

Proverbs 29-31

Good evening and thank you for joining us! Would you please turn in your Bibles to Proverbs 29?

SHOW PIC Former US President Herbert Hoover once said, “Wisdom consists not so much in knowing what to do in the ultimate as in knowing what to do next.” **SHOW PIC**

Which reminds us that wisdom isn’t just abstract or philosophical – it’s practical.

As we’ve learned in Proverbs, God’s wisdom deals with the nuts and bolts of life. It emphasizes what to do next. Tonight we’ll finish the book as we study 29-31

Let’s pray and then we’ll begin

1 He who is often rebuked, and hardens his neck,
Will suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy. When
God’s judgment comes, there are no 2nd chances

2 When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice;
But when a wicked man rules, the people groan. Elections matter.

3 Whoever loves wisdom makes his father rejoice,
But a companion of harlots wastes his wealth. He throws away
not only his money, but his integrity too.

4-5

4 The king establishes the land by justice,

But he who receives bribes overthrows it.

5 A man who flatters his neighbor

Spreads a net for his feet. Be careful when someone is trying to flatter you. Oftentimes they're just trying to set you up.

6 By transgression an evil man is snared,

But the righteous sings and rejoices. He sings and rejoices cuz he's got a clear conscience!

7 The righteous considers the cause of the poor,

But the wicked does not understand such knowledge. He's too wrapped up in himself to consider others

8-11

8 Scoffers set a city aflame,

But wise men turn away wrath.

9 If a wise man contends with a foolish man,

Whether the fool rages or laughs, there is no peace.

10 The bloodthirsty hate the blameless,

But the upright seek his well-being.[fn]

11 A fool vents all his feelings,[fn]

But a wise man holds them back. Certainly, it's good to have a friend in whom we can confide. But we shouldn't just spew out all our feelings because they are fleeting.

12 If a ruler pays attention to lies,

All his servants become wicked. A leader can't get caught up in speculation – or he'll become paranoid.

13 The poor man and the oppressor have this in common:
The LORD gives light to the eyes of both. Romans 1 tells us God reveals himself to everyone to a certain degree so they are without excuse.

14-16

14 The king who judges the poor with truth,
His throne will be established forever.

15 The rod and rebuke give wisdom,
But a child left to himself brings shame to his mother.

16 When the wicked are multiplied, transgression increases;
But the righteous will see their fall.

17 Correct your son, and he will give you rest;
Yes, he will give delight to your soul. It's an exhausting job to discipline your child consistently and correctly – but notice the end result, "rest." The end result of not doing a good job as a parent is a lifetime of anxiety.

18-19

18 Where there is no revelation,[fn] the people cast off restraint
But happy is he who keeps the law.

19 A servant will not be corrected by mere words;
For though he understands, he will not respond. This is a reminder that it takes the convicting and convincing work of God's

Spirit to cause a person to confess sin and bring them to a place of repentance. It takes more than “mere words.”

20-27

20 Do you see a man hasty in his words?
There is more hope for a fool than for him.

21 He who pampers his servant from childhood
Will have him as a son in the end.

22 An angry man stirs up strife,
And a furious man abounds in transgression.

23 A man's pride will bring him low,
But the humble in spirit will retain honor.

24 Whoever is a partner with a thief hates his own life;
He swears to tell the truth,[fn] but reveals nothing.

25 The fear of man brings a snare,
But whoever trusts in the LORD shall be safe.

26 Many seek the ruler's favor,
But justice for man comes from the LORD.

27 An unjust man is an abomination to the righteous,
And he who is upright in the way is an abomination to the wicked.
This is why there can't be true fellowship b/w the righteous and the wicked-they are polar opposites.

Chapter 30 begins

1 The words of Agur the son of Jakeh, his utterance. This man declared to Ithiel—to Ithiel and Ucal: Now we don't really know anything about these names. But Hebrew names are also words with their own definition. For example, "Agur" means "collector." "Jakeh" means "obedient." "Ithiel" means "with me is God." And "Ucal" means "enabled."

So if you interpreted verse 1 translating the names as words, it would read, "The words of the collector (or Solomon) the son of the obedient (or David), his utterance. This man declared to those who God is with - Yes, who God is with and who have been enabled by him." It's a possibility. Verse 2-3 tells us what this man, Agur, declared,

**2 Surely I am more stupid than any man,
And do not have the understanding of a man.**

3 I neither learned wisdom

Nor have knowledge of the Holy One. As we'll see Agur was not a foolish man. In fact, he was quite wise. But the mark of true wisdom is the realization of how little we actually know.

It's wisely been said "The knowledge of God is so deep the theologian can never touch bottom, and so shallow even a child will never drown."

The knowledge of God is beyond our grasp, but the truth He reveals is simple enough that even a child can understand. Verse 4 reels off a few questions...

4 Who has ascended into heaven, or descended?

Who has gathered the wind in His fists?

Who has bound the waters in a garment?

Who has established all the ends of the earth?

What is His name, and what is His Son's name,

If you know? The questions in verse 4 are much like the questions

God fires at Job toward the end of Job's story. They were

intended to expose Job's ignorance and arrogance. Job

38:4 "Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?

Tell Me, if you have understanding.

God doesn't tell us all there is to know – but He does tell us all we need to know.

5-6

5 Every word of God is pure;

He is a shield to those who put their trust in Him.

6 Do not add to His words,

Lest He rebuke you, and you be found a liar." Remember the

warning in Revelation 22:18-19 18 For I testify to everyone

who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds

to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are

written in this book; 19 and if anyone takes away from the words

of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from

the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which

are written in this book.

Verse 7-9 contains a wise and sincere prayer.

7 Two things I request of You

(Deprive me not before I die):

8 Remove falsehood and lies far from me;

Give me neither poverty nor riches—

Feed me with the food allotted to me;

9 Lest I be full and deny You,

And say, “Who is the LORD?”

Or lest I be poor and steal,

And profane the name of my God. There’s a danger in having too little or too much. Too little could tempt me to rip you off to feed my family. Too much might cause me to rip God off and deny Him praise. Only the Lord knows what we can handle.

10-14

10 Do not malign a servant to his master,

Lest he curse you, and you be found guilty.

11 There is a generation that curses its father,

And does not bless its mother.

12 There is a generation that is pure in its own eyes,

Yet is not washed from its filthiness.

13 There is a generation—oh, how lofty are their eyes!

And their eyelids are lifted up.

14 There is a generation whose teeth are like swords,

And whose fangs are like knives,

To devour the poor from off the earth,

And the needy from among men. It sounds like Agur is pretty pessimistic about the future. And it does seem to appear that each generation grows further and further away from God.

For the rest of the chapter Agur is going to prove that he was an astute observer of life. He's going to look around at nature and provide a series of illustrations. There's wisdom all around us, waiting to be gleaned.

15-16

15 The leech has two daughters—

Give and Give!

There are three things that are never satisfied,

Four never say, "Enough!":

16 The grave,[fn] Funeral Homes are recession proof.

The barren womb, A woman continually longs for a child.

The earth that is not satisfied with water—I can soak my lawn one day, and the next day it needs to be watered all over again.

And the fire never says, "Enough!" " It burns as long it's fed.

17 The eye that mocks his father,

And scorns obedience to his mother,

The ravens of the valley will pick it out,

And the young eagles will eat it. **SHOW PIC** Every time a bird with a sharp beak flies over a rebellious teenager without swooping down on top of them... God is showing mercy! **CLOSE PIC**

18-19 prove how life is a beautiful mystery

18 There are three things which are too wonderful for me,

Yes, four which I do not understand:

19 The way of an eagle in the air,

The way of a serpent on a rock,

The way of a ship in the midst of the sea,

And the way of a man with a virgin. Now the tone changes

20 This is the way of an adulterous woman:

She eats and wipes her mouth,

And says, “I have done no wickedness.” She denies her sin. As Agur observes life he’s amazed at both its beauty and its ugliness.

21 For three things the earth is perturbed,

Yes, for four it cannot bear up: Here Agur reflects on life’s irritations. Life is full of frustrations isn’t it?

22 For a servant when he reigns, **SHOW SLIDE** his is authority without character. A man who’s been a servant is used to taking orders not giving them. If he doesn’t learn to handle authority he’ll misuse and abuse his power.

A fool when he is filled with food, **SHOW SLIDE** This is wealth without work. He’s good at eating off another man’s table. You will never maintain prosperity without knowing what it took to obtain prosperity.

23 A hateful woman when she is married, **SHOW SLIDE** This is relationship without responsibility. Here’s a gal who goes out of her way to get a husband – she’s nice and thoughtful and caring – it’s all about her man – until after the wedding. Here’s a woman who wants a happy home, but she’s a hateful wife.

And a maidservant who succeeds her mistress. **SHOW SLIDE**
This is promotion without preparation. Here’s a woman who’s

thrust into a position that requires charm and culture, but she's never been trained. The maidservant is illequipped.

24-28 deal with little critters...

24 There are four things which are little on the earth,
But they are exceedingly wise:

25 The ants are a people not strong,
Yet they prepare their food in the summer;

26 The rock badgers^[fn] are a feeble folk,
Yet they make their homes in the crags;

27 The locusts have no king,
Yet they all advance in ranks;

28 The spider^[fn] skillfully grasps with its hands,
And it is in kings' palaces. A list of little creatures that teach big lessons.

29-31

29 There are three things which are majestic in pace,
Yes, four which are stately in walk:

30 A lion, which is mighty among beasts
And does not turn away from any;

31 A greyhound,^[fn]
A male goat also,

And a king whose troops are with him.^[fn] Ephesians 4 instructs Christians to walk in a manner worthy of our calling. Our position as a child of God is a gift of grace, but once we become members of the family we need to learn to act like it.

Here're we're giving insight into how to adopt a godly walk...

First, v 30 stride like a lion. Be bold, courageous, fearless for the Lord.

Second, v 31 run like a greyhound. Be quick to obey and do good.

Third, v31 stand like a goat. Be steady and reliable, avoid slip ups...

Fourth, v31 march like a king with his troops... be confident and full of faith.

Put it all together and you've got a lion's stride, a hound dog's run, a goat's crouch, and a king's march.

We should be walking differently than the folks of this world.

32 If you have been foolish in exalting yourself,
Or if you have devised evil, put your hand on your mouth. If you've been boasting or bucking God's will - you need to shut-up and repent.

33 For as the churning of milk produces butter,
And wringing the nose produces blood,
So the forcing of wrath produces strife. Apparently, you can learn a spiritual lesson even from a bloody nose.

Proverbs 31

The Words of King Lemuel's Mother

The OT records the kings of Israel and Judah, and Lemuel doesn't appear on any of the lists.

Some think he was a pagan king who put his trust in Yahweh, the covenant God of Israel, and through the fear of the Lord learned wisdom.

Jewish legends often say Lemuel, meaning the one belonging to God, was Solomon himself and his mother was Bathsheba.

1-3

1 The words of King Lemuel, the utterance which his mother taught him:

2 What, my son?

And what, son of my womb?

And what, son of my vows?“

3 Do not give your strength to women,

Nor your ways to that which destroys kings. It was out of Solomon's harem that idolatry gained a foothold in Judah

4-5

4 It is not for kings, O Lemuel,

It is not for kings to drink wine,

Nor for princes intoxicating drink;

5 Lest they drink and forget the law,

And pervert the justice of all the afflicted. Alcohol is not for people in positions of authority and leadership. A king can be called on in a moment's notice to make a decision of national importance. The country can't run the risk of him being tipsy or his mind fuzzy.

This is also why the NT makes alcohol off-limits to pastors. How would you like to call your pastor for counsel and find him drunk or hungover?

6-7

6 Give strong drink to him who is perishing,
And wine to those who are bitter of heart.

7 Let him drink and forget his poverty,
And remember his misery no more. It isn't that there are no consequences for drinking in these two scenarios, but the consequences have little impact in comparison to the king or leader.

8-9

8 Open your mouth for the speechless,
In the cause of all who are appointed to die.^[fn]

9 Open your mouth, judge righteously,
And plead the cause of the poor and needy. If ever there was a verse commanding us to speak out against abortion, this is it!

The rest of the chapter is about the virtuous wife.

10 Who^[fn] can find a virtuous^[fn] wife?
For her worth is far above rubies.

Throughout the Proverbs we've been warned about "the perverse woman" and "the contentious woman" – it's good to know there's an alternative. There are women who love God and know how to love a husband and raise a family. They're not controlled by worldly fads and fashions – or addicted to comfort and conveniences. They control their tongue and reserve their passions. They're gracious and kind even at home.

For single men I wish I could say the market was glutted with virtuous women, but that's not true – not in Solomon's day, or our

day. Even the writer of Proverbs admits “For her worth is far above rubies.”

A virtuous woman is a rarity. Im glad I got one!

It's interesting in the original Hebrew these last 22 verses form an acrostic. There are 22 letters in the Hebrew alphabet, and each verse begins with a succeeding letter. This aided in the memorization.

**11 The heart of her husband safely trusts her;
So he will have no lack of gain.**He's not worried when she goes to the store with the credit card. He and his wife are on the same page.

**12 She does him good and not evil
All the days of her life.**Notice her commitment to her husband is for life! She's a lifelong blessing!

**13 She seeks wool and flax,
And willingly works with her hands.** She's not afraid of hard work

**14 She is like the merchant ships,
She brings her food from afar.**Watch her when she pulls into the driveway with the groceries. Her boat is full of provisions from that distant land called Kroger.

**15 She also rises while it is yet night,
And provides food for her household,**

And a portion for her maidservants. She's up before daybreak packing lunches for her kids to take to school.

16 She considers a field and buys it;
From her profits she plants a vineyard. She's even got a few tomatoes plants she keeps up.

17 She girds herself with strength,
And strengthens her arms. She doesn't neglect the gym, she knows working out does a body good!

18 She perceives that her merchandise is good,
And her lamp does not go out by night. She's up late at night surfing the net looking for the latest deals – trying to stretch the funds.

19 She stretches out her hands to the distaff,
And her hand holds the spindle. She's crafty, not too proud to even wear her own homemade outfit.

20 She extends her hand to the poor,
Yes, she reaches out her hands to the needy. She's up to her eyeballs in taking care of her own family, but she's not too busy to help others. She's full of compassion.

21 She is not afraid of snow for her household,
For all her household is clothed with scarlet. She prepares for the future to make sure the kiddos are ready for it.

22 She makes tapestry for herself;

Her clothing is fine linen and purple. The virtuous wife also enjoys nice things in life, dressing nicely for herself and her husband

23 Her husband is known in the gates,
When he sits among the elders of the land. This woman makes her husband the envy of every man. They wish they had a wife as good and godly as his bride.

24 She makes linen garments and sells them,
And supplies sashes for the merchants. On top of everything else she does, the virtuous woman has a part-time job she works that brings in some money to help pay the bills. She's got a side hustle to help the finances.

25 Strength and honor are her clothing;
She shall rejoice in time to come. She's not a complainer. She has an optimistic view of the future.

26 She opens her mouth with wisdom,
And on her tongue is the law of kindness. Her kids and husband go to her for advice and counsel.

27 She watches over the ways of her household,
And does not eat the bread of idleness. She doesn't waste her precious time by doomscrolling on her phone all day. She's involved in all parts of her family's life.

28 Her children rise up and call her blessed;
Her husband also, and he praises her: When her daughters grow up they want to be like their mom. When her sons grow up they

want to marry women like their mom. And to top it off, she's all her husband talks about...

29 "Many daughters have done well,
But you excel them all." These are the words of a grateful husband who knows he's blessed to have such an incredible wife.

30 Charm is deceitful and beauty is passing,
But a woman who fears the LORD, she shall be praised. Her complexion will weather, her skin will sag, her hands will wrinkle - but she'll never lose her beauty. She will be gorgeous for all eternity.

31 Give her of the fruit of her hands,
And let her own works praise her in the gates. Here's a final word to husbands... Men, if you are married to a virtuous woman - or at least a woman who aspires to be - never take her granted.

She is more valuable than rubies. Pamper her... praise her... respect her in front of the kids... most of all, love her with all your heart.

This man, is great wisdom