

## Proverbs Chapters 25-26 John Karmelich

1. In this lesson, we begin a five-chapter section on the Proverbs of Solomon that were added to this book about two hundred and fifty years after Solomon was alive.
  - a) The point is Solomon intended the collection to end at Chapter 24.
  - b) Verse 1 of Chapter 25 says that these proverbs, written by Solomon were copied by the men of Hezekiah, king of Judah. Again Hezekiah was a king who ruled over 250 years after the time of Solomon.
    - i) What is unknown is why was this added to the "official" collection, so much later? Was this a big deal at the time?
    - ii) Solomon may have ended the book to end at Chapter 24, but God's game plan was to have the book complete with the additional chapters as we know it today.
    - iii) Again, the chapter numbers were not added to the middle ages. The point is the book as we know it, is longer than Solomon himself intended it to be.
  - c) What that important point made, we can now discuss the proverbs in this lesson. ☺
2. This lesson covers Chapters 25 and 26 of Proverbs. The interesting news about the proverbs in these two chapters is that they are very much "grouped" by category. That is unusual for the book of Proverbs up to this point.
  - a) For example, Verses 2-7 deal with "kings". Remember that Solomon wrote this book for future kings to study. The proverbs don't apply just to kings and leaders, but also to people in the presence of kings and leaders.
  - b) From Verses 8-19, the common topic is about "saying the right thing at the right time".
    - i) This includes trying to settle matters personally before going to court.
    - ii) This includes proverbs on not speaking too much or not spending too much time with a neighbor. To keep relationships strong, we shouldn't over indulge them.
    - iii) This section also includes proverbs on using a reliable a "messenger". Today, personalized messengers are still used to deliver important messages. Even with all our technology today, it is still common to rely on human messengers to communicate important messages from person A to person B. We have a number of proverbs dealing with good and bad messengers.
  - c) The remainder of Chapter 25 deals with the "tongue". It describes the use of the tongue in good and bad situations. It is about when to, and when not to speak.
  - d) The first 12 verses of Chapter 26 deals with "the fool". This is an issue covered all through Proverbs. Yet, the first 12 verses summarizes many of the themes discussed so far in this book as well as a few new points.
  - e) Verses 13-16 of Chapter 26 deal with another familiar theme, "the sluggard". This is describing a lazy person and their bad habits.
  - f) Verses 19-22 deal with the issue of meddling into affairs that are not ours. The proverbs deal with gossip and practical jokes. The main theme is actions we should avoid.
  - g) Verses 23-28 are still about "meddling", but the theme switches to a "lying tongue". The common theme is about the damage caused by being a false witness.
  - h) OK, enough overview, lets start on the proverbs. ☺
3. Chapter 25, Verse 1: These are more proverbs of Solomon, copied by the men of Hezekiah king of Judah:
  - a) Verse 1 is the only verse in the book that is not a proverb, other than Chapter 1, Verse 1. It is a statement saying in effect that some men added it during the time of king Hezekiah.
  - b) It is not known if the book of Proverbs was ever studied by Jews prior to this point.
    - i) What most scholars suspect is prior to this verse, the book of Solomon was something in the private collection of the king's family. With the addition of these latter chapters, the book became formally recognized as "part of scripture".

4. Verse 2: It is the glory of God to conceal a matter; to search out a matter is the glory of kings.
  - a) I listened to a lecture on this verse where the pastor was preaching on things that were "unknowable" to men. With all due respect to that pastor, I don't think that's the point of this proverb. The point has to do with things God wants us to learn, but He hides them from the "public's eyes".
  - b) Because a king is a king, God holds that king to a higher amount of accountable.
    - i) One of the reasons Christians are told to pray for our government leaders is so that they can rule over us effectively. Hopefully, they seek God's council for their own lives and for the ability to rule well over us. History has taught us that God does reveal things to human leaders if those leaders are willing to take the time to search them out.
  - c) So what are these things that kings had to search out? I believe a lot of it has to with learning about our relationship with God. An Israelite king had access to biblical materials not available to the "everyday person" in Israel. It is the job of "kings" to learn God's ways and pass on that information to the king's subject's.
    - i) In fact, God told Moses (centuries earlier) that when someone is a king over Israel, part of their duty was to make a copy of the law and study it the rest of their life!
  - d) This verse is not describing anything we don't know about God today. In our modern world, copies of God's word is readily available to just about everyone. That was not the case until printing became common in the later part of the Middle Ages.
  - e) OK, I'm not a king, nor do I plan to be one. How do I apply this? For starters, pray regularly for the leaders of our country. Also remember that all Christians are called "kings" that will rule and reign with Christ. God cares for us much for you and me as He does for a king. May we search out the things that God wants us to discover for our lives!
    - i) This including studying the scriptures and exploring our world.
5. Verse 3: As the heavens are high and the earth is deep, so the hearts of kings are unsearchable.
  - a) The point of this verse has nothing to do with heavens and earth. The point is just as we as humans have difficulty fathoming how "high up" heavens go and "how low" (how deep) the earth goes, so it is difficult to understand the heart of a king.
  - b) Remember the biblical principal that only God fully understands our hearts and not us.
  - c) The next idea is that the subject's of a king cannot fully comprehend what a king has to deal with. We as "subjects of a king" cannot fully comprehend all the information that runs through a leader's head and heart prior to making any major decision. Most of the time we are simply not privy to such information.
  - d) This follow up verse to Verse 2 is another reminder for us to pray for our leaders!
6. Verses 4 and 5: Remove the dross from the silver, and out comes material for the silversmith; <sup>5</sup> remove the wicked from the king's presence, and his throne will be established through righteousness.
  - a) Part of a job of a silver-maker is to remove the impure materials from the silver prior to molding the silver into some sort of design.
  - b) Along the same line of thinking, people who are wicked need to be removed from the king's presence in order for a king to rule well over the people.
  - c) The goal of this proverb is for a king, or a leader to rule effectively. Part of that rule requires the removal of wicked people from being an influence over the king. Part of our prayer for our leaders is that wicked people be away from the kings' presence.
  - d) Who would a wicked person be in this proverb? One who wants to do harm to the people of the kingdom for the personal benefit of the wicked person and/or the king! A government that oppresses it's subject's is probably under the influence of wicked people!
  - e) A wicked person who wants to rise to power is going to "hang around" the king! A wise king would recognize such a person and remove them from the throne room!

7. Verse 6: Do not exalt yourself in the king's presence, and do not claim a place among great men;  
<sup>7</sup> it is better for him to say to you, "Come up here," than for him to humiliate you before a nobleman. What you have seen with your eyes
  - a) Here is a principal Jesus himself commented upon. The essential idea is that when one is at a function with "leaders", it is better to go find a seat in the back and then, if invited, come up to the front, as opposed to finding a seat up front and then being told, "You have to go to back, these upfront seats are for someone else!"
  - i) Jesus said essentially the same thing in Luke 14:7:10. Jesus point is similar to the one being made here. "Don't exalt oneself, but let the leader exalt you he desires!"
  - b) This proverb is about "avoiding embarrassment" in life by raising oneself up to a position where one is not invited.
  - c) The last line, "What you have seen with your eyes". Some commentators believe that is part of the next proverb in Verse 8, and some tie it to this one in Verse 7. It can be read either way, depending upon how it is placed in context.
8. Verses 8-10: do not bring hastily to court, for what will you do in the end if your neighbor puts you to shame? <sup>9</sup> If you argue your case with a neighbor, do not betray another man's confidence, <sup>10</sup> or he who hears it may shame you and you will never lose your bad reputation.
  - a) This verse begins in the middle of a sentence. Other translations begin Verse 8 with the word "Do" as the first word of a sentence. Again, the part about "What you have seen with your own eyes" can go well with either the previous proverb or this proverb.
  - b) The previous proverb was about avoiding embarrassment: The idea of verses 6-7 is if a king or leader tells you to get out of a front row chair and go sit in the back, it would be an embarrassing thing to have to do. In a sense, this proverb is also about avoiding something that could potentially be embarrassing!
  - c) The idea of verses 8-10 is not to be in a hurry to go to court to solve a problem. If one has an argument with someone, first try to solve the issue with that person directly.
  - d) The related issue has to do with "betraying the confidence of a third person". Let's say some key information in a court case involves something told to us in confidence. The point is not to betray that confidence by going to court and letting "everyone" hear what was told in confidence.
    - i) The main point is to do one's best to keep confidential information confident and not go to court when a matter could be solved privately.
9. Verse 11: A word aptly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver.
  - a) Verses 11-15 all deal with the issue of "saying the right thing at the right time!"
  - b) The simple point of Verse 11 is that a word properly spoken at the right time is a thing of beauty. It is about giving good advice at the time it is appreciated!
10. Verse 12: Like an earring of gold or an ornament of fine gold is a wise man's rebuke to a listening ear.
  - a) This verse is another comparison of "fine gold" to the right words being spoken.
  - b) This verse is specifically about "rebuke". The idea is that a wise man or woman will accept a rebuke if it was necessary for correction.
  - c) In other words, a wise person is willing to be rebuked if they were wrong about something and a wise person is willing to listen to contrary opinions about their actions!
11. Verse 13: Like the coolness of snow at harvest time is a trustworthy messenger to those who send him; he refreshes the spirit of his masters.
  - a) To understand the "harvest time" reference, one has to understand that most crops are gathered from late spring to late summer. The point is there is usually no snow on the ground when crops are harvested. The point of the first part of this proverb is that the "coolness" of snow would feel good on a warm day when one is "harvesting".
  - b) The real point of this proverb is that just as coolness would feel good at the times of the harvest, so a trustworthy messenger refreshes the spirit of the one who sant him.

- c) Remember when this was written, all messages had to be hand-delivered. There were no telephones or e-mail to pass one messages. One had to use a human messenger to deliver a message to someone else. The point is if the messenger is faithful, it makes the sender of the messenger happy.
  - d) Even today with all of our modern methods of communication, we still at times, rely on others to pass on information. The point is we want those messengers to be trustworthy in the message to be passed on!
12. Verse 14: Like clouds and wind without rain is a man who boasts of gifts he does not give.
- a) I once heard a great story of an American Indian who was converted to Christianity. He was listening to the sermon of a preacher who didn't do a good job preparing his message. Because the preacher didn't prepare, the preacher did a lot of hand and facial gestures and "improvised" a lot of basic comments. The point of this story is at the end of the sermon, the Indian was asked what he thought of the sermon. The Indian replied, "Lots of clouds and lots of wind, but no rain". ☺ (What that means is the sermon lacked any substance and was all "show"!)
  - b) I thought that story was appropriate here as this proverb is describing a man who is boasting of gifts he claims he is going to give, but never gives them. The idea of this proverb is to condemn the type of person who is falsely bragging about something he never plans to do or doesn't follow through with his plans.
  - c) You and I may never know if a person follows through with statements made, but God does. The point is to avoid false bragging and to avoid promises we can't keep.
13. Verse 15: Through patience a ruler can be persuaded, and a gentle tongue can break a bone.
- a) If you want to convince a person to change their mind or to do something "our way", it can be done, but it has to be done patiently.
  - b) If there is one thing I have learned in life, it is that almost impossible to get people to change by insulting them or putting down their views.
  - c) Often in arguments, people just want to be heard, as opposed to actually want to change the other person's opinion. If the goal is to get the other person to see things your way, it can be done, but it often requires changing the way to present information, or changing the focus of one's argument.
  - d) The idea of "gentle tongue can break a bone" is not to be taken overly literal. The idea is if we speak gently on an issue, we can possibly persuade someone to change their view.
14. Verse 16: If you find honey, eat just enough-- too much of it, and you will vomit.
- a) If you've ever eaten honey, too much of it can make one sick. The underlying point is not to overindulge in anything. It can make one sick. The idea is to have "moderation" in life and not to overindulge in any specific pleasure, as it will eventually make one sick!
15. Verse 17: Seldom set foot in your neighbor's house-- too much of you, and he will hate you.
- a) Both Verses 16 and 17 are preaching "moderation" in our life. Verse 16 uses the example of food, and in particular, honey. Verse 17 uses the example of overindulging our time with our neighbors. Our neighbors may like us, but if we spend too much time with them, they don't have time to get on with their own lives.
  - b) The idea is not about avoiding contact with one's neighbor, but about not spending so much time with a particular person that they begin to resent you. Again, the key term here is "moderation".
16. Verse 18: Like a club or a sword or a sharp arrow is the man who gives false testimony against his neighbor.
- a) Speaking of "problems with neighbors", this verse goes well after the last one.
  - b) The main point is not to give false testimony against the neighbor, no matter what we personally think of them!

- c) The principal of "false testimony" has been mentioned every now and then in this book. The point is God wants us to be honest in all our dealings with others. To give false testimony against one's neighbor is one of the 10 commandments, "You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor." (Exodus 20:16).
17. Verse 19: Like a bad tooth or a lame foot is reliance on the unfaithful in times of trouble.
- a) We're now back to the concept of reliance upon someone who is faithful. This verse states in the negative by saying if we are relying on someone who is unfaithful, it is like having tooth pain or a lame foot.
  - b) In times of trouble, we need faithful people around us. It could be talking about friends. It could refer on those who are trying to help us get out of this situation. The point is if we are putting our trust in unfaithful people, we end up hurting ourselves!
  - c) The point of this proverb is to think about who we want "around us" in tough times! Think about who will be helpful and who will do us harm?
18. Verse 20: Like one who takes away a garment on a cold day, or like vinegar poured on soda, is one who sings songs to a heavy heart.
- a) The point is when someone is grieving, we are not to make matters worse. There are times when one is going through a rough time and they don't want to be "cheered up" with light hearted singing. The idea is to do what is appropriate when someone around us has a heavy heart about something and avoid doing what is inappropriate.
  - b) The first couple of refers are things that are "bad". If one ever tried to mix vinegar and soda. It will cause a gaseous explosion.
19. Verse 21: If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat; if he is thirsty, give him water to drink.  
<sup>22</sup>In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head, and the LORD will reward you.
- a) The idea here is one can sometimes remedy an angry situation by helping out those we consider our enemy.
  - b) How does one reconcile this with all the "warfare" passages of the Old Testament? For example, we read of David killing many of his enemies! I don't believe the passage is designed for times of warfare, but about situations where one has someone who is an enemy living near us! (God does not call on us to kill our enemies in "peace-time".)
  - c) The point is we can often remedy hate filled situations with kindness.
  - d) Paul taught this principal in Romans 12:19-20. Paul incited the principal of "letting God take care of wrath", while we try to show kindness to those we consider our enemy"!
    - i) "Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. <sup>20</sup> On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head."
  - e) Notice in Verse 22, the enemy may not appreciate the kindness, but God does. This verse does not say the enemy will reward you or change their ways, but God ("The LORD") will reward you for your actions.
    - i) One has to remember the biblical principal that God wants nothing to block our relationship with Him! If we are busy doing harm to an enemy, we are focusing on our enemy and not God. He wants us to do good in all situations. Give God "room" so He can take care of revenge. Our job is to be good witnesses for God in all that we do, including how we treat our "enemies".
20. Verse 23: As a north wind brings rain, so a sly tongue brings angry looks.
- a) Those of us living in the northern hemisphere, when we think of "north wind", we think of a cold wind blowing in. Such cold wind often brings rain along with it, depending upon the time of year and one's location on the planet.
  - b) Along the same lines, a tongue that insults people brings angry looks from the one listening to the one with the "sly" tongue. The point is to be careful what we say and "who" we are talking about!

21. Verse 24: Better to live on a corner of the roof than share a house with a quarrelsome wife.
  - a) This is a "repeat" of a proverb stated in Proverbs 21:9. This is word-for-word, the exact same proverb. Why is this one repeated (as opposed to many others)? We don't know.
    - i) I'm not going to repeat the same comments as stated in Chapter 21.
  - b) My only "new" comment is to see this verse in context of the previous one: The previous one was about how a "sly" tongue brings an angry look. Let's talk about that proverb in context of this one! Let's face it, some of the worse arguments we have in life usually involve our spouses or close friends & relatives. The point of this proverb is sometimes it is better to just "get away" than to argue.
  - c) As I stated in Chapter 21, the best salutation for such a tongue is not only to get away, but to pray for that person at that moment.
22. Verse 25: Like cold water to a weary soul is good news from a distant land.
  - a) Here's another comparison of two things that "feel good".
  - b) The first is that cold water tastes good when one is thirsty. When one receives good news from a distant land, it also feels good to the soul. The only thing to add is what we consider "good news" should also be what God considers "good news". That could be as simple as a friend is "ok" to good news about a family member being in good health.
23. Verse 26: Like a muddied spring or a polluted well is a righteous man who gives way to the wicked.
  - a) The idea of this spring or well is that it was somehow "ruined" by some outside effort. For example, some animal might have muddied the spring or an enemy polluted the well.
  - b) The idea of the "righteous giving way to the wicked" is that the righteous are somehow in power and they let the "wicked" rule and take over. The proverb can also refer to the loss of social status by a righteous person so that a wicked person rises to power.
  - c) The main idea is having the wicked in power "ruins" things just like a spring or well that somehow got ruined so no one could drink from that water source.
24. Verse 27: It is not good to eat too much honey, nor is it honorable to seek one's own honor.
  - a) Here's another proverb comparing "something bad" to eating too much honey. The bible has nothing against eating honey. The idea is overindulging in honey (or just about anything for that matter) is bad for one's health and well being.
  - b) As far as "honor", the bible condemns seeking one's own honor. The idea is not about leading or achieving some sort of powerful position. The criticism is about letting your ego run things to the point where you are raised to a power position that you or I are not ready for in that moment of our lives.
    - i) There is a false notion that Christians can't seek any sort of power position. That's not the point being made. The point is about our "ego" getting in the way and doing something God has not intended us to do at this moment in time.
  - c) May God give us the wisdom to know when to stop and not take things to excess! ☺
25. Verse 28: Like a city whose walls are broken down is a man who lacks self-control.
  - a) For most of human history, walls were built up to protect a city. The idea here is that a man or woman that lacks self control is like a city with broken walls.
  - b) This verse has nothing to do with building up walls in our life. The verse is arguing about the danger of not having any self-control.
    - i) Using "honey" again as an example, we can overindulge in just about anything in this lifetime. The danger is not honey, but the person who doesn't have the self-control to know when to say "enough is enough".
    - ii) A big part of maturity in life is about knowing when to say "enough" of whatever and knowing when to say no more.
    - iii) One can apply this in the "negative" as well about not having the self-control to say "yes" to the things we really need in life.

26. Chapter 26, Verse 1: Like snow in summer or rain in harvest, honor is not fitting for a fool.
- From Verse 1 to Verse 12 are all on the topic of the "fool".
  - The biblical definition of a fool is a person who doesn't care for the things of God. The definition of a fool has nothing to do with how intelligent a person is. The biblical definition of a fool is simply about how a person acts toward the things of God.
  - With that said, on to Verse 1: The idea of "snow in the summer" and "rain in the harvest" is that both of those things are inappropriate and unlikely. In Israel, harvesting of the crops is in the late spring or summertime. A rain storm would make harvesting more difficult. Besides, in Israelite weather, it rarely rains during the time of the harvest.
  - The comparison of bad weather is to a foolish person getting honor. This verse is not saying fools don't get honor every now and then. The point is it is not fitting for them.
  - The idea is honor for a fool is to be avoided, especially in circles that take God seriously.
27. Verse 2: Like a fluttering sparrow or a darting swallow, an undeserved curse does not come to rest.
- The idea of an underserved curse not coming to rest means that if the person receiving the curse does not deserve the curse, it will not be effective.
  - There is a false notion that if we place a curse on someone, it "comes to rest" because we said it should happen. The bible has a different concept of curses. The power of the blessing and curse comes from God, as only He really knows people's hearts.
  - You or I could verbally curse someone, but if there is no truth behind it, over the long term, that curse will not come to pass!
  - The comparison to the birds is that a fluttering sparrow or a darting swallow do not rest in such actions. Those flying motions are temporary until they accomplish their goal of getting their pray or coming to rest. The comparison is an undeserved curse does not come to rest on a person and these birds in such motion do not continue forever that way!
  - I stated in Verse 1, verses 1-12 in this chapter (26) are about "fools". Verse 2 is the only verse from 1-12 that does not use the word fool in the proverb itself. The "tie-in" has to do with who does and who does not deserve to be cursed and "who is doing the cursing".
28. Verse 3: A whip for the horse, a halter for the donkey, and a rod for the backs of fools!
- Verse 2 talked about things that are not appropriate. Verse 3 is on what is appropriate.
  - When a horse is not cooperating, people apply a whip. The same with a halter for a donkey. The idea here is when a foolish person is acting in a way that causes harm to society, a whipping would be appropriate. The fool does not respond to logic or reason, so a whip is appropriate.
  - Does this mean we should go around whipping those who don't believe in God? That's not the application. It's more about those who are doing things illegal like stealing. The point is such a fool will not respond to reason, only to punishment.
29. Verse 4: Do not answer a fool according to his folly, or you will be like him yourself.
- This one is best explained by an example: Let's say a foolish person wants us to join them in some illegal activity. Or let's say a foolish person wants us to join them in turning away from God for some other activity. If we answer that fool by saying "yes", we will eventually become like them.
  - The danger of joining their activity is that it draws our hearts astray to be like them.
30. Verse 5: Answer a fool according to his folly, or he will be wise in his own eyes.
- Verse 5 sounds like a contradiction to Verse 4. This proverb says we are to answer a fool according to his own "beliefs" or folly. If we do that, won't we be in danger of being like the fool as stated in Verse 4.
  - One has to see the subtle difference between Verses 4 and 5. Verse 4 is about not joining in the fool's activities. Verse 5 is about not "spouting wisdom" on the fool. The point of Verse 5 is that it is a waste of time to try to teach wisdom to a fool, as they have no interest in wise things. Verse 5 is about giving an "appropriate answer" to a fool's question.

31. Verse 6: Like cutting off one's feet or drinking violence is the sending of a message by the hand of a fool.
- a) The idea here is if we use a fool as a messenger, it will only lead to trouble. Such a person by definition is not trustworthy to deliver our message.
  - b) The comparison here is that if we use a fool to deliver a message, it would be as painful as cutting off one's feet or the violence of a drunken brawl.
  - c) Let's say we have an immediate family member who is a fool. That person may be good for other things, but we shouldn't use that person to be a messenger for us!
32. Verse 7: Like a lame man's legs that hang limp is a proverb in the mouth of a fool.
- a) If one gives a biblical proverb to a fool, it is a waste of time as by definition, a fool is one who does not care for the things of God. If such a fool is thinking of a biblical proverb, it will turn out to be a waste of time and they won't use it for any good.
  - b) The first part of the proverb compares such a time-waster to a man with a bad leg. This is not about insulting someone with a bad leg, but saying just like that leg is unusable, so is the fool with a proverb on his mind.
33. Verse 8: Like tying a stone in a sling is the giving of honor to a fool.
- a) When one puts a stone in a sling, the idea is we want to fire the sling. The classical biblical example is David using the sling to kill Goliath. The idea here is that tying a stone to a sling is a time waster, as the purpose of a sling is to fire the stone, not to tie it in.
  - b) Both halves of this proverb are about "time wasters". The second one is the point of this proverb. It is a waste of time to give some sort of honor to a fool.
34. Verse 9: Like a thornbush in a drunkard's hand is a proverb in the mouth of a fool.
- a) The idea of a thornbush is if a person is drunk, they are unable to handle a thorn bush and will get stuck with thorns. The idea is when one is drunk one does not have the physical ability to deal with thorn bushes. It is another good reason to avoid being drunk. ☺
  - b) A fool may have the ability to spout off a proverb, but such a fool cannot comprehend what it means or "what to do" with that proverb!
  - c) If you go through the Gospels, a lot of Jesus' teaching was in proverbs. The reason he used that method was to "hide" God's knowledge from those who we're not interested. If one speaks in proverbs, and someone in the audience has no interest in the things of God, that foolish person will not understand the point of the proverb. That is the idea of both Jesus teaching in proverbs and this one here in Verse 9. (See Matthew 11:25.)
35. Verse 10: Like an archer who wounds at random is he who hires a fool or any passer-by.
- a) Imagine someone with archery skills. They fire away at random and can hurt those near by as they are not shooting at any particular target! The same sort of "bad randomness" can happen to us if we hire a fool or "just anybody" to do some sort of job for us.
  - b) The idea is if we are to hire someone, we need to check them out first and not just hire the first person who comes along. The danger of hiring a fool is not only we could harm ourselves, but we could harm innocent people who happen to be around, the same way an archer can hurt innocent people if that archer just fires away without aiming at anything in particular.
36. Verse 11: As a dog returns to its vomit, so a fool repeats his folly.
- a) If you ever watch a dog vomit and let's assume it is not cleaned up immediately, the dog will walk back to that spot and even try to lick it up!
  - b) A foolish person will repeat their mistakes and not learn from their foolish actions. It is similar to the foolish thing the dog does by trying to "lick up" their own vomit.
  - c) Let me give an example: We may have to bail out a fool because he or she is a close relative. A few months later, we'll find ourselves bailing them out again because such a fool does not learn from their mistakes, but repeats their actions over and over again!



- i) When I say "bail out", I'm not just referring to jail. Such a fool could be at a bar and doesn't have the ability to drive home and we have to pick them up. They could be in some sort of financial trouble and need to be "bailed out".
  - ii) We may have to help them because say, we are a close relative, but unless that foolish person gets some help to change their ways, we'll be bailing them out again, sooner or later.
- 37. Verse 12: Do you see a man wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him.
  - a) Here's the final proverb in this chapter on "fools". The point of this one is that the fool's life is such a waste of time, there is more hope for a person who "thinks they are wise".
  - b) The point of this proverb is that a person who thinks he or she is wise, are almost impossible to help to become wise. Yet, they are still easier to help than a fool!
  - c) One of the characteristics of a fool is that they are "wise in their own eyes". The difference is that a fool is more than just that, while a "non-foolish" person can still be wise in their own eyes. The idea of this proverb is that both the "wise in their own eyes" person and the fool are hard to change for the better, but the "wise in their own eyes" person has a chance of hope, while the fool does not.
  - d) So how do you know what type of person you are dealing with? Watch their actions and lifestyle for awhile and it usually becomes clear. May God grant us the wisdom to discern our actions clearly and the actions of those around us!
- 38. Verse 13: The sluggard says, "There is a lion in the road, a fierce lion roaming the streets!"
  - a) The next few verses deal with the characteristics of a sluggard. We've discussed this type of person in earlier lessons as well. A person who is lazy is compared to a sluggard (snail) in that such a person is slow to do anything of any value.
  - b) The idea of this proverb is the way to tell a sluggard is they are too afraid to go out in the world and make a difference. The "literal" interpretation is they are too afraid to go outside as they are afraid of being attacked by a lion.
  - c) The idea behind this proverb is a sluggard is a person too lazy to do anything and they will always find an excuse to not do any significant work.
- 39. Verse 14: As a door turns on its hinges, so a sluggard turns on his bed.
  - a) In order for a door to turn, it must be on hinges. The idea is not that a sluggard literally has hinges attached to him or her, but they might as well have hinges as they are too lazy to get out of bed. ☺ The idea here is the sluggard spends way too much time sleeping and not enough time out doing "useful" things.
  - b) This proverb is not arguing against sleep. Every person is different in terms of the amount of sleep they need. The point is to get as much sleep as we really need and no more. The point of this proverb is about avoiding laziness in life.
- 40. Verse 15: The sluggard buries his hand in the dish; he is too lazy to bring it back to his mouth.
  - a) The ultimate "example" of laziness is one who puts his or her hand in a dish to get some food and then is too lazy to bring it to their mouth. I don't think this proverb is meant to be so literal, because everyone needs to eat to survive.
  - b) The point of this proverb is that a sluggard will grow more and more lazy until they get to a point where they are no use to anyone, including themselves!
  - c) The concept of "laziness" can get worse and worse if not treated appropriately. Most people don't start out being this lazy. When one gets lazy, it will grow worse and worse unless we make the effort to change and do something about it.
  - d) Does this proverb mean we can't enjoy times of rest? Of course not. This section is warning about the idea of resting when one should be working. If we stay in that lazy state when we should be working, our condition will grow worse and worse until something is done about it.

41. Verse 16: The sluggard is wiser in his own eyes than seven men who answer discreetly.
  - a) A person who is a sluggard, rarely realizes they have a problem. This proverb teaches that such a sluggard thinks highly of him or her self. They see their laziness as a sign that they are "better than everyone else" in that they know better and don't have to go out and make a difference in the world.
  - b) The point is it is hard to correct a true sluggard as they believe they are doing the right thing. They think they are wiser than say, seven people who answer discreetly or "correctly" to the question of are you making a difference to God and to mankind with your life and your lifestyle.
42. Verse 17: Like one who seizes a dog by the ears is a passer-by who meddles in a quarrel not his own.
  - a) This proverb warns against the idea of meddling in people's business that one should not be meddling in, in the first place.
  - b) Most people know of at least one person that likes to meddle in other people's problems that they have no business being involved with in the first place! My wife and I know a person (from many years ago) who we avoid for that reason, as that person tends to get involved in "everyone's business". That person has no right, nor was asked to get involved. Sometimes they do it out of boredom. Sometimes they just want to be the "hero" and fix things. The point is they were not asked to get involved and try to fix it.
  - c) For those who have never pulled a dog by their ears, if one does it, it gets the dog mad and very likely will attack you. The point is if one pulls a dog by their ears, one is inviting trouble on themselves, just as if they get involved in issues that are not their problem!
43. Verses 18-19: Like a madman shooting firebrands or deadly arrows <sup>19</sup> is a man who deceives his neighbor and says, "I was only joking!"
  - a) The danger here is about when men and women engage in practical jokes. In the end, it never ends up good. The one receiving the joke then wants to get even or "top" the first one. Laughing at the expense of others never comes out good in the end!
  - b) The proverb is also talking about one who does deception and then uses "joking" as an excuse. Either way, this is not good.
  - c) Such actions are compared to a mad person firing deadly arrows without thinking about who that person is firing at!
44. Verse 20: Without wood a fire goes out; without gossip a quarrel dies down.
  - a) This proverb continues the same theme of bad actions. Here proverbs is stating that if one wants to end a quarrel, then stop speaking in gossip. The point is gossip is not a good thing. God does not want us to spread gossip about others. If there is an issue with someone, that issue needs to be brought to the person directly, not spread to others!
  - b) Both halves of this proverb are teaching how to bring an end to action. If one wants a fire to go out, stop adding wood. If one wants a quarrel to die out, end the gossip.
  - c) I would suspect this proverb is also about speaking gossip about the person present in the discussion group. The idea is if we want the quarreling to stop, then stop making accusations about the person and things will just "quiet down" all on its own.
45. Verse 21: As charcoal to embers and as wood to fire, so is a quarrelsome man for kindling strife.
  - a) This verse is along the same lines as the previous one. The point is if a person is "quarrelsome by nature", or if a person is just in the mood to argue, that person will simply "kindle strife" when speaking. Sometimes people just get into a mood where they want to argue or debate endlessly on some point. If you want to live peaceably, we need to avoid that person, or at least avoid them at that time.
  - b) The first half of this proverb compares such an arguer to putting charcoal or wood on a fire. In other words, the "arguer" adds to the fire as opposed to trying to calm a situation.

- c) I've rarely in my life seen problems solved by arguing over them. It is one thing to discuss an issue calmly. It is another to make accusations over and over again and never get anywhere. My wife taught me many years ago, "Why do you do the same thing over and over again, and expect different results?" The point of that saying is if one wants different results, one often has to change their habits first.
46. Verse 22: The words of a gossip are like choice morsels; they go down to a man's inmost parts.
- a) There is a natural "instinct" in us to gossip. We listen and digest what people are saying about others. It doesn't make it right. The point of this proverb is that people do enjoy gossip, even though it is wrong.
- b) Of all the sins committed among Christians, I am convinced that one of the most common and "dangerous" sins is that of spreading gossip. I've watched friendships split up over gossip and churches split over false accusations.
- c) The point of this proverb is not that gossip is ever a good thing, but that people do digest the words of gossip. It is just another reason to avoid gossip when it comes around.
47. Verse 23: Like a coating of glaze over earthenware are fervent lips with an evil heart.
- a) An "earthenware" is a jar or a similar device made of clay. Such a jar is then typically covered in glaze. The glaze prevents stuff from permanently becoming part of the earthenware vessel. For example, if one puts coffee in a clay cup without glaze, the coffee will stick to the cup and one cannot wash out that coffee stain.
- b) The idea of the second part is a person may speak kindly, but that same person may have evil intentions on their heart. Just as glaze covers up the jar, so flattering words may cover up the thoughts of the heart.
- c) The point is it is best to judge people by their actions, and not the words they say!
48. Verse 24: A malicious man disguises himself with his lips, but in his heart he harbors deceit.
- a) In some ways, this verse continues the thoughts of the previous verse. The previous verse says that fervent (lying) lips cover up an evil heart. This verse takes it one step further by calling such a person a "malicious man". The point, like the last verse is to not trust people by what they say, but by their actions.
- b) To use a political example, I don't care a lot what a politician says in the months leading up to an election. I know that they will say anything to get elected. What I try to pay attention to is their past voting records. In other words, I care what they do far more than what they say. This proverb is not just for politicians, it is just a possible application.
49. Verse 25: Though his speech is charming, do not believe him, for seven abominations fill his heart.
- a) The description of this "malicious man" continues in Verse 25. The idea again is not to trust one's speech, but to look at their actions. Someone may have a charming speaking ability, but it does not necessarily mean they are trustable. Again, it is best to judge people by how they live their lives than by what they say!
50. Verse 26: His malice may be concealed by deception, but his wickedness will be exposed in the assembly.
- a) This step takes the concept of a wicked person one step further: This verse is saying such a person's actions may be concealed by deception, but (sooner or later), that person's wickedness will be exposed once the "public" finds out about his or her deeds.
- b) A wicked person may go to great length and trouble to "cover up" their deeds, but the point of this proverb is sooner or later their deeds will be exposed.
51. Verse 27: If a man digs a pit, he will fall into it; if a man rolls a stone, it will roll back on him.
- a) I stated a lesson or two back, that the "road runner" cartoons are biblically based whether it was intentional or not. Here is another verse to support that theory. I always think of the coyote from those cartoons making these elaborate traps for the road runner. Those traps never work and the coyote himself usually falls into those traps! If you are familiar with that cartoon, think about the coyote in light of this proverb!

- b) With that said, let's discuss the proverb itself. It is describing a man digging a pit for the purpose of trapping another person. The second part describes a man rolling a stone for the purpose of hurting another person. The point of the proverb is not the literal actions, but the fact that if a person designs a trap for another person, God will often let that man fall into his own trap. The other concept is that somehow God revenges those who set such a trap for others.
  - c) This verse does tie to the theme of the previous verses. The previous set of verses was all about someone with illicit intent but still speaks with a positive tone in his or her voice. The idea here is that the wicked plans such a man intends usually comes back to harm the man (or woman) who designed such plans.
52. Verse 28: A lying tongue hates those it hurts, and a flattering mouth works ruin.
- a) We're still on the topic of the "wicked person" who wants to hurt people. The point here is that the lying tongue hates those who the person is lashing out at. The underlying point is such a person doesn't really care for the people around him and proves it with their speech.
  - b) Some suggest this verse also means the person with the lying tongue really hates his or her own soul as well as they are causing damage to themselves.
  - c) I also want us to think about this verse during our own moments of not telling the truth to those we are talking to. Do we "hate" those we are lying to? We usually have good reasons to lie, such as "We don't want to hurt their feelings" and statements like that. The question is "Does it make it right to lie" if we have a good reason?
    - i) Sometimes in the business world, people make agreements with our clients to not disclose our true intentions to others. In such cases, it is best to keep our mouths shut as opposed to making up excuses. For example, I work as a real estate appraiser. Sometimes our clients will ask us to not tell the tenants in the building the true purpose of the appraisal. What I have done is lied. What I "should" do is just be quiet about the issue or say, "Go ask the owner".
    - ii) Now let's talk about the issue of lying to not hurting our friends. It is probably better to not bring up the issue in the first place. The other answer is to state the truth. It is better to say the truth even though it may hurt a little than to lie directly to their face.
    - iii) My point is to "think twice" about lying to someone. Even though we may have good intentions, we are usually doing far more damage than we realize!
  - d) We'll continue this collection of "Solomon's other proverbs" in the next lesson.
53. Let's pray: Father, help us to learn what You want us to learn from these proverbs. Help us not just to apply them to others, but to ourselves. Help us to see our own short-comings in these proverbs and to apply them to our lives. Help us to apply them as we draw closer to You. We ask this in Jesus name, Amen.