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Proverbs 6:1 - 6:19



Proverbs - Steve Gregg

Steve Gregg provides a detailed analysis of Proverbs 6:1-19, in which Solomon advises his son to make wise choices in pursuit of a successful life. Gregg focuses on the importance of financial prudence and warns against hasty financial decisions, urging listeners to trust in God for their future. He also highlights the dangers of slander and the shedding of innocent blood, emphasizing the importance of building strong relationships and avoiding harmful behaviors. Overall, Gregg presents a thoughtful and practical interpretation of Solomon's teachings, urging listeners to make wise choices in all areas of life.

Transcript

Alright, we're in that section of Proverbs where Solomon is still urging his son to make the right choice in pursuits in life. And that pursuit that he recommends most highly is the pursuit of wisdom. And it might seem to get a bit old because we're taking several days to get through this section, but one might think, well, OK, I think I've heard the exhortation.

Maybe we should move along. Well, apparently, Solomon felt that repetition is a safe method of teaching. You know, that's what Peter said in 2 Peter, and Paul said that also in his letters.

He said, you know, it's safe for you, for me to repeat myself. And I guess people often need to have something driven in. And so he spends really nine chapters at the beginning of the book trying to just get across this point.

He makes practical applications in the course of it. But the whole drift of the section is simply to urge upon his son the necessity of knowing the value of and pursuing, therefore, wisdom. Now we're in chapter six.

This is supposed to be something of a light survey through, and so I'm not really pausing on every verse to comment. We will actually be taking more detail than we are at this point when we get to another portion of our studies in Proverbs. Chapter six, my son, if you become surety for your friend, if you have shaken hands and pledged for a stranger,

you are smeared by the words of your own mouth.

You are taken by the words of your mouth. So do this, my son, and deliver yourself for you have come into the hand of your friend. Go humble yourself.

Plead with your friend. Give no sleep to your eyes nor slumber to your eyelids. Deliver yourself like a gazelle from the hand of a hunter.

And like a bird from the hand of the fowler. Now, one thing that we find is there are many Proverbs that address specific areas of life that are the large areas of life, like finances, financial policies, money management, and so forth. And we see there's also other areas where wisdom is applied in these instructions, as in the previous chapter and some other places that lie ahead of us still.

Warnings about not falling foolishly into traps sexually and other. There's just so many big areas of life where wisdom is not just something that a philosopher sits around in a cave and contemplates. It is something that directs behavior in the most nitty gritty and most practical areas of life.

And here we are. What he brings up is a situation where you have actually made some kind of a financial commitment, apparently one that was not wise to make in the first place. And he talks about it in terms of going surety or becoming surety for somebody, in this case, for your friend.

There are a number of Proverbs that warn about the foolishness of becoming surety for a stranger. But here, even for your friend. Now, perhaps you would not usually become surety for anyone unless you counted them to be a friend.

It's a favor that some people do for other people. Being surety means that you become responsible for their obligations. The most familiar form of that might be today for us to maybe co-sign on a loan for somebody.

Somebody who doesn't have good credit. They're trying to borrow money. The lender does not trust them because their credit is not established.

And so they want you to co-sign so that you become responsible for their non-payment. And this is what becoming surety means. It means you're securing something for them at the risk of your good credit, of your resources.

And Solomon always advises against this. Now, there are times when it's not the wrong thing to do if it's money that you don't mind losing and it's for a cause that you think is good, obviously. That's not the situation he's envisaging.

He is envisaging a situation where somebody just probably, you know, it's not something that's needed. You see, if it's somebody who needs something, you can just give them

the money. You don't have to co-sign on a loan for them.

If you have the money to put at risk by co-signing and you don't mind losing it or you don't mind giving it to a legitimate need, that's one thing. But this is something presumably that you don't feel that you would underwrite willingly. That's why it's co-signing instead of just buying something outright.

When you co-sign, you're hoping that the other person will make the payment. You're just making sure that if they can't, then they'll be made. But this would only be for situations, obviously, that you don't feel like, you know, donating to or paying for.

And so, if you go shorty, the idea is, even with your friend and especially with a stranger, you're taking a risk that is not wise to take because the person who needs your credit in order to get a loan is in a position where they don't have good credit or they don't have predictable resources. That is, the reason the lender does not want to just lend to them without your signature on it is because they don't look like a good risk. Lenders like to lend to people who look like a good risk because lenders make money off of them.

But if they won't lend, it's because that person to an expert lender looks like a bad risk. And if they're a bad risk in the eyes of an expert lender, they're probably really a bad risk. And for you to co-sign means that you're probably going to end up paying their debt off.

Now, Solomon, I don't know what circumstances in the ancient Hebrew world would be pictured here. The principle is very applicable to modern co-signing on loans or in any other sense becoming responsible for somebody else's deficient credit. But whatever the situation was, Solomon knew that his son might find himself in a situation where he has committed himself to something that he really shouldn't have.

And he's now in danger of his own position financially. And so he says, if you've done that, if you've shaken hands and pledged with a stranger, that would mean if you've made a deal and sealed it with a handshake or whatever it is that officially commits you, he says, then you've trapped yourself. You've snared yourself with your words of your mouth.

Now, this is because it is assumed that you must at all costs keep your word. He doesn't say, well, just default on it. You can't do that.

Solomon knows that integrity is more important than anything else. If you've made a commitment and you can't get out of it, then you have to keep it no matter how much it hurts, no matter how much it smarts, no matter how much you lose on it. That's what we saw in Psalm 15, verse 4. The man who swears to his own hurt but doesn't change is the man who's got the kind of integrity that God honors and the one who will dwell in God's holy hill.

So the one who, even though he commits himself to his own hurt, he doesn't back away. That is, he doesn't default. But what Solomon says, you can do something else.

You don't have to default or necessarily pay if your friend will let you out of it somehow. If you've made a commitment and your friend lets you out, then you're out. So he says, do this, my son, and deliver yourself.

For you have come into the hand of your friend. That is, you're at his mercy. Go humble yourself and plead with your friend.

In other words, ask him to let you out of the situation. I used to run discipleship schools in the summertime in Santa Cruz back in the 70s, and because they were only in the summertime and were not the other nine months of the year, it was not practical or possible to maintain facilities year round for them. So each summer I had to locate some properties I could rent to house about 25 students for three months and only that.

And that's not the easiest thing in the world to do. So approaching the summer of 1978, I was looking for facilities to house students and a school in. Usually a big house would be adequate.

A big old two story Victorian house or something we could rent and put a whole bunch of bunk beds in there and house students there for three months. And a friend of mine at church was moving to Hawaii and he had a house that he owned in Santa Cruz. It was a pretty big house.

And I heard about it and I told him I was looking for a big house to rent and could I see his house. So I looked at it and I realized that it would probably be very useful. It wasn't big enough to put everybody in.

But I thought, well, the rent he was asking was low enough that we could probably rent two houses and use two together. And it was getting close to summer and I was kind of desperate. So I committed myself.

I said, I'll go ahead and rent your house starting in June. Well, shortly after I made that commitment, I discovered another property much more suitable. It was actually two houses next to each other with a courtyard in between.

It was like a little little compound. And the two houses together, not his, but these two that were next to each other. I could rent for a very reasonable amount, about as much as I expected to have come in.

And so I thought, well, I can rent that little compound there, but I can't rent that and my friend's other house. There's not enough money for that. And his house was kind of across town and wouldn't make sense to have the school, you know, so far from itself.

And so I went back to him and said, Larry, I said, I found actually a better location for my school than your house would be. And I'd like it if I didn't have to rent your house. I'd like to not rent your house so that I can rent these other ones.

And he was kind of upset because he was about ready to move to Hawaii and needed to have someone in his house. He said, well, Steve, you've committed yourself. He said, you've rented.

I've had people ask to rent it. I've told them it's already committed and I've turned away other offers. He said, I think I think you should keep your commitment.

So I said, OK, well, I won't use your house, but I'll pay you the rent on it. You know, I don't know how. I didn't have any money, but I just thought, well, God wouldn't have me keep my commitment.

And I prayed about it. And fortunately, before summer, another person came and rented his house and I got out of that deal. But I was spared with the words of my mouth.

He even told me so, you know, and he was right. He's right. I had made that commitment.

He had counted on me and Christians should be people that keep their word no matter how much it costs them to do so. But if you can legitimately get out, do it. He's not saying default on it.

He's saying try to renegotiate, try to get out legitimately with the agreement of the person who's bound you. That's what he's saying. And so, you know, sometimes people right now find themselves really over their heads in debt.

The economy at this moment is pretty bad. A lot of people, their houses are upside down. They owe more than the house could sell for and so forth.

And lots of people have credit card debt, are in really bad shape and other kinds of debt. And obviously a lot of people are just declaring bankruptcy. I personally don't think that's what a Christian should do.

Bankruptcy means you just tell your creditors, you can eat that, you know, you can eat my loan. I'm not going to pay you back. The court has let me out of it.

They say I don't have to pay you. But the Bible says the wicked man borrows and does not repay. And that's always been an important thing to me too.

If I borrow money, I'm going to pay it back even if I have to make tiny payments for the rest of my life. But in many cases, instead of going bankrupt, an option exists. You can go to a lender and say, listen, I can't at this point afford to pay X amount, but would you settle for and then some other arrangement that possibly is workable? You know, I can

make smaller payments or I can, you know, if you reduce the total debt, I can maybe manage that.

They don't have to say yes, but if they do, that's not a non-Christian thing to do. I mean, if the lender is willing to renegotiate it, that's okay. That's not immoral for you to go and ask them to do that.

It's preferable to pay what you said you would pay and so forth. But if they will let you out of it, there's nothing wrong with trying. There's nothing wrong with asking.

And that's what he's saying. And he says, go plead with your friend. Give no sleep to your eyes nor slumber to your eyelids.

Make this your top priority even before you go to sleep. Go and negotiate this deal and try to get out of that commitment. Deliver yourself like a gazelle from the hand of a hunter and like a bird from the hand of a fowler.

He's saying if you're in debt or if you're committed to something, in this case, somebody else is dead. But you're like an animal that's been trapped or hunted. You're in a really undesirable position.

And then still speaking about financial matters in verse six, go to the end, you 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. 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 show your poverty.

Come on, you like a robber and your need. Like an armed man. This expression, a little sleep, a little slumber and so forth is repeated later in Proverbs in another situation.

But it's common in the book of Proverbs to speak of the sluggard or the lazy person, the slothful person as the quintessential fool. Solomon assumes that having enough to eat, having enough to house yourself and maybe even more, even being financially prosperous is a desirable end. And therefore anyone who has that end in mind is a fool to not be a hard worker.

And there are extremely, there's an extremely large emphasis in Proverbs again and again on the need to not be a sluggard. And so the sluggard is mentioned again and again in Proverbs as the fool, because obviously being a sluggard is not a responsible or wise way to guarantee your future financial security. Now, a lot of things that I'm saying here, you know, I say, Steve, you don't have any financial security.

What are you talking to us about? True. And if I was a sluggard, I'd feel bad about it, you know. That is, if I was doing nothing and had no financial promise of the future, I'd feel like I was a fool.

There are different ways to be busy and being busy about ministry is a job too, even if it doesn't pay anything. But it's a job. I mean, having God as your employer is not being unemployed.

So, you know, diligence is necessary in all fields. Actually, I think if you are working for God, it's important to be even more diligent than working for man, not less so. I've sometimes heard people say they're in full time ministry, but if you watch their day, it doesn't look like they're doing anything in particular full time.

Some people just, they say they're serving God, but if they served an earthly employer that much, they'd be fired because they're, they're lazy. And they don't really put in a full workday, you know. So, whether you're serving God or you're self-employed or you're serving an employer, being diligent is, well, first of all, it's the only way to be honest with your employer if you have one, because you're being hired to do a certain amount of work and to do it well.

And a Christian should be doing their work as unto the Lord, not unto man. Servants should serve their masters diligently as unto the Lord. So, whatever you do, you should be not a sluggard about it.

And Proverbs will say a lot about that as we go through, we'll see. But in this particular case, the ant is presented as the role model for the sluggard, for the cure of a sluggard, because the ant is anything but a sluggard. It's interesting that Solomon, in those ancient times, would have known as much as he exhibits himself to know about ants.

I mean, he truly was a close observer. I don't think they had glass in those days yet, so he couldn't have had an ant farm. He couldn't have been watching an ant community, really a cross-section of it like we can today, and see how organized it is and how busy they are all the time.

He could see them walking above ground and carrying loads bigger than their own bodies, you know, carrying an ant. He'd carry a twig that's probably five times or ten times its own weight. It's an incredible worker.

And they're always working. They just never seem to stop. And what he points out about them in particular is that they seem to have a certain wisdom of foresight about, you know, lean times.

They know that winter's coming and there'll be less food to gather, and so they actually store it up in the summertime while it's there's an abundance. Now, the laying aside of something for the future is recommended in Proverbs. And it says in Proverbs, you know, the wise man foresees the evil and prepares himself, but the fool passes on and is punished.

It actually says that twice in Proverbs later on. The ant is recommended for its wisdom,

not just for its diligence, but for its wisdom in that it has the knowledge or the foresight to know there's going to be a time of need, and you need to work harder at some seasons. Make hay when the sun shines, because there's times when the sun's not going to shine, and you can't make any hay.

And so you do, you work harder certain seasons. Now, the ant, of course, isn't really that intelligent. The ant's brain is about the size of a molecule.

You know, it doesn't really have that much brains, but it's got insights that God has given it. And that's a really that's a fantastic thing that God has done in the creation. He could have done any number of things differently, but he did things to confound the wise.

He chose foolish things to confound the wise, the wise atheists. I mean, you see something as small as an ant with a brain as small as it is, and yet you look at their community and they're organized. They do exhibit what looks like wisdom.

If people did the same things, it'd be because they're intelligent. Ants are not intelligent. God just orders them, and they do what he wants.

Animal instincts are just such a testimony to the supernatural because of the migration patterns of birds and butterflies and sea turtles and all kinds of creatures that make just incredible feats of salmon, you know, return to their spawning grounds 25 years after they were born and hadn't been there in the meantime, going to the same spot. I mean, these things are animal instincts that clearly are, they're really God's wisdom. Built in to these animals because they don't know what they're doing.

And there's no way evolution can possibly account for the development of such instincts. I mean, they have to come from somewhere. One could argue that a creature born with such instincts would have an advantage and therefore natural selection would select it for survival.

But you've got to get the instinct first before you can have animal ahead. Where does that wisdom come from? Where does an ant colony learn how to organize itself into workers and drones and all these different things? Bees too. I mean, Solomon had a thousand years before Christ already been contemplating these things and recognize there's a certain wisdom in these little tiny creatures.

Not wisdom that's innate to their native intelligence, but it's the wisdom of God exhibited for our benefit. We should go to them, look at them and learn from them. That's what God had in mind for us when he built these wise behaviors into them.

It's also interesting that it speaks of the worker ant as a female. She provides her supplies in the summer. That's actually correct.

Although I don't think that Solomon had a little microscope to look and see is this a male

or female here. But he's right. The worker ants are all female.

And somehow he knew. But what about this business of supplying for the future? Didn't Jesus say, take no thought for tomorrow? For tomorrow will take thought for the things of itself. And lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth where moth and rust corrupt and thieves break through and steal.

Didn't he talk about the rich fool who had abundance and so he built bigger barns and stored it up and said, soul, take your ease. You have much laid up for many years. Eat, drink and be merry.

Didn't Jesus tend to teach against this idea of just laying up for the future? Well, it sounds like it at times. And of course, what Jesus was teaching and what Jesus always is teaching is he's trying to condition people to have the right attitude of heart. The attitude of heart is often exhibited in behavior.

In fact, it almost always is. And the rich fool was a fool, not because he was rich, but because he was not taking God into account and was basically serving mammon, serving money. His trust was in his money, not in God.

Now, it's a fine line. If you have stuff, you might trust in it or not. You might trust in God.

No one can tell whether you're trusting in his stuff or in God, unless you maybe tell them. But people who have stuff may or may not be trusting in it. Jesus was certainly telling his disciples not to trust in riches and even sometimes using the hyperbole of, you know, give it all away, forsake all that you have.

There's a sense which that's not hyperbole, because in our own hearts, we do forsake all that we have. We change title, transfer title of our goods to God when we become followers of Christ. And then everything we have, we are to do with it what he wants done with his stuff, because that's what it is, his stuff.

But he might, in many cases, lead people to hold on to things for various purposes that he has for it. And other people, maybe he might tell them to liquidate all or part of it. But the point is, it's all God's things and you're not trusting in those things.

If you are, then that's violating what Jesus is teaching. He said, do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth. Well, but what if you lay them up, not for yourself, but for God's kingdom, for God's purposes? What if God has given you surplus because he wants you to invest it in God's kingdom? And but you have to hold on for it until you know what to do with it.

I mean, it's sitting there in some form under your control. That's because you're a steward. You're a manager of what's God's.

No one can look at what you have and say that you're in violation of what Jesus said about laying up treasures unless they know for sure that you've laid them up for yourself. Because that's what Jesus said not to do. Everything we have is God's.

But since we are managing God's things, being a wise steward is incumbent upon us. And wise stewardship means wise management. And so, I mean, there are people who are called to do things like go on the mission field or do things which, you know, it's just in the nature of what God tells them to do.

They just supposed to liquidate everything and just trust God day by day. There are callings like that, but not everyone has quite that kind of calling where you don't have any idea where, you know, the money is going to come from or what. You know, there's nothing in the lottery.

You don't know where the next meal is going to come from. There are people like George Miller and others, Hudson Taylor, who felt that that's how God wanted them to live. But but they themselves knew that God didn't require everyone to live that way.

In fact, I think George Miller didn't even believe that God was requiring him to live that way. He chose to do that. He said he wanted to do that just because it was in his heart to be an example to Christians and show them that God is faithful and that the Christian can.

Trust God. I don't think Miller thought that God required him to do that. And he certainly didn't believe that God requires everyone to do that.

But the main thing is what God does require of everyone is that they are trusting God and not immaterial things. And the things that they do have are seen not as their own, but as God's things given to them to manage for him. And if you're managing somebody else's stuff, you should use wisdom in management.

If you're a foolish and wasteful steward, well, there's an accounting. The owner of the goods is something going to call you on the carpet and say, you know, what's up with that? I gave you this stuff to manage for me and you just ran me broke, at least in your sector, you know. And so since we see all the things that come to us, whether they're many or few, as God's things, and we must be conscientious, say, OK, it's as if you were hired to be the manager of a store of Costco and you had to make decisions.

I don't know if the managers of Costco make decisions or if that's made at a higher level, but let's just say a mom and pop store, someone who's rich enough to own a store and hire you as a manager. You're supposed to make the business decisions day by day and hopefully increase the wealth of the owner. That's what they pay you for.

That's what your responsibility is. And if you're a good manager, then the owner will get more business and will prosper. You might even, too, but that's not your issue.

What you're hired to do is not to enrich yourself, but to make sure the owners get richer. That's why they hire you, so that they will prosper. And so learning to be wise in the management of finances is incumbent on Christians, because the management of finances is a moral issue.

You're working with somebody else's stuff. If you waste and lose somebody else's stuff, it's kind of like stealing. And so there's a lot of advice and proverbs about money management and what policies to follow, what policies not to follow.

And there are certainly times when some kinds of industries, some kind of businesses, where there's lean times and fat times. There's times when business is going to be booming for a season and then you can anticipate it's not going to be booming for a season. And so you take advantage of the times when it is, like the ant does, so that you can keep it going through the winter.

Now, there is, of course, perhaps a personal application to this ant storing up for the hard times and so forth. And when people consider old age, you know, I mean, when we're young and strong, that's summertime, you know, we can we can earn money, we can be productive. What we know, or at least we have reason to think possibly, that we will get old and unemployed and unemployable.

Or maybe even before we're old, maybe we'll be disabled in some way. There's all kinds of unpredictable things. And so some people feel that they should store up for their old age.

Now, maybe some people should. Maybe that's the wisdom that God is giving them, because he is the means by which he intends to provide for them is through their present employment and through whatever measures they take to keep the finances coming after they're no longer able to be employed. You know, that's when they retire.

But if somebody does that, they still need to realize that they might be wrong in trusting in their retirement or in something else other than God. They can have those things and still trust God. A person can say, OK, God has blessed me and that he's made it possible for me to cover myself once I can't be employed anymore.

And so God is giving me like the ant an abundance in the summertime. The winter will come when I can't work anymore and God has provided for me. But still a person can have all those arrangements made and still be nervous and not trusting God because they are trusting in what they've laid out.

And then they've got to worry, you know, what if a crisis comes up? What if, you know, what if my kids need money? You know, and what if I what if the economy goes belly up or what if the pension stops or whatever the 401k? I don't know what people depend on these days. I don't have any of those things. But the thing is that there people can worry

even when they have that, because you never know if you have enough.

You calculate the future may require X amount for the rest of my life. But what if I live a lot longer than that? What if I'm in an Alzheimer's home for 30 years alive, soaking up the estate? You know, probably not 30 years. People don't usually live that long with Alzheimer's.

But the point is, maybe longer than is convenient and feasible economically, you still have to trust God about the future, because what you can lay up for the future. Might be inadequate. God knows you don't.

And so you have to make decisions about things that are governed by the awareness that your things are God's things and that God is your provider. And frankly, it is possible that what what a secular minded person would lay up for his future. God might lead a Christian not to lay up for their future and say, Listen, I've got some servants right now who need that now.

You're thinking you might need it in the future. So you're putting it aside. I've got some hungry servants over in this other country over here who their families need that right now.

You give them that now and I'll take care of you in the future. You know, I mean, God will lead each individual. That's a, that's a personal thing.

What I would suggest is that Solomon is saying, if you're trying to conduct an ongoing enterprise that goes through lean and fat times, it's good to calculate what it will take you through the lean times like the ant does through the winter. He uses good financial wisdom, but good financial wisdom doesn't apply to every person's calling in every, every situation. I know good wisdom does, but the same policies don't necessarily.

Because, well, let me show you what it says in 1 Timothy 6, verse 17 and 18 and 19, actually 17 through 19. Paul said, command those who are rich in his present age, not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God. So this is what rich people need to be taught.

Rich Christians need to be disciplined in these lessons. One author I remember years ago reading said he thought every church should have a, in their Sunday school, a rich Christians class to teach rich Christians what rich Christians are supposed to be taught. Paul said, you need to instruct rich Christians to do certain things.

And that is to how to not be haughty or trust in their uncertain riches, but to trust in the living God who gives us virtually all things to enjoy. Now, that last line is very important. God is not requiring us to live a Spartan life.

Unless of course he is. Some people may be, but it's not a given that Christians are

supposed to live without enjoying the things that God gives them. He says he gives us those things freely to enjoy.

Sometimes people have almost a monastic picture of Christianity that, you know, we're all supposed to be in total poverty and living in a poverty stricken, you know, monastery or religious community because that's more spiritual. Actually, Christianity isn't an aesthetic religion. John the Baptist was a good example of an aesthetic.

You know, he didn't own much, probably nothing, except the camel hair he was wearing and the locust and the honey he was eating every day. And he probably had his crowns new locusts and new honey every day. He was aesthetic.

He denied himself comforts. He didn't enjoy, you know, the comforts of this life. That was his choice.

That was his calling. But Jesus wasn't like that. And Jesus actually made a distinction between himself and John the Baptist in that very respect.

He said, John came neither eating meat nor drinking wine. And you people criticize him. You say he had a religious demon.

But the Son of Man came eating and drinking. Jesus was different than John. Jesus didn't come as an aesthetic.

He enjoyed a good meal. He enjoyed a feast with people, even with the kind of people that the religious fancies wouldn't associate with. There's nothing wrong with enjoying what God has provided.

Jesus didn't come to advocate a form of aestheticism, which became so popular, for example, in the monastic movements and always remains popular among some religious minded people. Because people who are interested in religious things or spiritual things obviously can get out of balance so that they don't properly value material things and do not give proper attention to their material responsibilities. God, Paul says, has given us all things richly to enjoy.

But we should remember this. Jesus said it's more blessed. That means more happy.

One might say more enjoyable to give than to receive. So if God's given me all things richly to enjoy and I give them away, I'm enjoying them. It's more enjoyable to give than to receive.

At least I find it so. Although you have to receive before you can give. So it's got to be coming and going.

The point is, you don't have to think, well, God doesn't want me to enjoy things in life. He gave Adam and Eve everything to enjoy in the garden. And they were not sinning there.

That was enjoying the garden that God assigned them to do, to enjoy each other and to enjoy their family life as they would have more if they had not sinned. God made people to enjoy his gifts. And so Paul says, it's no different now.

God richly gives us all things freely to enjoy. But we need to be informed by what Jesus says. Of course, enjoying the things God has given may be the greatest when we're giving them.

That's the that's the happiest thing I think we can do with them. But that doesn't mean we're expected to give them all and not enjoy any of them in any other way. But he said to the rich in verse 18, let them do good that they may be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come.

That they may lay hold on the eternal life. Now, if a person is rich and they want to lay up a good foundation for the future, secure the kind of future that they hope to have with their money, he says, well, there's a way they can do that. They can be rich in good works, because if you're doing God's work, he always pays his laborers in a timely way and ready to give, willing to share.

That's how they lay up for themselves a foundation for the time to come. Sharing and giving. These are actually almost like business transactions in the sight of God.

If you want to lay up for the future, like the ant does. You want to lay up a good foundation for the future financially. Then Jesus said, well, I'll tell you where to lay it up.

Don't lay it up on earth. Lay it up in heaven. Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven.

Now, how do you do that? Well, he said to the rich young ruler, sell what you have, give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. By giving to the poor. That's how you make a deposit in the bank in heaven.

You give the money to the poor. In Luke, I think 12, Jesus said to his disciples, sell what you have and give alms and provide for yourself bags that do not become old, a treasure eternal in the heavens. So giving to the poor is depositing treasures in heaven.

The ant is wise to lay up treasures against the future. So would we be. Solomon may or may not have understood this, but the New Testament tells us the best place to lay them up, though, is in heaven.

One of the best things you can do to lay up a good foundation against the future is to give to the poor now, because that's giving to God. Jesus said, inasmuch as you do it to the least of these my brethren, you've done it to me. So when you give to the poor, especially to poor Christians or to the needs of the poor Christians, then you're giving to Christ.

And he counts that a deposit, you know, it says in Proverbs later on, he that has mercy on the poor lends to the Lord. Well, I would like to have God indebted to me. I would like to lend money to him.

And so giving to the poor is a way to have loans out to God that he will repay in a timely manner. I remember hearing about people who had been informed that the second coming was going to come on a certain day back in the 1800s. And, of course, there was another time more recently.

But from time to time, people say they know when Jesus is coming back and the people who are really stupid enough to believe those people sometimes do really stupid things. And from what I've heard, there's been more than one occasion of people who thought Jesus was coming on a certain day, went out and ran up their credit cards. Now, I don't know if this is a true story or a possible story, but I've heard this more than once, that people who thought Jesus was coming the next day, they went out and ran up their credit cards.

Like, is that the last thing you want to do before you see God? Borrow money that you're not going to repay? Like steal? The last thing you want to do before you meet God is steal from people? That's the weirdest thing I could even imagine. And what are you going to do for 24 hours with the stuff you bought? You know, party hardy for 24 hours? Like, is that how you prepare to meet God? That's so weird. What a mentality.

People think, wow, you know, I'm not going to pay that because Jesus is coming, so I'm going to go just run up the bills. You mean rob your creditors, right? You're going to take money from them with no intention of repaying it. So, you want to go out into this world as a wicked person, as the Bible defines it.

A wicked man borrows and doesn't repay. I'll tell you what, I am glad that I don't get repaid for everything I do. In fact, of course, God only knows most of the things that I do, but some of the things people know I do, I receive nothing for it and I'm glad because that means that when I die, there will be people in my debt and God in my debt.

I like that. People say you can't, you know, you can't get, you can't what, out give God or something like that, but, or they say God will be a debtor's no man. That's not what he says.

He says that if you give to the poor, you're lending to the Lord. I guess that puts him in your debt. It's kind of nice to think that when I stand before God, it will not be that there are people I owe to that I have not repaid, but there are people who owe me who've never repaid me.

Get to go with, you know, a positive benefit on assets on the ledger. So it's, Jesus said, that's how we should live actually, that when you throw a feast, he said, don't invite the

people who can pay you back. Invite the people who can't pay you back, the poor and the lame and the blind, because they can't pay you back.

Then you will be repaid in the resurrection of the just, he said. So live in such a way that you don't indebt yourself to others, but that they are indebted to you, that you can leave this world with a positive amount owed to you rather than a negative, what you owe to others. This is how you lay up treasure in heaven.

By giving, by also, of course, by investing in the things that are what heaven considers to be advantageous in the value. So the ant is wise because it looks to the future. Christians are wise if they look to the future, too.

Remember that parable that Jesus taught in Luke 16 about the steward. It's a troubling parable because it's the parable of the unjust steward. There's some things that people always find difficult, but he had wasted his master's good.

He was told that he was going to be fired. He had not yet been fired. He was going to be fired.

He was told to go up and draw up an accounting of his books to turn in so his master would know really where he stood on things. And the man had been probably, in all likelihood, a few days before his termination. And Jesus said, the man knew he was going to be terminated and he thought, what am I going to do? I'm too old to go out and dig ditches for a living.

I can't do hard labor. I'm ashamed to be a beggar, of course, so I need to find some kind of security for my long term future. And he said, I know what I'll do.

And he took his master's goods and he went to the people who owed his master money and he reduced the debt. And said, we'll call this paid off if you give me 50 percent of what's owed. And this made those people who were getting a good deal, it ingratiated him with them and it made them kind of owe him something in a way.

I mean, he was doing them a big favor. At his master's expense in this case, but he was doing them a big favor so that they would receive him into their homes or give him a job or whatever after he was unemployed. That's what the idea was.

What's interesting about the parable and the difficult part is that the master was amused rather than angry. The master said, wow, you're pretty shrewd, aren't you? You know, you use my stuff to make yourself a long term future, you know, make friends that'll cover you when you're in trouble later on when I fire you. Now, apparently, the master in question was not greatly impoverished by this man's actions.

You know, he lost a little money on it, but the man gained a great deal. And the master was had lost probably such a little amount of his estate that he was more amused than

anything. But the point that Jesus makes is that he says the children of this age are wiser than the children of light sometimes in these matters of finances.

And he says, consider what the unjust judge did. What did he do? He knew that he had only a short time. To continue being a steward, and then he'd be out of a job, he'd be needy.

So he used the short opportunity he had left to make provision for his long term future. And Jesus says, therefore, make friends with the mammoth of unrighteousness that they may receive you into everlasting habitation when it fails. That is when your money runs out or when your opportunity runs out.

What I think this is saying is all of us are like that steward. We all know we've got a termination notice. We all know we're going to die.

We've only got so much time to be stewards of what we have. And then we're out. We're going to look for a long term home after that, an eternal home.

And therefore, being aware of the short time that we have in this life, we should. Not cheat our master, but the specific way in which the servant did this is not what's being given to us as an example, but the fact that he had the foresight to say, my job is going to be over here soon and I only have this much time to prepare for my permanent future. And so he did what he had to do.

And what Jesus is saying, you need to think that way about this life. This life is it's like you're going to be terminated. It's not that far off.

We only live really a relatively short time. Then there's this long term permanent future in eternity that we need to be worried about. So he says, use the man and use the money you have now in such a way that will ingratiate you with someone who will take you into an eternal habitation.

God. And so he's thinking, Jesus is teaching, we need to be in a sense like the ant. The ant knows the winter's coming.

Well, there's a sense which our winter comes when we die. And the summertime where we can actually do something to make provision for that is our lifetime. And so we should spend our whole life managing and increasing, if possible, God's assets that are given to us for his kingdom's sake, not for our own.

We don't lay up for ourselves, but we may lay up for God. For the needs of his people and so forth, that there's nothing. The Bible does not forbid us to actually put money aside and have it in the bank for something that we need to realize that that's money's God's.

And it may be that that'll be the money he'll have us live on our old age if that's how he wants to provide for us. Or it may be that he'll have us just liquidate it and trust him. We just don't know what the future holds.

It might be that he might not even tell you to liquidate it, but he'll liquidate it. You know, the point is you have to have your trust in God. But in the meantime, what you're doing with the assets in your hands have got to be with a view that the time is coming when you will look back on the opportunities you had and either regret or be glad about the way you used those types of opportunities.

Like the ant, if it reaches wintertime and has not used the opportunities of the summer, it'll have occasion to regret that. And so will everyone. If you reach heaven's door and you realize you have no more opportunities to invest or manage any of God's stuff because you've run your you've been terminated on earth, then you'll have reason to wish you had done more wisely, perhaps if you haven't been wise with it.

So these are the lessons of the ant. Verse 12, a worthless person, a wicked man walks with a perverse mouth. He winks with his eyes.

He shuffles his feet. He points with his fingers. Perversity is in his heart.

He devises continually. He sows discord. Therefore, his calamity shall come suddenly.

Suddenly he shall be broken without remedy. I'm not sure exactly what kind of a man he's thinking of here. The man who winks with his eyes, shuffles with his feet, points with his fingers.

It doesn't sound like any of these things are very practical things. Maybe that's why he's worthless. He's got body parts, but he doesn't employ them in anything that's of value.

He just does a pointing with your finger. It's not really, it's not going to, it'd be better to use your fingers to do something proper. It's more profitable than just sit and point at other people and shuffle around with your feet in a purposeless way.

I'm really not sure what the, you know, obviously his following has a particular paradigm in mind, some kind of a person he knows that this fits his description. The one thing we can say, it's a worthless person and therefore whatever he's doing with these parts of his body, his mouth, his eyes, his feet, his fingers, his heart, are not worth anything. He's just wasting his life and causing trouble in the meantime.

Because he's perhaps idle, I don't know if he's got an idle person in mind or someone who's more actively, you know, doing evil things. He is devising evil continually, he sows discord, but it's not going to go well for him. Now, 16 through 19 are an interesting little segment.

These six things the Lord hates. Yes, seven are an abomination to him. A proud look, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans like the guy that was just described.

Feet that are swift to running to evil, a false witness who speaks lies, and one who sows discord among brethren, who is also like the guy described. It's interesting in verse 14, the worthless man, he devises evil in his heart and he sows discord. Well, those are two of the seven things that God finds abominable.

This form of speaking in verse 16, six things the Lord hates. Yes, seven. Six, no seven.

It's a way of saying, I'm going to give you a list, but it's a partial list. I'm not giving you the exact number. I can think of six or seven, just off the top of my head.

There may be more. You know, I mean, this is if he said it's this number exactly, then he'd be more or less committing himself to a complete list, which is there's six, no, seven. It's sort of like we might say six or seven.

We're not really committing ourselves to an exact number. And this form, I think, is saying this is a sampling of what might be a much larger list. But this is the number I'm going to list.

And these number stains are found elsewhere, too. In fact, they're rather thick. In in Chapter 30 of Proverbs, where there's a lot of these numbers, things.

Chapter 30, verse 18, says, There are three things which are too wonderful for me. Yes, for which I do not understand. Then he lists them.

And then verse 21, for three things, the earth is perturbed. Yes, for four, it cannot bear up. And it lists some.

In verse 24, there are four things which are little on the earth, exceedingly wise. He doesn't he doesn't change the number there. And then he says, There's these numbers saying some of them give an exact number and some of them do the three, no, four kind of thing.

Almost all of Chapter 30 is talking about two things or three things or three things or four things or something like that. Here it's it's not as common in Solomon's chapters as it is in Agger's. Agger wrote Chapter 30.

But Solomon, we see, is capable of giving these kinds of statements to six things. Lord hates. Yes, seven on abomination of a proud look.

Now, why do you think a proud look? Why doesn't he say just pride? Not sure. What? Maybe because you people exhibit their pride by their posture, by the look in their face or something. God doesn't like it when a man has a proud look about him because it

exhibits pride in his heart.

Now, a humble look doesn't always prove these humble because a proud man might know that it's his advantage to seem humble at times. He might take on a humble look, but a humble man will very rarely take on a problem. So pride is really what he has in mind exhibited in the way a man holds himself or conduct himself and looks.

A lying tongue, which is sort of like what's in verse 19, a false witness who speaks lies. I'm not really sure what the difference is, except that a false witness is apparently somebody who's a court witness, someone lying in court. Another person may just tend to lie in every situation.

But they're obviously the same problem. Hands that shed instant blood is clearly a murderer. A heart that devises wicked plans is just a bad heart.

Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks. And earlier in chapter 3, in verse 23, it said, keep your heart because out of it are the issues of life. So a heart that devises wicked plans is going to be living a wicked life.

Feet that are swift in running to evil. These things God hates. People who are eager to do evil, plotting to do evil in their hearts and quickly carrying it out.

People who kill other people, people who lie and deceive and who are proud. And the last one in verse 19 is one who sows discord among brethren. That's something God hates.

And perhaps that's the one of the list that we're most likely to be guilty of. I mean, any of us might be guilty of a proud look or of maybe telling a lie. But most of us are going to be out killing people or devising wicked plans and having that kind of evil shot through in our character.

I mean, we're Christians. We have a new heart. We don't do that.

But one can almost, well can easily, inadvertently sow discord among brethren by gospels or by trying to draw people away from some friendship into another friendship. People who are jealous of somebody's attention. They're giving someone trying to draw that attention away.

People will sometimes try to put a wedge between other people. And God wants his children to be unified, not have discord. It's a very apparently odious thing to God when there's discord among his children.

And therefore he is not sympathetic at all. For those who do it, he finds it abominable, which means absolutely revolting to him. Well, the next part of chapter six is going to go into the subject of the seductress and the adulterous woman again, which is a recurring theme in this section.

We've run out of time for it, so we're going to pause here and come back to that part of the chapter the next time.