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Proverbs Overview (Part 2)



Bible Book Overviews - Steve Gregg

In this insightful overview, Steve Gregg delivers an in-depth analysis of Proverbs, a book of the Old Testament, focusing on its lessons on wise living and character. Gregg highlights the importance of observing human nature and God's providence, paying attention to the consequences of one's choices, and considering the long-term effects of decisions. Furthermore, he emphasizes the book's relevance in governing relationships, spiritual life, and finances, and its potential to bring about positive personal transformation. Proverbs provides a valuable guide to navigating life and making wise choices.

Transcript

Now, I want to go through, and we're not going to go like chapter by chapter through Proverbs. Instead, I want to pick out some of the main kinds of Proverbs there are, the kinds of themes they address, and what they say about them. Proverbs largely describes patterns of living, wise patterns of living, as opposed to foolish patterns of living.

By the way, foolish patterns of living are not uncommon. It's not hard to find people who are being very foolish in their lives, and wasting what little they have of it. So, to learn the wise patterns of life, and to observe things that other people see but do not observe.

If you ever were a fan of Sherlock Holmes, one of his famous statements is, You see but you do not observe. Well, Solomon definitely observed, and he didn't just see. But many people do see, and not really observe what's behind things.

Let me just show, let me just talk about some of the kinds of Proverbs there are. One of the kinds of Proverbs there are is, he makes observations about nature. For example, well, if you look back at 1 Kings, which is where we find the story of Solomon, In chapter 4, it actually talks about how he made a lot of Proverbs, and it mentions specifically how he observed nature, and drew lessons from nature.

In 1 Kings 4, 33, it says, He spoke of trees, from the cedar tree of Lebanon, even to the hyssop that springs out of the wall. He spoke also of animals, of birds, of creepy things, and of fish. And men of all nations, from all the kings of the earth, who had heard of his

wisdom, came to hear the wisdom of Solomon.

So, he looked at animals, how they behave, I already mentioned the ant. He says, Go to the ant, thou sluggard, consider her ways, and be wise. He sees in the behavior of the ant, storing up in the summer, so there'll be sufficient in the winter, a pattern of behavior in the animal kingdom, that would be wise for people to emulate.

We know one man who emulated it in the Bible, and that was Joseph. When God revealed, through the dreams of Pharaoh, and the interpretations that Joseph was given of them, that there's going to be seven years of plenty, followed by seven years of famine. He says, we better store up during the seven years of plenty, so that there'll be something here when the seven years of famine come.

That's kind of the same principle, that was wise. In fact, Pharaoh said to Joseph, there's no one as wise as you. Although, I would think that it would take a moderate amount of wisdom to figure out if you're going to have seven years of famine.

But, if seven years off, you better save something up. But, that's still, that's what wisdom is. So, he does make proverbs, he did make proverbs from animals.

And, we have, for example, the one I mentioned, chapter six, verses six through eleven, is his statement about the ant. Go to the ant, thou sluggard, consider her ways, and be wise, which having no captain, overseer, or ruler, provides her supplies in the summer, and gathers her food in the harvest, and goes on. And, he makes application to the human behavior.

He says, how long will you slumber, oh sluggard? When will you rise from your sleep? A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep, so shall your poverty come on you, like a robber, and your need, like an armed man. Poverty will come against you like an invader, that you will not be able to resist, like an armed man coming to defeat you. You will not be able to overcome poverty, in other words, if you don't make provision, when there's opportunity to do so.

Because, there will be times when there is no opportunity to do so. So, that's one of the examples of Solomon, you know, observing animals and finding from nature patterns. If you look at chapter 24, verses 30 through 34, we see, I went by the field of a slothful man, and by the vineyard of a man devoid of understanding.

Now, this was not a man he'd ever met, but he knew, when he went by this guy's field, and by his vineyard, that this was a foolish man. He said, there it was, all overgrown with thorns. Its surface was covered with nettles, its stone walls broken down.

When I saw it, I considered it well. I looked on it, and I received instruction. Here he's looking at an overgrown vineyard and field, with untended walls that are beginning to become dilapidated.

He says, I got a message about that. See, many people walk right by that and say, well, I wish they'd clean that place up and just keep going. He says, I think about these things.

I observe that. I thought about that. And I received instruction from this observation.

He says, again, a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest, so your poverty will come like a prowler, and your want be like an armed man. The same thing he said about the ant. Looking at the ant and its behavior, looking at the second law of thermodynamics taking its toll on an untended, cultivated field.

He looks at nature, and he says, hey, I learned something here. You need to be diligent. You need to work.

In a sense, you have to work against the forces of nature. You have to work against the second law of thermodynamics. And you know that because you're always trying to repair your house or keep your weeds from growing in your yard or your yard becoming a jungle.

It will become all those things if you don't get up out of bed and do something about it. You know, so it takes work to have something of value because it's just not going to come about naturally for you. In Chapter 30, there's several observations from nature that not Solomon, but Agur, the author of this chapter, gives.

Chapter 30, verses 24 through 28. He says, there are four things which are little on the earth, but they're exceedingly wise. The ants are a people not strong, yet they prepare their food in the summer.

The rock badgers are feeble folks, yet they make their homes in the crags of the rocks. The locusts have no king, yet they advance in ranks. The spider skillfully grasps with their hands.

Some translations say lizard. And is in king's palaces. Now, what's he saying? I see these animals and I can learn lessons from the ant.

He's got the same lesson from the ant that Solomon got in Chapter 6. What about the conies? The conies are vulnerable little rodents. They don't have any real defenses against predators and they live in lands where there are predators. So what are we going to do? They can't fight them off.

Well, they find a secure place to live. They hide in the crags of the rocks where the predators can't go. Which, of course, we could even make a spiritual lesson from that.

And that is that, you know, because we are spiritually vulnerable, we have to hide ourselves in the rock in Christ. But really, the general rule is you need to know what your weaknesses are, what your vulnerabilities are, and take whatever precautions make

sense to avoid the dangers of life. If you don't know where your weaknesses are, you may walk into trouble and find you're overwhelmed.

That there's predators there bigger than you. But the conie is smart enough to find a safe place to be. That's taking precautions about the dangers in his world.

There's the mention of the locusts. They have no king. There's no one organizing them and yet they instinctively cooperate.

They advance in ranks. They look like they're organized, but no one's organizing them. No king is organizing them, but they advance in ranks.

They basically don't just each one go their own way. Even without a ruler to tell what to do, they cooperate. They find strength in numbers.

You know, if a locust comes to your field and starts eating your grain, you'll just smash it. If 10 billion locusts come to your field, you're just going to watch it go. They operate as troops.

By working together, they advance and nothing can stop them. That's wise. I mean, frankly, it's wise to cooperate with others because you're more vulnerable when you operate alone.

Then he talks about either the spider or the lizard, depending on which translation you read. He says they take hold of their hands and live in king's houses. I'm not really sure exactly how he's seen that, but he basically seems to be saying these creatures are opportunists.

They live in the nicest places in town because they find their niche and they hang on to it. So, I mean, basically looking at animals, looking at plants, looking at nature and saying, there's a lesson to be learned here. Realizing that God himself is the author of nature and the author of wisdom, it is assumed, therefore, that there's some wisdom in nature.

Jesus himself used parables about nature. Seeds planted on different kinds of soil bring forth different kinds of results. You know, a mustard seed is a tiny seed, but it grows into a great tree.

Leaven is a little tiny ingredient in a lump of dough, but it caused the whole dough to rise. These become illustrations for Jesus of how the kingdom of God is. And they're simply observable things in nature, how nature works.

So many of the Proverbs and frankly, wisdom can come to us from paying attention, not just taking for granted things in nature that we see all the time. But saying, what's what can we learn from this? And Solomon was a guy who had a mind working like that. Then

there's also observations, not just from nature, but from human nature.

In Proverbs 12, 25, Solomon says, anxiety in the heart of man causes depression, but a good word makes it glad. Now, one thing we have to see about these is not everything that the Proverbs declare to be so are always true. There are exceptions.

But remember, wisdom is simply the ability to say, what is the goal I'm looking for? What's the most likely course to take to get there? Do I want to do I want to not be depressed? Then I need to be around people who give encouraging words rather than people who are, you know, making me worried all the time. All the conspiracy theorists and so forth, watching the news all night. That's going to make me depressed.

Anxiety, it causes anxiety and anxiety. I need to listen to somebody who says things a little more encouraging than that. The point is that human nature is such that it is influenced by other people.

My mood can be affected by other people. A good word from somebody can make me glad. Other, you know, other effects can come from other kinds of influence from people.

I can become depressed, you know, around the wrong kind of influences. In Chapter 13, 12, hope deferred makes the heart sick. But when the desire comes, it is a tree of life.

A tree of life is simply a phrase that speaks to an enhancement of life. But he says hope deferred makes the heart sick. What is hope deferred? Hope is when you're anticipating and hoping and wishing for something to be true, expecting something positive.

But it doesn't happen if it's deferred. It means it's delayed or doesn't happen. If the thing you're hoping for, expecting doesn't happen, it can make the heart bitter, sick.

It can cause you distress of heart. But of course, when the thing you expected happens, when the desired thing occurs, then it makes you all happy. Now, this might seem like, well, obviously.

Well, yeah, a lot of things are obvious. When you think about it, these things are pregnant with more meaning than just the obvious. I mean, you don't want to have a sick heart.

Well, then you need to avoid having deferred hopes. Well, how do you avoid that? Well, you don't have unrealistic expectations. If you have high expectations when they're not warranted or likely to come true, you're just setting yourself up for disappointment, to becoming bitter.

This is so much a relationship principle, too. When you enter into a friendship or a marriage, you have certain expectations. This person is going to treat you a certain way.

Your life will be enhanced by this relationship a certain way. And then when they don't

do what you thought they'd do, and it turns out different, your hope that you had and the expectations you had are deferred. And many people become bitter against their spouse.

It's amazing how many divorces there are because people who once really loved each other, apparently, or thought they did, got married. But the person they married didn't live up to their expectations. The hopes they had about the person just don't materialize.

And they don't just say, oh, well, I got to adjust to that. They say, I'm bitter. The idea sometimes is that this person owes it to me to live up to my expectations.

The fact that they don't makes me mad at them, makes me bitter toward them. And it also is instructive to you if you have promised something to someone or they have reason to expect something from you. If you fail to do what they expected and what they rightly expect, they'll probably be angry at you.

They'll probably get bitter. So he's talking about the human nature, how human nature responds to things. And, of course, gives sort of a foundation for figuring out what you ought to do, therefore, about such situations.

In chapter 18, verse 1, a man who isolates himself seeks his own desire. He rages against all wise judgment. What's that mean? It seems to mean that if a man becomes antisocial and just kind of avoids other people, that's not just a normal personality trait.

He doesn't want interference from other people. He doesn't want accountability from other people. He wants to do his own thing.

He's seeking his own desire. He's not seeking to be necessarily doing what anyone else could tell him was right. He wants to do what he wants.

If he was around other people, they might say, that's not the right way to go. They might not countenance his behavior. He's seeking his own desire.

He doesn't want to be accountable to other people's approval, so he just doesn't hang around them. He isolates himself. This is probably the case with many people who don't go to any kind of a church.

Now, I'm not one who believes it's mandatory to go to an institutional church by any means, or even to any church on a weekly basis necessarily. But when people avoid fellowship consistently, it's a good chance there's something going on in their life that they want to do that they don't want people to get into their life and see what they're doing. And maybe confront them about it or whatever.

They just prefer to be left alone to do their own thing. That's what Solomon says is what's probably going on when someone is isolating himself. And he rages against all

judgment.

That means that if someone tries to reason with him, he's not interested. He wants to do what he wants. He'll get angry if you give him good counsel.

That's why he doesn't want to be around people. They might counsel him. They might correct him.

They might tell him, hey, what you're doing in this area of your life, you should change. The reason your marriage is failing is because the way you're treating your wife or whatever. The reason you're in debt and you're totally overwhelmed is because you're not working or you're gambling your money away.

If someone wants to do those things, they don't want someone around saying, that's wrong. That's just stupid. You need to do better than that.

And the people correcting may be using wise judgment. But he doesn't want to hear it. And if he keeps hearing it, he gets angry.

He's going to rage against it rather than correct himself. That's not the way of a wise man, but it's a way of man who seeks his own way and doesn't want people interfering or disapproving. So he isolates himself.

See, Solomon's watching people. He watches nature. He watches animals.

He watches how vineyards dilapidate without care and how walls break down. He's getting information from observing nature. He's also getting information about people from observing human nature.

How do people behave? He's picking up on it. He's saying, I see a pattern here. A man who's isolating himself usually has something to hide, some selfish and wrong behavior that he doesn't want people to know about.

Somebody who gives false reasons for hopes and doesn't meet his obligations, doesn't meet the expectations, he's causing somebody else's heart to get sick. That's bitter, probably. And I mean, this is something, if you pay attention, you can find these things.

Solomon was a person who paid attention. Chapter 23, verses 6 through 7, he says, Do not eat the bread of a miser, nor desire his delicacies, for as he thinks in his heart, so is he. Eat and drink, he says to you, but his heart's not with you.

Now notice the man in question is a miser. He's not a generous man. And suddenly you get this unexpected invitation to come over to a feast or to a meal with somebody who's not known for generosity.

Well, why is this guy inviting me over? He's acting really generous. Eat and drink, he

says, but his heart's somewhere else. Where he really is at is where he's at in his heart.

He's got a secret motive going on. As he thinks in his heart, that's what he really is. He looks generous by his actions, but what's going on in his heart really defines him.

He's a miser. You should know that. You should know that if a man who's not characteristically generous suddenly starts acting generous toward you, he's got an agenda.

He's trying to get something out of you. That's what he's saying. Don't be fooled by this.

If you know the guy's a miser, and he's now suddenly acting un-miserly, he's acting against his nature, he's trying to trap you. He's got something he wants to get from you. Chapter 20, verse 14.

It says, It is good for nothing, cries the buyer, but when he has gone his way, he boasts. Now, Solomon had apparently seen bargaining in the marketplace plenty of time in ancient Middle Eastern society, as in many societies today. There's not a set price for the items you have to bargain for.

And usually if the merchant has a certain price he gives, he intends to be bargained down, because he knows that's what people are going to want to do. He probably inflates the original price and is willing to go down to a lower price, but he'll take the high price if someone doesn't bargain him down. And someone who's bargaining with someone, they're trying to get him to take a lower price.

They say, this is a piece of junk. You're charging this for this thing? It's probably worthless. It is nothing.

It's worthless. It's good for nothing. But when he actually buys it for the price he wanted, he goes, hey, you should see a great deal I got.

It's like, while he's trying to bargain for it, it's a piece of junk. But once he's got it, he's bragging about what he got. That's kind of an interesting observation that I'm sure Solomon observed among people who buy and sell.

Chapter 29, verse 5. Another observation from human nature. A man who flatters his neighbor spreads a net for his feet. That is, he's setting a trap for him.

Just like the miser who suddenly shows uncharacteristic generosity, he's got something up his sleeve. He's got an agenda. So also versus flattering you.

Now, complimenting you isn't the same thing as flattering you. People who love you and want to affirm you will often point out something about you that's genuinely good. And they want you to realize that they see it and appreciate it.

There's nothing wrong with compliments if they're sincere. Flattery is by definition not sincere. They're saying, oh, what a wonderful person you are, how talented you are, how beautiful you are.

But they're not really, I mean, they're overstating it because they're trying to manipulate you. They're trying to spread a net for you to get something they want from you. So that's how flattery works and that's how a flatterer is motivated.

That's what Solomon says. So there's also observations. We're talking about the different observations, Solomon.

He made observations from the animal and plant world and nature. He made observations from human behavior about human nature. He also made observations about what I would call characteristic providence.

Now, providence refers to how God intervenes and how God acts toward people. How the things he brings to pass are his providence. We often might think of providence as when God provides maybe some kind of material benefit.

Somebody who has a special need and they pray about it and God meets that special need. We call that God's providence. But the term providence would simply refer to all of God's dealings in whether he's blessing or cursing.

His interaction with man, his intervention in the affairs of man, that's God's providence. And there is characteristic providence. I say characteristic because it's the way God usually interacts with man.

But usually doesn't mean always. And this is the important thing I want to get across about wisdom literature. It is not prophecy.

It is not like God's prophesying that this is going to happen, therefore it has to. It is not a promise. These are not promises.

God promises to do it, so he has to do it. This is wisdom. This is simply saying, you want this result, try this.

This is what a wise man would do if he wanted to reach that goal. He may not. Something may interfere with it.

But if you're smart and you want that goal, you'll do this instead of something more foolish. There are wise ways to pursue ends. And there are stupid ways to behave if you're hoping to reach a certain end that's not consistent with what you're doing.

So it says in Proverbs 12, 2, A good man obtains favor from the Lord, but a man of wicked intentions he will condemn. Now that might be a universal if we're thinking of God's ultimate judgment of a man. If he's a good man, God will ultimately, you know,

approve of what he's doing.

Though I think obtains favor from the Lord has, in the Old Testament sense, much more the idea of will receive benefits from the Lord. It's sort of like what Job's counselors thought. And Job himself thought it before he had his famous experiences.

That if you're a good man, God will only let good things. The favor of God will be on you and it'll be seen and you'll be prosperous, you'll be healthy, your kids will be healthy, everything will be good for you. But if you're a wicked man, well, God's going to condemn you to poverty and, you know, disaster and things like that.

That's exactly what Job's counselors thought. And they were right in a general sense. You see, their theology was not bad except that they absolutized that which is a more general providence.

It's a characteristic providence of God that he blesses people who do good things and that he curses those who don't. But there are times when a good man goes through what looks like God's curse. Now, Job was not cursed by God, but anyone looking on his circumstances would have assumed that he was.

And that's what his friends were thinking. But the point is that typically you can expect you want good treatment from God, be a good person. You want God to oppose you and condemn you? Well, then there's a way to do that, too.

You know, if you're smart and you want God's favor, then be good is basically what this is saying. Chapter 14 and verse 34 says, righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is reproach to any people. Well, of course, it is a reproach to sin, no matter what you nation are.

But righteousness will usually, apparently, God will bless and exalt a nation that is righteous. But not always. Just because a nation is invaded by another nation and succumb to it doesn't mean that they were the evil nation.

It'd be nice if it always worked out that way. It'd be nice if the nations that won the wars were always the good guys. We've had a couple of world wars where I think we'd say it worked out that way eventually.

Eventually the good guys won, you know. But wars haven't historically always taken that course. But if a nation is righteous, in general, God's going to be on their side in a conflict against a nation that's not righteous.

And you can pretty much expect God to exalt that nation, except when there's exceptions. You see, this is the point about Proverbs. They tell us things that are true, except when they're not true.

These things are generally true. A wise man can't really predict and doesn't pretend to predict what will absolutely happen. He tells you what is likely to happen if you do this, as opposed to what's likely to happen if you do this other course.

One's a wise thing, one's a foolish thing. Now, you may do a wise thing and still die young. Jesus did.

Jesus was as wise as they come. He died at age 33. That's, you know, that's not what most people would desire.

And there's people who are wicked people who live to be very old and lecherous and greedy and foul-mouthed and lewd people. And they live to be very old. And healthy too, by the way.

You know. And the psalmist sometimes complained about that. If you read Psalm 73, the psalmist said he almost stumbled in his faith because he noticed that the righteous seem to be oppressed all the time.

And the wicked seem to be comfortable. And they, you know, they feed themselves. They're fat and happy and they die comfortably in their beds.

You know, he said, when I saw that, I almost stumbled. My feet almost slipped and I almost gave up on my faith. And that does bother people sometimes.

You know, life doesn't seem fair because I'm a good person. I'm not, you know, rich and famous. But somebody else who's a bad person is rich and famous.

How come? That doesn't make sense. Now, that isn't always the case. And the opposite is not always the case.

But generally speaking, if you want God to promote you and treat you well and give you a good life, you certainly would be very foolish if you didn't pursue that end by following the ways of God and being righteous. Righteousness typically exalts the nation. Sin is a reproach to anyone.

And so if you want to be exalted by God, well, among other things, humble yourself and live according to God's ways. Will you be, you know, will you be exalted in the eyes of men? Might not happen. But in general, that's God's characteristic providence.

There are exceptions to all these things. Chapter 22, verse 9. He says, he who has a generous eye, meaning a person who's generous, will be blessed. He who gives it for he gives his bread to the poor.

Now here he's saying, if you're generous, you'll be blessed. Jesus said similar things. Give and it will be given to you.

And that is usually true. But a person can be very generous and still things could go wrong for him. You can't manipulate God's providence.

God is not there to be manipulated. Say, I want to be blessed, so I'm just going to, so I will be blessed. I'll be generous.

But if you're being generous so that you'll be blessed, that's not really generosity. And a lot of people give to the poor and so forth. And like the Pharisees, Jesus said, they sound the trumpet before them, before they give to the poor.

Well, I mean, they may be being generous, but they're not going to be blessed. Likewise, the woman who gave her two mites was contrasted with the Pharisees who gave large sums to the temple. He said, well, she gave more than all of them.

They seemed very generous to be giving such large sums, but God didn't see them as generous. The woman who gave a little bit was more generous, was more of a sacrifice. Motive has a lot to do with it.

But basically, in general, if you're generous to people, God will bless you. There will be blessing in it for you. I'd like to testify about that sometime, but I don't have time right now.

Chapter 23, verses 10 and 11. Do not remove the ancient landmark, nor enter the fields of the fatherless. For their Redeemer is mighty, and he will plead their cause against you.

Now, removing the ancient landmark, what's that about? When Israel conquered the land from the Canaanites, Joshua divided up the land to the different tribes. Each tribe and every clan got their own parcel. And they marked off the borders of each person's individual parcel by marker stones, landmarks.

Now, they didn't have, you know, modern surveying equipment, stuff like that. It'd be possible for an unscrupulous person to go out at night and move the landmark over several feet, or several tens of feet, or maybe some distance, into his neighbor's property, thus expanding his property at the expense of his neighbor. That's like, you know, real estate theft.

And people did that because they could often get away with it. He said, don't do that. Don't move those landmarks.

Don't enter the fields of the fatherless. Now, the fatherless are usually your typical vulnerable people. Orphans, widows are always in Scripture the vulnerable ones.

Don't take advantage of your neighbor because he's vulnerable. He's an orphan, you know. God will plead against you.

Now, on the Day of Judgment, God certainly would do that, and that's universally true. There might be some times when a wicked person who does those kind of things may, in fact, get away with it. At least until the Judgment Day.

So these are observations of how God usually deals with people. You cheat your neighbor, God's going to plead against you. You're generous, God's going to bless you.

This is some of the patterns of the prophets. You've got observations of nature, of human nature, of divine providence in its characteristic forms. And also observations of cause and effect.

Now, here's a situation where God's not making it happen, you're making it happen. You're doing something that has a natural result. You're not taking the result into consideration when you're doing the thing.

But if you would, you'd avoid doing the thing because you'd recognize the effects that come from what you're doing. A lot of people just need to see, when they're trying to make a decision, what's the outcome of that going to be. But a lot of people act impulsively and don't look ahead.

And so Proverbs 12, 24 says, The hand of the diligent will bear rule, but the lazy man will be put to forced labor. Now, when a lazy man is being lazy, he's not thinking that he's going to become a slave, or he's going to be put to forced labor, or he's going to have to be the low man on the totem pole in the company. Or he's only going to have to work for someone else.

He's never going to be in management. Because he just wants to be lazy. He's not thinking of the outcome of it.

He's just thinking, at the moment, I don't want to get out of bed. At the moment, I'd rather watch TV than go out and work hard. At the moment, I'd rather increase my coffee break beyond what's set, so someone else would do some of the work that I'd end up doing.

Being lazy is going to keep you at the bottom of the totem pole. You'll be put under forced labor. The hand of the diligent, that is a man who's a hard worker, he's going to bear rule.

He's the one who's going to be elevated to management. He's going to be the boss in the company. People who own companies are always looking for people who are hard workers.

Not hard workers just when they're being watched, but hard workers by nature, by conscience. People who work hard because they know that's the right thing to do. The person who's a hard worker, he's going to be elevated to the position of management

and leadership.

That's what it's saying. We might even apply this spiritually in the era of spiritual warfare. If you're spiritually lazy, you may come under spiritual bondage.

You may be diligent in resisting certain temptations, which if you're not diligent to resist them, you may come into bondage from them. You know that you're on the computer and some pornographic website comes up. And there's a temptation perhaps to, even out of curiosity, to check it out.

Well, if you follow that rabbit trail, too many people have done that and they've found out they're enslaved. Same thing with a little gambling. You know, I've walked through casinos in Las Vegas a lot of times because I teach in Las Vegas in churches and stuff, and I've sometimes eaten in the restaurants.

I've never put a quarter in a machine. I've never done any gambling. I'm not even tempted to gamble.

But if I would, someone gave me a lottery ticket as a gift at Christmastime. And it wasn't a winner. I was thinking, thank God it wasn't.

Even if I won a small amount, you know, even if I won \$100, I'd be so tempted. Well, hey, maybe I'll take another one. Oh, that one didn't.

How about another one? One of these is going to pay off because that one did. You know, you don't want to win. It just draws you in.

You know, if I put one quarter in a one-armed bandit in a casino and it paid off big, I think, wow, I think I'll stay here all night and put more in. You know, I mean, it's addictive. A person has to be diligent in their resistance of things that will enslave them.

The hand of the diligent will bear rule. You'll rule over your life if you put out the effort that you need to resist those temptations. But if you're lazy, they'll just roll over you.

They'll just steamroll over you and you'll become enslaved. That's just a pattern of cause and effect. Chapter 13, verse 18 says, Poverty and shame will come to him who disdains correction, but he who regards rebuke will be honored.

OK, you don't want someone to correct you. You're stuck with your own stupidity. And everyone has some.

Everybody has limited amounts of wisdom. And we benefit from the wisdom of others who see things more clearly than we do in some area. You might be ever so wise in some area, but there's some area you're not an expert at.

And someone comes up, says, you know, that could be done better. I got a feeling that

the way you're doing that's not going to work out. You say, trust me, I know what I'm doing.

You know, I don't need to hear what you have to say. Well, it's poverty and shame come to people who don't listen to counsel, don't take correction. The person who regards rebuke, if someone says you're doing the wrong thing, you say, oh, you know what? I'm not too proud to say you're right.

I think I'm doing the wrong thing. I think I'll change that. Well, then you'll be honored.

You'll be promoted. Things will go better for you. Chapter 14, verse 4 says, where no oxen are, the trough is clean, but much increase comes from the strength of an ox.

Now, what in the world is that saying? It's saying if you are a farmer, which most people were in those days, if you don't own an ox, you'll never have to muck out the barn. Your barn is a clean place. The trough is clean.

There's no ox in there messing things up. You can relax more. You don't have to muck the barn.

Only the problem is you have to push the plow with your own strength. Having an ox, actually, there's much work can be done by an ox, probably 10 times as much as without one. Isn't it worth a little shoveling of dung to have the benefits of an ox? In other words, you have to take on a little bit of inconvenience to gain a lot of advantage.

If you never own a car, you'll never have oil gathering on your garage floor. You'll never have repairs to pay for. You'll never, you know, have to get it licensed.

You'll never have to visit the DMV. That's a hassle to do. You can avoid all kinds of headaches if you don't have a car.

Yeah, but you can't go anywhere. You can, really. You can, of course, ride a bus or whatever.

But let's face it. Owning a car is a lot more convenient than virtually any other thing you can do without one. Is it worth it? Is it worth it to make the payments on the repairs? Is it worth it to get the licensing and keep that up? It's a pain, but the advantages are worth the trouble.

That's what he's saying. He's saying it's a pain to have an ox. If you don't have one, you never have to clean the barn.

On the other hand, if you're willing to clean a barn, you can get a lot more profits out of the work of an ox than trying to do all that stuff yourself with your own muscles. Chapter 29, verse 15 says, The rod and rebuke give wisdom, but a child left to himself brings shame to his mother. And two verses later in verse 17, it says, Correct your son, and he

will give you rest.

Yes, he will give delight to your soul. This is a cause and effect thing. A child is, one of the Proverbs says, Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod will drive it from him.

Basically, the Bible teaches that children are not born smart, certainly not morally smart. They're not born unselfish. A lot of times, the best things come to people in life if they can put their own selfishness aside and do things for other people.

It benefits everybody, including themselves, ultimately. But a child isn't born with that kind of wisdom. A child isn't born knowing about delayed gratification.

You know? Most little children, if you say, I'll give you a penny today or a dime tomorrow, which would you like? I think 99 out of 100 kids will say, I'll take the penny now, thank you. They don't care that tomorrow's, you're going to get 10 times as much if you hold off, but delayed gratification is just not in their vocabulary. Children don't know it.

They want what they want, they want it now. They have to be taught delayed gratification isn't something that wise people learn. If I don't grab what I want right now, I mean, you're saving up money for something, and you've got enough money now to buy all kinds of things that you don't need.

And if you want to immediately gratify the desire to have those things, fine, but you won't ever get the thing you're saving up for, because it's better to hold off and discipline yourself, and say I'm not going to spend this money until I have enough to get what I really need. That's something that children don't know. You have to train children in wisdom.

They don't have it already. And a lot of times their lack of wisdom makes them do damaging things to themselves and others, or immoral things. And therefore, discipline is necessary.

We live in a time where corporal discipline is not really smiled on in our society. There are some states in the United States where it's illegal to spank your child. And the child psychologists want you to do something like have time outs, or frown at them, or do something like that.

Instead, that's supposed to make them behave. And they don't realize it's not cruel to discipline a child judiciously and wisely and lovingly, because if you don't, they'll grow up, and they'll have someone else to discipline them, namely the criminal justice system. And if you teach your children to respect other people, and to be moral, and to just be wise, you train a child, and you're sparing him trouble in the latter end.

If he doesn't learn those things, then he's going to be, without knowing why, he's going

to be damaging all his relationships. He won't know what's going on, because he hasn't been taught. Children, they don't know that instinctively.

And so the rod and rebuke give wisdom, but a child left to himself is going to bring his mother to shame. And correct your son, he'll give you rest. You'll have a happier life.

Now, of course, what it's saying here is, although no one likes to correct their children, who does? Nobody wants to spank their child. I suppose there are some people who just are mean, cruel people, who would like to injure other people, and the child's the most vulnerable person around, so they beat on a kid. This is, of course, child abusers.

I have a feeling they're a pretty small percentage of the general population, although we hear about them when they come out in the news. But of all the men I know who have children, I don't know any that would want to abuse their children. They want their children to be happy.

And worse, they want their children to like them. This is especially true among single parents. When your spouse has left you, you've got a gap there.

All the family you have left is the kids. And there's competition for the affection of the kids from the spouse. They get them on the weekend, they do all the fun things, and you get them the rest of the time, and you've got to do the hard thing.

Make them do their schoolwork, make them do their chores, make them go to bed, make them eat healthy food. They go off with your ex-spouse for the weekend, and they get to eat candy all the time and just go to Disneyland every week. I mean, just obviously a parent in that situation wants the kid to like them.

And it's not easy to make a kid like you because the more you try to accommodate them, the more they'll take advantage. And you know that if you discipline them, by definition, that's not making them happy. So the temptation is not to discipline.

Keep the house peaceful. Keep the kid on your side. Don't do the unpleasant thing of saying no to the child, knowing they're not going to be happy with you.

But if you do the unpleasant thing, the thing that's unpleasant to you and to the child, disciplining the child when they need it, later the child will bring rest to your soul. If you don't, later they'll bring shame to you. So that's, of course, cause and effect observations.

Now I'm going to rush quickly through several other things because we're getting close to the end of our time. Some of the Proverbs are, in fact, most of them are generalities, as I said, not universalities. Wisdom, again, is that which recognizes the generalities and the likelihood, the superior likelihood that you reach certain goals if you do certain things.

But there's always things that can throw a wrench in the works, and it doesn't happen. And so, for example, in Chapter 15, Verse 1, it says, A soft answer appeases strife. Okay, well, does it always? There's people who don't like you.

If you answer them softly, will they like you? Well, they're more likely to. Certainly, if you want your neighbors to be friendly to you, you're wiser to answer them considerably and respectfully than to rag on them and cuss at them and things like that. He says that grievous words stir up strife.

You know, you want peace, then speak politely, speak considerably. Don't speak rudely to people. But he's not saying that every time you speak kindly, it's going to make everyone happy with you.

I have known people who just had decided not to like me or someone else I knew, and in responding to them politely and kindly and sweetly, it didn't help. So it's not a general, it's not a promise of God. You know, you want to remove all the strife, you want to neutralize their anger, just speak nicely, and that'll do it.

No, it won't always, but usually it would. And if you want to appease their anger or you want to reduce their anger, you'd be a fool to do anything other than to answer calmly, because if you do something else, you're only going to stir it up. So again, wisdom is saying, what do you want? What's the wisest thing to do? It's not always going to get the results you want, but if you want those results, you'd be stupid to do anything else.

Another thing that points this out is there's many places in Proverbs, like Proverbs 10, 4, that basically say a diligent person will become rich and a slothful person will become poor. Well, that's generally true. You want to get rich, then work hard.

You want to be poor, then be lazy. You know, that's typically how things are going to work out for you. Now, once in a while, there's some sluggard who inherits a fortune.

He might be a prince or a nobleman's son, and he lives a high life, but he's lazy, never does a lick of work. Okay, so once in a while, you've got an exception there, someone who's lazy and they don't go broke. And there's other people who work really hard, and they're never rich, especially in third-world countries.

You can be a really hard worker just to put food on the table and never get rich. It's not universally true that hard work will make you rich and that slothfulness will make you poor, but it is generally true, and it is certainly the course of wisdom. If you want to not be poor, then don't be a sluggard.

Be a hard worker. Most cases will prove that this tends toward that outcome. Another example of a generality would be in Chapter 10 in Verse 22, which essentially says that if you fear God and live a godly life, you'll live long.

It'll give you a long life. Well, in many cases, that is true. A lot of people shorten their lives by doing stupid and evil things.

If you become addicted to drugs or alcohol, you're probably going to shorten your life. If you get involved in a life of crime, good chance you're going to shorten your life. You sleep with your neighbor's wife, there's a good chance you'll shorten your life.

There's a lot of things that people are not supposed to do. You kill people, you get into fights, probably going to shorten your life. You're not going to die instantly necessarily, although you might, but the truth is you do stupid and evil things, your life is going to get shorter.

You live a godly life, in all likelihood, you're going to live longer. It won't always be the case because, again, Jesus died young, and he certainly lived a godly life. There are always people who are innocent or righteous who die young, a lot of martyrs.

But as a general rule, righteous living prolongs your life, and foolish living has a tendency, at least some forms of foolish living, certainly tend to shorten the life. So again, it's not universal, but it's certainly general. You want to live long? You're more likely to get that goal by living a godly life.

And sometimes there's generalizations that are in tension with each other. It's kind of interesting because if you look at something like Proverbs 26, verses 4 and 5, it looks like a direct contradiction to each other. Proverbs 26, 4 and 5, it says, Do not answer a fool according to his folly, lest you also be like him.

Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own eyes. Well, what's that mean? First of all, what's it mean to answer a fool according to his folly? We're first told not to do it, and then we're told, do it. But that's like opposite instructions.

To answer a fool according to his folly, it's hard to know exactly what that means, but it sounds from what he says about it. It means like if a fool is saying foolish things, obviously foolish things, that you kind of answer him in the same foolish kind of way, imitating his own folly in your answer. First thing is, don't do that kind of thing.

Don't be drawn into that. You'll just be like him. If somebody's being foolish, rather than imitate him and becoming like him, just refrain from doing that.

Sometimes when someone criticizes you and they're a fool, I get emails like this all the time. I'll tell you, I just in the past few days, I've got three or four people who, I don't, they had some disagreement with me, which everyone's entitled to have. Not everyone who disagrees with me is a fool.

A wise person could disagree with me on some things, but these people are truly fools. They just kind of, they just say stupid, insulting things without any defense of their

position or anything like that. They're just angry.

Well, I could write back a similar kind of an answer to them, and then I will have succumbed to the temptation to be like them. Just don't do that. On the other hand, he says, answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own eyes.

Apparently there's times when you can imitate him back, and he sees how stupid that looks, how stupid that sounds. In other words, are you supposed to or are you not supposed to? Well, obviously here we are not dealing with absolutes. If these are absolutes, then you should absolutely never do it, or you should absolutely always do it, because both instructions are given.

This is basically saying sometimes some things in life are just not so clear cut. There's times when you have to respond in a certain way, in certain situations, to get a desirable result. Other times you don't do the same thing.

Not ever in the sense of doing an immoral thing, but there's sometimes a sensible way to do something with one person that would not be a sensible way to do it with another person. By putting these two statements right next to each other, Solomon's not being foolish, like, oh, didn't he know he just said the previous thing? No, he's putting them right next to each other so you can see that these things, both of them are true in their own time and place. These two ideas that you don't want to answer full-courtesy of, although sometimes it's beneficial just to know there are two truths that are in tension with each other.

All right? Also, there are, like in Chapter 15 and Verse 22, it says, Without counsel plans go awry, but in the multitude of counselors they are established. That is, you can predict success if you have enough counselors. Really? I mean, you might have a bunch of counselors and still not succeed at whatever it is you're doing.

You can have a big board of directors and your company still doesn't beat the competition. You know, just having a lot of counsel doesn't really always guarantee success, but it's a good way to seek success. You're more likely to be successful if you get input from a lot of different sources and hear the wisdom and insights of other people, but it's not always the case.

It's not predictable. For example, in Chapter 19 and Verse 21, it says, Now, the point he's making is you can have all the counselors you want. You can make the plans you want, but nothing's going to happen unless God allows it.

You know? On one hand, if you have a lot of counselors and so forth, that's the path to success, but on the other hand, if God's not on the side of your plan, it's not going to succeed. And so there's... these are kind of contrary ideas. They're both true in their own way.

If you want to succeed, certainly proceed with good counsel, but knowing very well that in the final analysis, God has veto power over everything, and if he doesn't want to, it's not going to happen. Getting very clear near the end of what I want to say here, there are what I would call pregnant specifics, which are statements that apply more broadly in principle than their own statement. For example, he says in Chapter 25, 16, In other words, you can get too much of a good thing, right? I mean, if you find honey, in that day, that was candy for them.

You know, that was pleasant. Eat as much as you should and no more, because if you eat too much of it, you're going to vomit. People have found the same thing out about alcohol sometimes.

A little bit, it's pleasant. Too much, your head's in the toilet. And so too much of a good thing.

Now, just that statement about honey is a generic principle that you can apply to anything, really. That's a pleasant thing, which you are unrestrained in your indulgence about. You may end up wishing you hadn't done it.

In Chapter 26, verse 27, it says, If he that digs a pit will fall in it himself. That doesn't always happen, but it's a general statement that is pregnant with all kinds of applications. Haman built a gallows to hang Mordecai on in the Book of Esther.

He got hung out on himself. Sometimes people lay plots to hurt somebody else, but it backfires on them. And that's what he's saying.

You dig a pit, you're trying to trap somebody. You may end up trapped in it yourself. The pit itself is not the whole story.

It's one example of a much larger set of circumstances that might apply to. You're trying to hurt somebody else, you may get hurt yourself by what you did. One of these would be like Chapter 27, verse 14.

It says, He that blesses his neighbor with a loud voice rising early in the morning, it will be counted a curse to him. Now, trying to bless your neighbor, that's well-intentioned. If it's early in the morning and your brother hasn't had his first cup of coffee yet, you come in here all boisterous and, God bless you, brother! You know, I mean, he's not going to appreciate that.

You need to be a little sensitive. You may intend well, but your blessing that you intend may end up being taken in like a curse. You need to be a little more sensitive.

The idea that you're loud in the morning, although you are well-intentioned toward your brother, you intend to be a blessing to him, he's not going to take it as a blessing if you're insensitive to the fact that he'd rather sleep in. And so, with many other areas of

life, your well-intentioned actions toward someone else may not be appreciated if you're not taken into consideration and being sensitive to how that person is likely to react to it. What do they really want? Do they want you to come in loudly blessing them or do they want to sleep? You know, so I mean, these are kind of interesting examples he gives.

Now, only a few minutes more. I want to go on if you'll indulge me. There are striking similes, a lot of them, in Proverbs, where one thing is said to be like another thing.

In many cases, you wouldn't know that they're alike until you think about it for a while. And that's the point of the proverb. Making a simile like this that's not obvious, when you think about it, you think, oh, now I get it.

That's something I never thought of before. And, for example, chapter 10, verse 26, As vinegar to the teeth and smoke to the eyes, so is a lazy man to those who send him. Or we might say someone who hires him.

You send somebody out, you give someone a job to do, and they're lazy. They don't realize it, but that's a tremendous irritant to the person who's counting on you. You assign something to someone because you want it to get done and you expect it to be done.

Someone's too lazy, they don't get done. It's a huge irritant. It's like smoke to the eyes.

Very painful, very annoying, like vinegar to the teeth. Very bitter and sour. It's, again, bracing.

It's annoying. So a lazy man to those who send him is like vinegar to that person's teeth, like smoke in his eyes. Chapter 11, verse 22 says, As a ring of gold in a swine's snout, so is a lovely woman who lacks discretion.

That's interesting. A beautiful woman who's a fool. A beautiful woman who is not virtuous, not godly, not wise.

More or less a floozy. If she's beautiful, well, a woman's beauty in the Bible is always treated as a desirable thing. Many times women are said to be beautiful as a good thing.

Sarah was a beautiful wife. Caused Abraham some problems too, but because other men wanted her. Rebecca is said to be beautiful.

Rachel was said to be beautiful. In contrast, Aaliyah, who is not. Lots of things are said about beautiful women, and beauty is something that God, it's a gift that God has given some people.

Not all people. Some of us don't have much of that, but there are people who've got unusual amounts. Now, that's a valuable thing.

Like a ring of gold is a valuable thing. It's a treasured thing. People like rings of gold and they like beautiful women.

But a beautiful woman who doesn't have any sense or virtue is like a ring of gold that's attached to a pig. You might like to have a ring of gold, but maybe not if there's a pig attached to it. You know, you don't want it in your bedroom.

You might have a ring of gold in your jewelry box on your on your dresser in your bedroom, but you don't want a pig in your bedroom. A pig is a foul to a Jew, a very unclean thing. In fact, most of us aren't.

A live pig is a pretty unclean thing. When they're in the refrigerator, they're not bad. But when they're alive, they're not good.

Not not not something you want in your house. Unless you're on Green Acres or something like that. But the the point here is a pig is a big undesirable thing.

A gold ring is a small desirable thing. A woman's beauty is a small consolation. If she has got no sense, if a woman is unvirtuous, if she's foolish, if she's not a good woman, her beauty doesn't doesn't make up for it.

Just like a pig is obnoxious, even if it has a gold ring in its mouth, that doesn't make up for the obnoxiousness of the pig itself. That's that's really what he's saying. In Chapter 25, verse 13, says, like the cold of snow in the time of harvest, meaning the summertime is a faithful messenger to those who send him free, refreshes the soul of his masters in the heat of the late summer.

To have a surprising snowfall is refreshing. It's kind of refreshing to get a break from the heat. And it's also surprising.

It's pretty rare. And that's how it is when you find a faithful messenger. It's kind of rare to find someone you can count on and they really carry out their responsibilities faithfully.

But it's refreshing. Same chapter, 25, verse 19, confidence in an unfaithful man, by contrast, in time of trouble is like a bad tooth or a foot out of joint. How so? You ever bite into something and your tooth gives you a great deal of pain or maybe falls out? I'm talking to people of the age that some of them may have had that experience.

You bite into food. You thought it was your tooth was going to serve you well. It was unreliable, painfully unreliable.

Or a foot out of joint. If you got a sprained ankle, but you don't know it yet and you take a step, you're counting on your feet like you always do when you walk, but it's not reliable and it hurts. Probably you'll fall down.

That's like that's what it's like to have an unfaithful messenger. You send them, you're counting on them, but they let you down painfully. Chapter 25, verse 20 says, like one who takes away a garment in cold weather or like vinegar on soda is one who sings songs to a heavy heart.

I guess if you meet someone who's really depressed, you're not going to cure him by singing some songs to them. In other words, by just being cheerful yourself, it can just be annoying. If somebody is really grieving and you're just trying to be cheerful around them, it's going to not really bless them.

It's like taking a garment away from somebody in the cold. They're going to be not appreciative of that. It's like vinegar and soda.

Even back then, they knew that you put soda and vinegar together and you're going to have some combustibility as a result. In chapter 25 and verse 25, it says, as cold water to a weary soul, so is good news from a far country. Cold water to a weary soul, it's very refreshing.

It's refreshing to hear good news from an old friend who's lived far away too. Now, there's many more of my notes, but I won't go through them because of the, you know, these are just all examples of the same kind of things, similes. Things that are like something else, but you wouldn't have thought they're like it.

Never thought of comparing it to that before. But once you see, you say, I can see now that that is that way. I'm not going to go through any of these remaining on the notes simply because of the time.

But there's two other categories, and that is that, and I've given examples in the notes. One of the things most important about being wise is knowing what's valuable and what's not. What's desirable and what's not so desirable.

What's a worthy goal to pursue and what's not a worthy goal to pursue. There are some things valuable and some things not, and a fool often chooses the things that don't really have any value. Especially if they choose something that's immediately gratifying, but in the long run does no good.

Remember when Jesus said in John 6, do not labor for the food that perishes, but labor for the food that endures to eternal life. Obviously, having food that endures to eternal life is more desirable than food that perishes. But most people choose the food that perishes over that.

And so a wise man has to know what's more valuable than what, because he can pursue two different things. One's worth it and one's not. And there's a lot of statements in Proverbs about that kind of thing.

I'm not going to turn to them, but for example, better is a little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure with trouble. Having the fear of the Lord, even if you only have a little, is better than having a lot of money and having trouble with it. How much better it is to get wisdom than gold.

There's a lot of better than's in Proverbs. This is the enlightened value system. What do you want to pursue? Well, it's better to get wisdom than gold and better to get understanding than silver.

Another Proverbs says, better to be of a humble spirit with the lowly than to divide the spoil with the proud. You want to be with lowly people, the humble spirit, you're better off than being with proud people dividing the spoil of their whatever, their robberies or whatever. He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty and he who rules his spirit is better than one who takes the city.

Controlling yourself is better than controlling other people. In other words, he that rules his own spirit is better than one who can conquer a city. Better is a dry morsel with quietness than a house full of feasting with strife.

Better to have modest possessions and modest meals in a happy home than to be wealthy and eating like a king in a home where there's nothing but turmoil and relationships are not good. It's better to dwell in the corner of a housetop than in a house shared with a contentious woman. And so, I mean, those kinds of statements, X is better than Y, is basically making a value judgment.

This is more to be valued than that is to be valued. And if you're going to make wise choices, the first thing you need to know is not how to get there but where it is you want to get to. It's better to pursue peace in the home than to pursue opulence so you can always eat gourmet meals.

Better to eat a dry crust of bread where you're with people you love than a feast with people who can't stand each other. Now, you see, therefore, what should you be pursuing? Pursue being with people you love, having a peaceful home, rather than pursuing simply wealth. Now, a fool will usually pursue wealth.

A wise man will choose what's better. To have the right goal is important before you know what course to take to get to your goal. You have to have the right goal in the first place.

And then the other thing I want to say in closing is that there's a lot of statements in Proverbs about the long view of things, the long-term view of things. Again, delayed gratification as opposed to going for something that instantly is pleasing and later you have regrets about. A wise man is going to be looking to the end of a thing more than to the immediate sacrifice.

I don't want to make these sacrifices, but I have to get this thing, which is the goal, which is a good goal, which is worthy of those sacrifices. So to take the longer view rather than the immediate gratification view. So some of the Proverbs say, for example, basically when he's telling his son to avoid immoral women, and he says, The lips of an immoral woman drip honey and her mouth is smoother than oil.

But in the end, she is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword. And you'll mourn at the last when your flesh and your body are consumed and say, you know, why have I been foolish? Now, basically, he says, in the end, it'll be this way. The woman is attractive.

The woman is appealing. But in the end, you're going to be regretting it. Take the long view of things, not the short view of things.

That's a lot of these passages have like in the end as part of their statement. There's a way that seems right to a man, but the end of it is the way of death. OK, you know, that's that that's stated at least twice in the Proverbs, Proverbs 14, 12.

In a way that seems right, but better think it through, make sure it's the right way, because some ways that seem right in the end, you're going to be it's going to result in death. Be careful about that. You don't want to do that.

Figure out the right way to go so you don't end up with some results you don't want. Listen to the council and receive instruction that you may be wise in your latter days. Again, look into your later days, not immediately.

Listen to counsel now so that later you'll be wise. Hear my son and be wise and guide your heart in the way for surely there is a hereafter and your hope will not be cut off. So don't just be thinking about now.

Realize there's a hereafter. There's a later time than this. And you don't want to be making choices without realizing that you'll still be around tomorrow and in the next life.

You're going to wish you made some choices. Now, this is so important to realize. I heard a guy, a preacher say once, you know, when I was a sinner, I just thought, eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow you die.

But I found out the problem is you eat and drink and tomorrow you don't die. You have to live with the consequences of those choices. You know, if you died and didn't have to live with the consequences, that'd be another story.

But you don't. You eat, drink and be merry. Well, there's going to be a hereafter.

There's something else. You're going to live to see regrets about that. And, you know, everyone on their deathbed will look back at the life they lived with either regret or

gratification.

I'll say, I'm glad I did what I did. Now, by the way, I've never heard of a person on their deathbed looking back saying, I wish I'd done more business deals while I had the chance. A lot of people look back and say, I wish I'd spent more time with my kids when they were young.

I wish I'd done more to train my children in the right way. I wish I'd done more to cultivate my relationship with God. I wish I had made better friends or done more for my parents or whatever.

On your deathbed, you'll look back and you'll have regrets about some things. But it's good if you live your life in such a way that when you are on your deathbed, you say, you know, I didn't do everything perfect, but I did things pretty much the way I would do it again. I pursued what I should pursue.

I did it for the most part in the right way. I made mistakes of some sorts, but in general, I don't have regrets about my life. A lot of people will.

And that's because they're not paying attention. There is a hereafter when you're making your decisions today. Realize there's gonna be a later and you'll look back on today and you'll be glad about the decision you made or unhappy.

And in the case of eternal hereafter, a thousand years from now, you'll look back on the choice you made today or the choice you're going to make tomorrow. And you look back on a thousand years from now, you'll either be happy or you'll be unhappy that you made that choice. Bearing that in mind tends toward the making of wiser choices.

And that's why there's so much emphasis on in the end. It's like this talking about avoiding alcohol or abusive alcohol. He says at the last it bites like a serpent and stings like a viper.

So initially it's attractive, perhaps, but at the end, it's not going to be good for you. In Chapter 24, he says, so shall knowledge of wisdom be to your soul. If you found it, there is a prospect and your hope will not be cut off.

There's you will have a prospect of hope in the future, in the end, if you pursue knowledge now. He says there's no prospect for an evil man, the lamp of the wicked should be put out. Again, looking to the end, what are his prospects in the end? It says, do not go hastily to court for what will you do in the end when your neighbor puts you to shame? Jesus said the same thing in Matthew five.

Don't go to court, settle out of court because you may end up losing your case. They'll turn you over to the judge and he'll turn you over to the prison guards. You know, don't be too quick.

A lot of people want to rush to court litigation. My wife knows a woman whose evil husband left her and two children for another woman, married another woman and left her. And he paid her very minimal child support and spousal support.

And yet he wasn't content. He wanted to pay less. And he went to court and tried to get more.

And it turned out the judge says, you're not paying enough yet. I'm going to increase it. So, I mean, you don't want to go to court too hastily.

You've got to make sure you've got justice on your side. You may find that it goes against you in the end. And so those are I'm not going to take any more time for this, but this is the kind of thing you find in the Proverbs.

A lot of different ways in which wisdom is communicated in similes and in aphorisms and things like that. But there are certain themes that prevail. And for the governing of relationships, the governing of your own spiritual life, the governing of your finances, plenty.

There's plenty of advice there. And one of my parents was just telling me today that they heard testimony of somebody who got converted. I guess reading the Proverbs, somebody advised him to read the Proverbs.

And he and he reformed his life and realized that all the ways of God are better than the ways of man. And that's something that it doesn't take a godly man to see. It takes a wise man to see.

But a wise man isn't going to be very wise unless he at least fears God, which is the fundamental basis of wisdom. If you're not taking God into account, if you're not taking into account whether God approves or disapproves, whether God's going to reward or punish, if those things are not in the consideration, you're not in a position to begin making wise choices at all. Anyway, we're out of time for that.

I'm going to pray. You can leave if you want to. We'll have questions and answers for those who want to stay for them.

All right. Thank you, Father, for your word. I thank you for those who've come out to listen to your word and to consider it and to gain, I hope, wisdom and also a better orientation for benefiting from the reading of the Proverbs.

I pray that you will actually give give us all a diligence to study and to gain wisdom from books like the Proverbs in the Bible. So we can learn your ways and we can have we can reach those ends that you have ordained for us to reach rather than being fools and missing the boat. And we ask it in Jesus name.

Amen.