out bad behavior. The other point is such discipline does work in driving out the bad behavior.
18. Verse 16: He who oppresses the poor to increase his wealth and he who gives gifts to the rich-- both come to poverty.
- a) This proverb is teaching two ways on how not to be rich: 1) By oppressing poor people in order to increase one's wealth and 2) by giving gifts to the rich.
- b) I have found that people who engage in these two have some financial benefits in this lifetime, but that's it. They end up in hell for living such a lifestyle.
- c) Do I believe salvation is about accepting Jesus payment for one's sins? Of course. Proverbs such as this one is a "sign" of an unbeliever. Remember the concept of accepting Jesus is not just making a verbal statement, but a change of lifestyle. This proverb is a prime example of living a lifestyle displeasing to God.
19. Verses 17-21: Pay attention and listen to the sayings of the wise; apply your heart to what I teach,<sup>18</sup> for it is pleasing when you keep them in your heart and have all of them ready on your lips.<sup>19</sup> So that your trust may be in the LORD, I teach you today, even you.<sup>20</sup> Have I not written thirty sayings for you, sayings of counsel and knowledge,<sup>21</sup> teaching you true and reliable words, so that you can give sound answers to him who sent you?
- a) Way back when started proverbs, I stated that most of the proverbs are single line or two sayings that teach principals of life. I also stated that sometimes in proverbs, they are combined in four line or six line sayings. We'll see a lot of multiple line proverbs over the next few chapters.
- b) These five lines are a summary of a key principal of proverbs, which is to "listen carefully to what they are saying, so that we may be wise in all we do. Further, these proverbs are designed to teach us to trust God in all that we do.
- c) Notice in Verses 20 it says "Have I not written thirty sayings for you" and it goes on from there. First of all, what is the "thirty"? The most likely answer is the next 30 points that Solomon wants to make. After these "thirty sayings", we'll only have 10 verses left in Chapter 24". Solomon even says at that point, "Here are a few more things I want you to remember (before I wrap it up). I suspect that Solomon had 30 key principals in this book as He originally intended it.
- i) I'll also add that we don't read any principals in the next few chapters that not already been covered in the book so far. They are just listed out in this format over the next few chapters.
- d) The final line of this text says these proverbs can help us give sound answers to him who sent you. What does that mean? For starters, it refers to God Himself as He is in control of our lives and we as believers are ultimately to be pleasing to Him.

- e) I believe Solomon had a second intent with this last line as well: Remember that Proverbs is written in a style of a father teaching a son how to live life. Notice the final line is not saying you can give a sound answer to those who receive you, but those who sent you. Solomon is saying to his son, this is how to live a life pleasing to God.
20. Verses 22-23: Do not exploit the poor because they are poor and do not crush the needy in court, <sup>23</sup> for the LORD will take up their case and will plunder those who plunder them.
- a) The first of the “thirty sayings” is about the issue of not exploiting those who are poor, either in court or in life. The second verse states that God himself will defend the poor and harm those who are harming them because they are poor.
  - b) Again, this principal is nothing new. In fact, we’ve had a proverb on the proper treatment of the poor already in this chapter and in the past few lessons.
  - c) Notice how Solomon puts this principal first. Remember that Solomon was a king and he was writing this proverb to his son and future king. The first principal being taught has to do with “fairness” by those who are in charge!
  - d) The underlying point is a king may “think” he is getting away with something by oppressing the poor, but the point is that king doesn’t realize God is watching out for the poor and will protect them. The help of the poor may come in this lifetime or it may refer to eternal salvations and rewards.
21. Verses 24-25: Do not make friends with a hot-tempered man, do not associate with one easily angered, <sup>25</sup> or you may learn his ways and get yourself ensnared.
- a) These two verses are considered “Saying #2 of the 30”. Like the first one, it is about a type of behavior to avoid: These two lines are teaching about what type of person to avoid in life. If we associate with one who is easily angered, we end up like them.
    - i) Again, this principal is nothing new to the book of Proverbs and has been stated a number of times in different forms.
  - b) The underlying principal is God wants us to be careful who we choose as companions and friends. The type of person who gets angry very easily is the type of person God wants us to avoid in life.
22. Verses 26-27: Do not be a man who strikes hands in pledge or puts up security for debts; <sup>27</sup> if you lack the means to pay, your very bed will be snatched from under you.
- a) Here’s another principal that we’ve covered a bunch of times. The idea is not agree to put up security for a debt for others. When your friend fails to pay, the person to whom the debt is owned will collect from you personally and even take your bed if necessary!
  - b) The principal taught throughout this book is about not putting up security for another. The main emphasis is not about one’s immediate family, but friends and acquaintances that we want to help. The point of this proverb is we end up hurting ourselves more than helping our “friends”. If our “friend” can’t afford this item, they should not have agreed to want to buy it in the first place!
23. Verse 28: Do not move an ancient boundary stone set up by your forefathers.
- a) Here is “Saying #4 of the 30”. The idea is to respect the land boundaries set up by our parents and ancestors and not try to cheat people out of their land. Remember that Solomon is writing these proverbs to the future leaders of Israel and it would be fairly easy for them to get away with such an act.
  - b) The underlying principal is about being honest in our deals with others.
24. Verse 29: Do you see a man skilled in his work? He will serve before kings; he will not serve before obscure men.
- a) The point is when a person is skilled in their work, they will serve before “kings” and (leaders) and not obscure people in life. The point is when one develops a very good skill, it will be appreciated and the important people of this world will take notice.

- b) So why is Solomon passing on this bit of advice? If the proverbs are being written to the future leaders of Israel, the point is for them to notice who is particularly skilled in their work and to raise them up to a higher level in terms of who they work for! It also teaches to watch for people who are developing such skill and help them to grow.
25. Chapter 23, Verses 1-3: When you sit to dine with a ruler, note well what is before you, <sup>2</sup> and put a knife to your throat if you are given to gluttony. <sup>3</sup> Do not crave his delicacies, for that food is deceptive.
- We are now on "Saying #6 of the 30". This proverb (saying) is a principal not yet directly addressed in this book.
  - Remember Solomon is writing to the next ruler of Israel and maybe other family leaders. The point of this proverb is that when as a ruler, one dines with other rulers, watch out what you eat. The other rulers "want something from you" and one has to keep that in mind when one dines with such people.
  - Let's personalize this one. I'm not going to be a king anytime soon. ☺ How does this apply to me? The principal may be when we sit down for a business meal we need to think about why the person invited us and what do they "really want". In other words, don't just concentrate on the food, but think about the purpose of the meal!
  - This proverb uses colorful terms to remind us to be careful in such situations. The proverb says for example to "put a knife to our throat if gluttony is a temptation". Again, the underling point is not so much about eating, but to think about the purpose of the meal and what does the man want who invited you to that meal.
26. Verses 4-5: Do not wear yourself out to get rich; have the wisdom to show restraint. <sup>5</sup> Cast but a glance at riches, and they are gone, for they will surely sprout wings and fly off to the sky like an eagle.
- These two verses are about having the proper perspective about "riches". The problem with "riches and stuff" is there is no finish line. There is never enough. The proverb is not against earning a living or supporting one's family. It is about perspective. It is about having our focus primarily on God and "earning a living second".
  - Another point of this proverb is that even when one has riches, they don't last forever. One cannot take them with you in the next life. They don't do you any good on judgment day. Verse 4 says to not "wear ourselves out" getting rich. Again, it is about perspective. The point is not to work late hours night after night just to "get rich". One has to have a balance between work and other aspects of our lives.
27. Verses 6-8: Do not eat the food of a stingy man, do not crave his delicacies; <sup>7</sup> for he is the kind of man who is always thinking about the cost. "Eat and drink," he says to you, but his heart is not with you. <sup>8</sup> You will vomit up the little you have eaten and will have wasted your compliments.
- There are some people who just can't enjoy life, as they are always worried about the cost. There have been times in my life where I worry about money, which means I battle this sometimes, but hopefully, I will never get to the stage of this proverb!
  - The point is if you know someone who is stingy about the cost of things, don't associate with him or her if possible. You can't even enjoy a meal with them as they are focused on the cost.
  - Just so we keep track, this one is "Saying #8 as we work our way up to 30!"
28. Verse 9: Do not speak to a fool, for he will scorn the wisdom of your words.
- If someone is a fool, they don't care for "Godly wisdom". Once one has determined that someone is such a fool, one should not waste one's time trying to change them.
  - God wants us to have wisdom as to "who" we witness to. Yes, we are "always" on the clock, but the idea is to focus our efforts to those who show some interest in God.
  - Let's say one's "brother" is a fool. Sometimes it is necessary to eat with a fool if he or she is a close relative. The point here is not to waste time and effort trying to witness to such a person if we perceive they don't care for the things of God.

29. Verses 10-11: Do not move an ancient boundary stone or encroach on the fields of the fatherless,<sup>11</sup> for their Defender is strong; he will take up their case against you.
- We're now on "Saying #9". This one is similar to "Saying #4". Saying #4 was about not moving boundaries set up by one's fathers or ancestors.
  - Verses 10-11 take this one step further. It is about not moving the boundaries of the "fields of the fatherless". The idea here is a person who had their parents die young. It could also apply to a widow. The idea is not to take advantage of the less fortunate.
    - The proverb goes on to say that God the Father is watching out for them and we shouldn't take advantage of those who are less fortunate.
    - It is another reminder to be fair in all our dealings!
30. Verse 12: Apply your heart to instruction and your ears to words of knowledge.
- We're now on "Saying #10". This is another "basic one", which is about having one's heart open to knowledge. In other words, one is never done in life as far as learning from God and growing in the knowledge of Him.
  - So why put this one here among all the "practical" ones? Sometimes we need that reminder of the basics in order to apply the other proverbs!
31. Verses 13-14: Do not withhold discipline from a child; if you punish him with the rod, he will not die.<sup>14</sup> Punish him with the rod and save his soul from death.
- The idea here is discipline helps a child learn what is right as to live a life pleasing to God.
  - The last part says such discipline will save that soul from his death. For what it is worth, this can also refer to a moral and social death as well as one's physical death.
  - I've already commented in this lesson on the style and importance of disciplining one's child, so I won't go any further here!
32. Verses 15-16: My son, if your heart is wise, then my heart will be glad;<sup>16</sup> my inmost being will rejoice when your lips speak what is right.
- These two verses naturally follow the previous ones. The idea is if one's kids turn out well in life, it is a blessing to one's parents. Almost all kids want to be pleasing to their parents. Seeing one's kids applying Godly wisdom to whatever decisions they make in life makes one's parents happy if one's parents are God-fearing people.
33. Verses 17-18: Do not let your heart envy sinners, but always be zealous for the fear of the LORD.<sup>18</sup> There is surely a future hope for you, and your hope will not be cut off.
- We are now on the "Thirteenth saying" for those who are counting! ☺ A child or young man could hear that last proverb about making one's parents happy and then think, "OK, summarize for me in one or two lines what is the most important thing for me to remember in order to live such a life". The answer could be Verses 17-18: The idea of this one is to remember to have one's heart follow God and not be "jealous" of sinners.
  - This two-line proverb is to remind a young person that there is a forever and a reminder to not associate with those who don't care for the things of God. Those "sinners" may enjoy this life, but that is all the pleasure they will ever get for eternity.
  - The point is to remind us that eternity is a lot longer than this lifetime. To live for God brings an eternity of happiness. To live for one's self and pleasure at best, will only bring some joy in this lifetime.
34. Verse 19: Listen, my son, and be wise, and keep your heart on the right path.
- This line is considered part of the "thirteenth (previous) saying" and is a nice follow up to the previous one. The previous proverb was about always being zealous for God. That means to think about the decisions one makes in life and not follow the path of sinners.
  - This verse follows up that thought by saying "Keep your heart on the right path".
  - So what does that mean practically? How do we keep our heart on the right path? I would argue for the necessity of spending regular time with God. This would be some sort of daily reading and praying time. I find that when a person carves out time of their life for God, then "making good Godly decisions" naturally follow!

35. Verses 20-21: Do not join those who drink too much wine or gorge themselves on meat, <sup>21</sup> for drunkards and gluttons become poor, and drowsiness clothes them in rags.
- a) The “Fourteenth saying” is a good warning about who to, and not to associate with in life! If we spend a lot of time with one who drinks a lot or focuses constantly on big meals, we will be end up like them. Worse, such people become poor toward God as they are primarily focusing their life on food and drink and not God.
  - b) Jesus commented on this in Matthew 6:25. It reads “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear.”
    - i) Jesus point is not about avoiding buying groceries when needed! His point was not to be overly obsessed about what to wear and what to eat and drink. His point is to primarily focus on God for our lives and He will make sure we have enough to wear, eat and drink in life.
36. Verse 22: Listen to your father, who gave you life, and do not despise your mother when she is old.
- a) The “Fifteenth saying” is similar to Verses 15-16. That 2-line verse (Verses 15-16) says in effect it makes your parents happy when their child says and does wise things.
  - b) Verse 22 follows up that thought by reminding the child to keep on listening to their parents as long as the parents are alive! We are never called to “despise our parents” who took care of us and raised us, especially when they are old!
  - c) This verse is also a reminder that God calls on us to take care of our parents when they get old, whether they are believers or not. Paul makes this point when he said, “If any woman who is a believer has widows in her family, she should help them and not let the church be burdened with them, so that the church can help those widows who are really in need. (See 1st Timothy 5:16).
37. Verses 23-25: Buy the truth and do not sell it; get wisdom, discipline and understanding. <sup>24</sup> The father of a righteous man has great joy; he who has a wise son delights in him. <sup>25</sup> May your father and mother be glad; may she who gave you birth rejoice!
- a) We’re now on the “Sixteenth saying”, which means we’re pass the halfway point of the 30 listed in these three chapters!”
  - b) The idea here is to tell one’s children to acquire Godly wisdom and never let that wisdom leave their heart. It will bring joy to the parent’s hearts if one’s children turn out wise in life and follow a biblical path for their life!
38. Verses 26-28: My son, give me your heart and let your eyes keep to my ways, <sup>27</sup> for a prostitute is a deep pit and a wayward wife is a narrow well. <sup>28</sup> Like a bandit she lies in wait, and multiplies the unfaithful among men.
- a) Back in the early chapters of proverbs, we spent a lot of time warning of the danger of prostitutes and how it can ruin a man. Here is Solomon, now speaking directly to his son and reminding him of the danger of turning one’s heart over to a prostitute.
  - b) The verse says such a prostitute is “Like a bandit as she lies in wait”. Such a prostitute doesn’t care if she is breaking up someone’s marriage or home. Such a prostitute is looking for men who are unfaithful.
  - c) It is generally true that young men are tempted to turn from their brides out of boredom. Men have to overcome their urge to want to have sex with “just about everything that moves”. The good news is God can help us overcome that temptation and focus our love on who God called us to focus it on: Our wives.
  - d) What if someone is older and single? That is a complicated and separate topic. The point here is no matter what the age, we are being warned to avoid the prostitute.

39. Verses 29-35: Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has strife? Who has complaints? Who has needless bruises? Who has bloodshot eyes? <sup>30</sup> Those who linger over wine, who go to sample bowls of mixed wine. <sup>31</sup> Do not gaze at wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it goes down smoothly! <sup>32</sup> In the end it bites like a snake and poisons like a viper. <sup>33</sup> Your eyes will see strange sights and your mind imagine confusing things. <sup>34</sup> You will be like one sleeping on the high seas, lying on top of the rigging. <sup>35</sup> "They hit me," you will say, "but I'm not hurt! They beat me, but I don't feel it! When will I wake up so I can find another drink?"
- a) Remember that sometimes proverbs are "single line sayings" that stand alone. Sometimes they are two line sayings and sometimes, like this one, it is a six line saying.
  - b) Just as the previous proverb warned the young man against prostitutes, here, this proverb (or saying) warns the young man about excess drinking.
  - c) The warning here is that such drinking does not seem so dangerous when staring at wine in a cup. One does not realize in the beginning of its danger. One can get to a point where one does not even feel the pain anymore and one is anxious to get drunk again.
  - d) Good Christian people and churches vary their views on whether or not Christians should be allowed to drink at all. Some say it is ok and some say "never".
    - i) The important issue is always whether one is being a good witness for God in any situation. If there is "drinking all around us", one has to wonder is that a place for Christians to be in the first place! Our primary focus is whether or not what we are doing is or is not being a good witness for God.
    - ii) The bible does not condone getting drunk ever, which is the main warning of this proverb. If this is a temptation for you or me, it should be avoided.
    - iii) In some Christian circles, having a glass of wine is accepted. Again, one has to think about being a witness for God first and act accordingly.
40. Chapter 24, Versed 1-3: Do not envy wicked men, do not desire their company; <sup>2</sup> for their hearts plot violence, and their lips talk about making trouble.
- a) We're now up to the "Nineteenth saying". Just as we are warned to avoid idolatrous men, drinkers and a few other types people, here in these two verses are again reminded to avoid those who are "wicked".
  - b) These verses are describing the type of people who live to do violence to others. They like to hurt others for their own personal gain or just for the pleasure of hurting them!
  - c) Part of staying on the right path in life is knowing what type of people to avoid. Here Proverbs is giving us another example of the type of person not to associate with.
41. Verses 3-4: By wisdom a house is built, and through understanding it is established; <sup>4</sup> through knowledge its rooms are filled with rare and beautiful treasures.
- a) The emphasis here is on the "building itself". This does not mean that God calls on us to individually construct our own homes from scratch. The point is as we grow and seek God in our life, what we put in our house is reflective of that fact.
  - b) As a modern example, it is a sad commentary when watching hours of mindless television has replaced the art of conversation and spending time reading good books! For what it is worth, I am not anti-television, just anti "hours" of sitting there mindlessly.
  - c) Some people take this proverb to refer to raising godly children. While that is a nice thought, it misses the point of this proverb. The point is one's home is reflective of one's values in life. What has in one's home should be reflective of their lifestyle. If one desires to live a life pleasing to God, the home should reflect that concept.
42. Verses 5-6: A wise man has great power, and a man of knowledge increases strength; <sup>6</sup> for waging war you need guidance, and for victory many advisers.
- a) This pair of verses switches from what a man does inside his home to what he does outside of the home. The direct point of this proverb is about waging war and the importance of having good council before getting into such actions.
  - b) For victory, strategy is more important than strength, even though both may be needed.

- c) OK, I'm not a king or a president. How do I apply this? Other than the idea of having to be part of an army when one is a young man, remember that "warfare" isn't always about military fights or country against country. It may be some sort of business battle or "war of words with a neighbor". The main point of this proverb is about seeing good Godly council before commencing such action!
43. Verse 7: Wisdom is too high for a fool; in the assembly at the gate he has nothing to say.
- By definition, someone who is a fool, has no interest in Godly wisdom.
  - We're now on "Twenty second saying". We're back to the idea of wisdom and the fool!
  - The idea of the "assembly and the gate" is that this is the place where the men of the city would gather and talk. The point here is for the wise man to avoid paying attention to the words of the fool as he has nothing "significant" to say that could positively affect us.
    - The point is not that the fool will keep his mouth shut, but that he has nothing to say that a wise person should take to heart.
  - May God help us discern who is, and who isn't wise for us to hang out with in life! ☺
44. Verses 8-9: He who plots evil will be known as a schemer. <sup>9</sup> The schemes of folly are sin, and men detest a mocker.
- The next pair of verses teaches us how to recognize another type of person to avoid. If you met a person who is plotting to do evil, avoid that person. Along the same line, the schemes of such a foolish person are sin, whether they realize it or not.
  - The point of this "Twenty third saying" is about who to avoid in life. If you're not sure, watch their actions for a while.
45. Verse 10: If you falter in times of trouble, how small is your strength!
- One never knows how strong one is (physically, mentally or spiritually speaking) until one is put under some sort of test to see how strong one is in that situation. The point here is if one "falters" when things get tough, it is a sign one is weak in strength.
  - For example, it is one thing to say one trusts in God, it is another to see how one acts when one is tested for such faith.
  - This proverb can apply to anyone when a situation gets tough.
  - This proverb is another reminder of how life works and the fact God tests us!
46. Verses 11-12: Rescue those being led away to death; hold back those staggering toward slaughter. <sup>12</sup> If you say, "But we knew nothing about this," does not he who weighs the heart perceive it? Does not he who guards your life know it? Will he not repay each person according to what he has done?
- The concept of this verse is that if we see someone in a life threatening situation and we're "around", God expects us to help them. The verse does not in my opinion, refer to a convicted criminal, but say someone walking into a trap and not realizing it.
    - As to the convicted criminal it can apply only in that we can help someone who wants to confess their sin prior to being punished.
  - The general idea of this verse is God holds us accountable to help other people who are in some sort of moral danger, but don't realize it. This proverb applies to all people, not just the one's we know are saved.
47. Verses 13-14: Eat honey, my son, for it is good; honey from the comb is sweet to your taste. <sup>14</sup> Know also that wisdom is sweet to your soul; if you find it, there is a future hope for you, and your hope will not be cut off.
- We're now up to the "Twenty Sixth saying".
  - The point of this proverb is that "knowledge" is being compared to honey in that both are "sweet". Honey is sweet based on its taste, and wisdom is sweet for the soul. The point Solomon is trying to make as he is wrapping up the "thirty" is to remember the important of wisdom and to keep trying to seek it all of one's life.

48. Verses 15-16: Do not lie in wait like an outlaw against a righteous man's house, do not raid his dwelling place;<sup>16</sup> for though a righteous man falls seven times, he rises again, but the wicked are brought down by calamity.
- The point here is not to attack the "righteous". Although they may fall many times, they will live to see another day while the wicked will only have this lifetime before their eternal death.
  - What's the point Solomon is trying to teach? It is to be careful who one picks as an enemy. Don't attack another righteous (saved) person.
  - What about Solomon's father David? Didn't David go to war against other Israelites? Yes, but for his own survival. David never "waited to rob an Israelite". The underlying idea is not to provoke an attack against someone who is essentially "on our side".
  - The point is never purposely attack a righteous person.
49. Verses 17-18: Do not gloat when your enemy falls; when he stumbles, do not let your heart rejoice,<sup>18</sup> or the LORD will see and disapprove and turn his wrath away from him.
- Eternal judgment is God's business alone. We never know who will and not be saved. We should avoid the company of bad people, but we are not to judge one's salvation.
  - Along the same line is when our enemy falls or just "stumbles" we are not to gloat. God wants us to remember they are also human beings. It may be "just" what happened to our enemies, but we are not to gloat over it.
  - Why would this be the third to last saying? Solomon's son would be the future king of Israel. He must know how to behave with good as well as bad people.
50. Verses 19-20: Do not fret because of evil men or be envious of the wicked,<sup>20</sup> for the evil man has no future hope, and the lamp of the wicked will be snuffed out.
- The basic point here is not be envious of wicked men, as in the end, all the life they will get is this one. Why would Solomon bring this up as the second to last point? Probably because it is always tempting for a young man to be envious of someone with power or someone with a lot of money. Young people often fail to see that what is important to God is not important to man, and vice versa.
  - The important thing is to examine a person's heart.
  - I should state again, that money and power is not the issue by itself. The issue is following after wicked people. Why would someone be tempted to follow such a person? Usually it is because they have something like money or power that is a temptation to join them in their actions. Young people usually have a more difficult time discerning good from bad people.
51. Verses 21-22: Fear the LORD and the king, my son, and do not join with the rebellious,<sup>22</sup> for those two will send sudden destruction upon them, and who knows what calamities they can bring?
- Here's Solomon final of the "thirty sayings" that he uses to wrap up this section of the book. His final one is the importance of having a healthy respect for God and for the government. The verse continues by saying to "not join in the rebellious".
  - From our standpoint, the important thing is not only to have a fear of God's judgment upon our lives, but to remember that human government is in charge whether we voted for those leaders or not. The point is they are in charge and we must respect the laws of the land.
    - What if the government asks us to do things that are immoral? There are situations in the bible where the "good guys" rebel against authority, but usually still have to suffer for it. Notice that when the apostles rebelled, they picked their battles carefully. For example, you never read about the apostles rebelling against the Roman Government, despite all of their faults. They only rebelled against the religious authorities who wanted them to stop preaching Jesus.

- ii) The point is to pick one's battles "carefully". Just because we don't like a certain law or person in power, they are there for a reason. God may want them in power for some greater reason. When in doubt, respect the government, flaws and all.
  - c) Getting back to the verse, the other idea of this proverb is to avoid those who are rebellious. This verse is talking about the kind of person who does not respect God or people in authority and such people live for rebellion. Such people usually end up dead early or in jail.
52. Verses 23-25: These also are sayings of the wise: To show partiality in judging is not good: <sup>24</sup> Whoever says to the guilty, "You are innocent"-- peoples will curse him and nations denounce him. <sup>25</sup> But it will go well with those who convict the guilty, and rich blessing will come upon them.
- a) As I stated, these last few verses was the original end of this book as Solomon intended it. Solomon ended the book with "30 key points". However, that is not the actual end. From Verses 23-34, Solomon has a little "epilogue" section of further points he wanted to make.
  - b) Why did Solomon pick these 30? We don't know. Maybe he believed these are the most important principals to remember.
  - c) The first point of this "epilogue" section is about being a judge. The point here is not to call the guilty innocent and vice versa. Remember that Solomon was writing this section to his son. One duty of an Israelite king would be a head judge in Israel. The main point is things go well in a land when the guilty are convicted.
  - d) OK, I'm not a judge. How do I apply these verses to my life? Most people in life do experience "courtroom settings at least once in their life". While it is not always easy to tell who is guilty and innocent, sometimes it is easier to tell when justice is not done for some reason.
  - e) The other application, at least for most Americans, is that it is our civic duty every now and then to sit on jury trials. In such times, it is important to uphold the law to the best of our ability and judge people fairly.
53. Verse 26: An honest answer is like a kiss on the lips.
- a) Here is a single line proverb on the importance of being honest. Some Middle East ancient cultures (associated friendship kissing with being a true friend). The point here is about being honest, especially when dealing with friends and acquaintances.
54. Verse 27: Finish your outdoor work and get your fields ready; after that, build your house.
- a) The idea behind this verse is to get established in the business world before building one's home. Grant it, one can wait "forever", but the idea for a man is to get established in the working world before settling into one's home.
  - b) It doesn't mean one has to wait to be successful before getting married and settling down. The idea is simply to get established in the working world before building up one's home.
  - c) The related idea is to not live beyond one's financial level. Don't go into debt for a lifestyle one can't support.
55. Verse 28: Do not testify against your neighbor without cause, or use your lips to deceive.
- a) This is another proverb about being truthful. The idea is to not give testimony against someone without a cause. In other words, do not deceive people with false testimony.
56. Verse 29: Do not say, "I'll do to him as he has done to me; I'll pay that man back for what he did."
- a) This verse follows Verse 28 for a reason. One reason a person can give false testimony against someone else is because that "someone else" did something to harm us.
  - b) The point is God wants us to be honest in our dealings, even if that other person has not been honest in dealing with us. We may avoid that person, but that is different from purposely setting out to hurt someone.
  - c) As I've stated in earlier lessons, "Vengeance belongs to God and not us."

57. Verses 30-34: I went past the field of the sluggard, past the vineyard of the man who lacks judgment; <sup>31</sup> thorns had come up everywhere, the ground was covered with weeds, and the stone wall was in ruins. <sup>32</sup> I applied my heart to what I observed and learned a lesson from what I saw: <sup>33</sup> A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest-- <sup>34</sup> and poverty will come on you like a bandit and scarcity like an armed man.
- a) The last proverb of this section is a five line proverb on one topic: The consequences of one who is lazy.
  - b) This proverb is about one who is lazy in life. In this little story, one walks past the farm of a lazy person. There were thorns and weeds everywhere. Apparently the owner was known for being lazy. The owner spent a lot of time sleeping and resting and then, ignoring his farm.
  - c) The point does not apply only to farms. The idea is to not be like the lazy person. In fact, if one is that way, it will be obvious the community around that person.
58. This wraps up the book of Proverbs as Solomon originally intended. The next five chapters give additional proverbs attributed to Solomon, but not added to this collection until centuries later. More on that in the next lesson.
59. Let's pray: Father, Help us to properly apply these proverbs to our lives. Help us to live a life pleasing to You in all that we do. Help us to make a difference for You in all that we do. While Solomon meant this book for his own son, we know that You (God) intended this book for all who follow You to study and apply. We ask this in Jesus name, Amen.