

PROVERBS

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Proverbs chapter 20 as we continue our study through the Word of God. We are continuing in this long section of short, one verse Proverbs that began back in Proverbs chapter 10 and will continue through Proverbs 22:16. In this section there are some 375 different Proverbs that Solomon is giving to us and each one is distinct in itself. And this evening we are going to open up with a warning against alcohol and it is a lesson that many don't learn. Look at the lives that alcohol has destroyed and yet people continue down that dangerous and destructive path. With that said, let's begin reading in Proverbs chapter 20, beginning in verse 1 and let's see what the Lord has for us as we study through His Word.

PROVERBS 20**VERSE 1**

1. Solomon is going to talk more about drunkenness or the effects of alcohol on a person when we get to Proverbs chapter 23. And as much as it was a problem back then, it is a huge problem in America today. Before I share some statistics with you let me explain what Solomon is speaking of here.

First of all wine speaks of that which comes from the vine and strong drink or intoxicating drink speaks of that which comes from the grain. Now let's think this through because Solomon is right here. Alcohol does lead to all kinds of obnoxious behavior and sometimes deadly behavior. Let me share a few statistics for you so you can see what the effects of alcohol are in our nation.

- Alcohol related crashes kill someone in the U.S. every 22 minutes. At any minute, one of 50 drivers on the road is drunk and every weekend night, one out of 10 is drunk.
- The damage caused by alcohol impaired drivers is the same as if a Boeing 747 with over 500 passengers crashed every eight days killing everyone.
- Drunk drivers are responsible for 1/2 of highway fatal injuries.
- Of all murders, alcohol was involved in at least 34% of cases.
- Rape - More than 1/2 of rapists had been drinking.
- Child abuse - mothers convicted are 3 times more likely to be alcoholics - fathers 10 times more likely.
- Heavy drinking is involved in 60% of violent crimes, 30% of suicides, and 80% of fire and drowning accidents.

No matter how you try to look at these numbers, they are not good. Death and destruction go hand-in-hand with drunkenness! Now let me also say this. God does not say that we can't drink alcohol, He condemns drunkenness and that is the problem in our society today, people drink many times to become drunk. Be wise, learn the lesson. You see, you can never justify drunkenness and God abhors or hates it! If you are in bondage to alcohol Christ has given to you the power to break those chains. You must give it to Him, you must let go of that drink!

VERSE 2

1. This just makes sense. A King or person who rules a nation can have the power of life and death. Thus, don't provoke him to anger, that is just foolish on your part. Be wise. Remember what Paul said in Romans 13:4 about a King or leader, **“For he is God’s minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God’s minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil.”** As Christians we should live out our faith in such a way that we are the best citizens around but many times we become the most obnoxious and that is not a gift of God! Be wise.

2. Now let's take this to the ultimate King, the Lord Jesus Christ. How many people provoke the King of kings and Lord of lords by their actions today! You see, that is the ultimate in foolishness and you will not get away with it!

VERSE 3

1. Along those same lines we have been talking about, how intelligent do you have to be to start a fight or quarrel? It is a no-brainer and I mean that literally, it takes no brains to start a fight, to argue with people. And there are some that are not happy unless they quarrel with someone.

Again, this is not a gift of the Spirit. Jesus said in Matthew 5:9, **“Blessed are the peacemakers, For they shall be called sons of God.”** The question we must ask ourselves is this, “Are we more of a peacemaker or a troublemaker?”

VERSE 4

1. Keep in mind that we are not talking about Wisconsin, but the Middle East and the season for planting in this part of the world is in the winter, during the months of November and December. The only problem is that this time of year it is rainy and cold. Thus, for the sluggard, he refuses to go out and plow or plant. It is an excuse but it is a costly one. You see, during the harvest time the lack of work during the planting season will lead to a lack of benefits then. The sluggard will have nothing.

2. Spiritually speaking there is an application here. There may be times when you don't feel like reading the Word of God, your spirit is cold you might say. I would encourage you to read it because this season when it is cold, maybe lifeless spiritually speaking will change and spring will come. Prepare in the times that may not be ideal, for the harvest will come you might say.

VERSE 5

1. This is kind of interesting to me. Solomon is saying that a good counselor, and I don't like that word today, but this person will draw out the issues, the problems of another and will bless this person as he does. But it does take time but look at the benefits as you do!

The reason I don't like that word or title of "counselor" is because many today feel you have to have all these degrees, take all these psychology classes to be able to help people. Poor Solomon, he did not know Sigmund Freud and these other nut cases. Sorry, but they were and are. Look at the damage they have done to people. Do they sometimes get it right? Sure, but a broken clock is also right twice a day! The best counselors are the ones who bring people to Jesus, the ultimate counselor. You give them the wisdom of God's Word and spend time with them to draw out those things that are hurting so they may give them to God, not dwell on them their entire lives!

VERSE 6

1. Here's the thing. There is a difference between what men are and what they want others to think they are. God is not looking for people that are all talk and no action. He is looking for people who live what they believe.

VERSE 7

1. This is so important in our day and it is something that is lacking, fathers that walk in integrity, in truth, and what they leave for their children is a wonderful example of how to live out your faith in a wicked world. You are giving them a pattern to follow after. Remember what Paul said in I Corinthians 11:1, "**Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.**" That is the key, as we are walking in the Lord and not apart from Him we will bless our children with a wonderful way to live!

VERSE 8

1. Solomon was a man of great discernment in his judgments; he could see through all the extraneous things and get to the heart of the matter. And thus, evil was put away. And this does apply to us today. We have the Holy Spirit that will speak to our hearts, He will give us the discernment we need to put out the evil. Paul put it like this in Philippians 1:9-11, **“And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.”** May we use the discernment God has given us to expose the evil and to see what is good!

VERSE 9

1. Here is the problem today, people think that they are good and they will tell you that they may not be perfect, but they are good. Let me say this. It doesn't matter how good a person says he is, outside of Christ his righteousness is like filthy rags. No one can say that he is good. It is as Ecclesiastes 7:20 says, **“For there is not a just man on earth who does good And does not sin.”** You see, you can't atone for your own sins; you can't cleanse yourself of your sins!

Then what can we do? You can only be forgiven as you apply the blood of Christ to your life. We have been washed in the blood of Christ and all our sins are cast as far as the east is from the west to be remembered no more. We are as white as snow as the Father looks upon us. It is as one writer put it,

The blood that purchased our release,
and purged our crimson stains,
We challenge earth and hell to show
a sin it cannot cleanse.

- Augustus M. Toplady

VERSE 10

1. Go figure, God wants us to be honest. Interestingly enough, Solomon speaks of this a lot in Proverbs. As Christians we should be honest in all our dealings, including business dealings. If you have to cheat, rip people off, lie to make your business work, then close it down, God will not honor what you are doing. And folks, we should be honest in all our dealings.

VERSE 11

1. You can get a pretty good idea of how a child will grow up by watching his actions when he is young. And let's face it, how we train up our children will be reflected in what they do as adults. Now it is true each child has choices to make, but as parents it is our responsibility to train them up in the things of God. Let me give you an example of what happened back in early April of this year at the Louvre Museum in Paris, why it closed its doors for a time.

It seems that there has been a rise of pickpockets, gangs of some 30 young Eastern Europeans coming in and "spitting, insults, threats" and striking employees and visitors. Staffers "come to work afraid because they find themselves confronted with organized groups of pickpockets who are increasingly aggressive and which include children, who get into the museum free and even when taken in for questioning by police, come back a few days later."

Think about what these children are going to be like when they are adults if they are doing this now and the parents are encouraging them to behave like this? What they learn as a child they will carry on into adulthood whether good or evil!

2. Now don't get depressed over this because I also have some wonderful news for you. When a person comes to Christ that all changes because he becomes a new creation! God transforms this person from the inside out and what He has done on the inside will overflow on the outside! Paul put it like this in II Corinthians 5:17 where he said, "**Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.**" Did you see that, the old things have passed away, they are gone and we are starting a new life in Christ? It doesn't matter what you did, where you came from, *ALL* things become new in Christ, we are a new creation in Him!

VERSE 12

1. You mean to tell me that the eye and the ear did not evolve over millions of years?

Absolutely, God made them when He created life. Think about a statue or picture, it may have eyes and ears but it can't see or hear. God has given to us this capacity.

And because God has done that they should be used for His glory. And think about this for a minute. God has given us the capacity to hear His truths and to see His truths, but many times we cover our ears and shut our eyes to them.

In the Old Testament, as Moses was consecrating Aaron and his sons for the ministry, he placed some of the sacrificial blood on their ear so that they may hear the truths of God. He placed some of the sacrificial blood on their hand so that they may do the work of God. And he placed some of the sacrificial blood on their foot so that they may walk in the paths of God. (Leviticus 8:24). We have been covered by the blood of Christ, may our lives reflect that! May we desire no less in our relationship with Him!

VERSE 13

1. Once again Solomon is speaking of the sluggard who wants to sleep his life away and if you sleep all day you will be hungry all night!

VERSE 14

1. Integrity, honesty is so important in our lives. Here we see a shrewd buyer who sees this car that is for sale for instance. It is a good deal, the car is in great shape, but as he looks it over he remarks about all the problems with the car to the seller. The seller then lowers the price of the car and this shrewd buyer purchases it. Once he buys it he shouts for joy because of the great deal he made. But as Christians, in all our dealings, may we do it with integrity! If you do things like that it is not honoring God. If the price is too high for you, don't buy it. But if you do purchase it, don't cheat the person!

VERSE 15

1. Look at what the world likes to adorn themselves with. They like to put on and display all kinds of precious jewelry, gold, and-so-on. Yet we see Solomon say that what is even more precious is our wise speech. That is what we should adorn ourselves with! That also means that the truths of God are more valuable than all the riches in the world. Perspective is everything and not a worldly perspective but a Biblical perspective!

VERSE 16

1. Solomon has spoken of this often, that if you are going to lend to a stranger you better get some kind of collateral so that you will be protected if he reneges on the payment. Better yet, don't lend if you can't afford to lose that money. And if this person is an immoral person, you better make sure you get some collateral if you are going to lend to them!

VERSE 17

1. If you gained something dishonestly you may have some pleasure for a time but in the end it won't be so satisfying. It will be hard to swallow. People think that they have hit the jack pot if they rip of someone. And that can be in many ways, like falsifying your tax returns to get more money back or give them less money. It could be getting more money back in the store for the item you purchased, they made a mistake and you don't tell them, you think it is a blessing from God. It is not! It can be fudging on expense accounts, dishonest advertising, bribes, and the list goes on. It is just like sin, bringing pleasure for a time, but once the long range consequences come into view, we see how destructive it was. God will honor your honesty but He will chasten your dishonesty!

VERSE 18

1. Solomon is saying that before you venture into anything make sure you are doing the right thing. You would not go to war without first seeking the counsel of others. That is just wisdom!

VERSE 19

1. People don't realize the destruction that gossip causes. It betrays confidences. And here is a little secret. If you come across someone who is a gossip and they start telling you about other people, chances are they are doing the same about you with other people. Solomon says avoid them, don't associate with them!

VERSE 20

1. We dealt with this back in Proverbs 19:26. If your child behaved in this manner, struck you, cursed you, under the Law you could bring them to the city leaders. They would hear the case and if that child was found to be guilty they would be taken outside the city and stoned to death. (Exodus 21:17, Leviticus 20:9).

Now that seems harsh and I don't think it was carried out that often, but it was surely a deterrent to children that were rebellious and abusive. And I think God made this provision because He saw that a rebellious, abusive child will grow-up to be a rebellious and abusive adult, and it would be destructive to any society.

In our society we have gone in the opposite direction, we are afraid we will hurt their fragile self-esteem, and thus, we let them get away with murder. Because of that we are reaping what we have sown. It is a stern warning of respect, something that we have lost in this nation and it will only come back as we turn back to the Lord!

VERSE 21

1. You might say easy come easy go! You see anything that comes too easily will not be appreciated. When you work for something you tend to appreciate it more. Look at the Prodigal Son in Luke chapter 15 and how he obtained his father's inheritance and spent it foolishly, he spent it all until he had nothing. That is the idea here! And that goes for those get rich quick schemes!

VERSE 22

1. I think we like the idea that "Vengeance is ours!" We like to get back at others for what they did to us and guess what? That is not scriptural, that is not what the Bible says we are to do. Then what are we to do? We are told to overcome evil by doing good! That is what Paul says in Romans 12:21. Vengeance is not ours to mediate out, it is the Lords.

Listen to what Paul said in Romans 12:17-19, "**Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,' says the Lord.**"

VERSE 23

1. Do you think God is speaking to us here? He is telling us over and over that we need to be honest in all we do, even in the work place! It is not good if you are not honest! Some Christians are Humble Hank at church and they turn into Dishonest Dave when they go to work. That should not be.

2. We are told that “Adam Clarke worked for a silk merchant who suggested that he should stretch the silk when measuring it for a customer. Adam’s reply was, ‘Your silk may stretch, sir, but my conscience won’t.’ God honored Adam Clarke by enabling him years later to write a widely used commentary on the Bible.” Don’t harden your heart to the things of God!

VERSE 24

1. Here we see God’s sovereignty emphasized and not man’s free will, even though both are true and play a part in our lives. We may not always understand what God is doing, and thus we have to trust Him, for He loves us and He is truly in control of our lives. He has what is best for us. If we would only live that way!

VERSE 25

1. Solomon is saying that we should not dedicate something to the Lord and then have second thoughts about doing it or giving it to Him. Before you even make the vow make sure you will be able to fulfill it. But whatever you promise Him you need to do it.

VERSE 26

1. This is not speaking of being unfair but it is dealing with the wicked in a righteous manner to protect the rest of the Kingdom! Thus, to punish wickedness is entirely appropriate. If only the wicked were dealt with in a just manner maybe we wouldn’t see so much evil out there!

VERSE 27

1. I think The Living Bible gives us insight to what Solomon is saying here. It says, “**A man’s conscience is the Lord’s searchlight exposing his hidden motives.**” That is what we see in the Hebrew, when it speaks of “**The spirit of a man**” he is speaking of his conscience.

I like the way my pastor puts this. He says that our conscience is the alarm system which God has wired into it His Law. Thus, when His Law is violated, transgressed, the alarm goes off. Then why do we see so much evil?

The answer is really simple. You can ignore that alarm and you can do it over and over again, you can do it so much that you can short circuit the system and thus, you will become insensitive to its warning, to the evil you are doing.

That is what Paul is telling us in I Timothy 4:2 when he said, “**speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron.**” We need to be careful and allow God’s Word to warn us of the danger that we may be moving into. We need to listen to that alarm and respond to it appropriately. Don’t become insensitive to what God is saying.

VERSE 28

1. Treat people with mercy and truth and they will follow you. That is what king Rehoboam was told to do and he rejected that wise counsel and it caused the nation to be divided into two kingdoms. In other words, he maintains his position of authority by his lovingkindness and not by tyranny, oppression, dictatorship!

VERSE 29

1. I guess a few years back this did not make sense to me but it is beginning to make more and more sense. You see, when you are young you can glory in your strength, but as you grow older you then move from the physical to the mental, that is wisdom. You should have grown over the years or else you will just be an old fool! And this is important. Every church needs both strength for service and age, maturity for wise counsel!

VERSE 30

1. God allowed corporal punishment and for that matter any kind of punishment that fits the crime was used to drive people away from their folly, away from their life of sin. We can do the same by using our tongue to correct a friend who is living in sin so as they hear, they may turn and be cleansed from their evil way.

Now here's the thing. Don't stand on the side-lines watching a friend heading down a path of destruction. It is your responsibility, as a friend, to warn them! I realize that it is not always easy but it is needed. Remember what Paul said in I Thessalonians 5:14, "**Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all.**"

Paul is saying that we as the church, we as believers are to exhort or encourage someone who is not walking as they should walk to get right, to come alongside them and encourage them to move forward. Paul first speaks of warning them who are unruly which was used of a soldier who was out of rank and it came to mean anyone who did not perform his duty or follow through with what he was responsible for! If you are not serving in the body of Christ you are cheating your brothers and sisters in the Lord of the gift that God has given to you. If you are serving and you are just getting by, doing the least you can do, not moving the ministry forward, that is also wrong!

Then there are those who need comfort for they are afraid, maybe because of persecution, maybe afraid to get involved in a ministry, whatever. Some may be sick physically or sick in sin and they need to be lifted up, helped along. Also, we are to be patient *with some*? No, *with all* as God has been so patient with each of us! That is how we are to function as a body of believers so that the body functions properly!

PROVERBS 21

VERSE 1

1. This should be great comfort to us today as we look at our government. You see, Solomon is saying that God directs leaders just as channels or canals direct water. God raises people up and He brings them down, He is sovereign. What if someone does not believe that God is in control? It doesn't change the fact that He is, whether they believe it or not!

VERSE 2

1. Isn't it amazing how we can justify our actions? You see, man looks at the outward and if it profits him then it is good. God looks at the heart, the motivation behind our actions. You see, without Christ we can justify almost anything in our life. The problem is we don't set the standard, God does, and outside of Christ all our righteousness, all our good works, are like filthy rags.

VERSE 3

1. I think that this verse fits in with verse 2 as we saw man looking at the outward actions and God looks at the heart. God is interested in obedience to Him, to His Word! And it is out of that obedience that we can serve Him but not apart from obedience.

It is as David said as he confessed his sin with Bathsheba before the Lord in Psalm 51:16-17 where we read, **“For You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give it; You do not delight in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, A broken and a contrite heart; These, O God, You will not despise.”**

And also we see this played out in what Samuel said to King Saul in I Samuel 15:22-23, **“Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, As in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, And stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He also has rejected you from being king.”** I think that is pretty clear!

VERSE 4

1. Look at the things that God sees as sin. He speaks of the “**haughty look**” or being puffed up you might say, it speaks of an outward expression of self-importance. He speaks of a “**proud heart**” or what is going on inside of you and that pride will then be reflected in your actions or the “**haughty look**” you might say. And lastly, “**the plowing of the wicked**” and this word that is used for “**plowing**” can also refer to a lamp or light. In other words you will radiate what is in your heart and if it is not the things of God then it will be evil that radiates from your life!

VERSE 5

1. The contrast here is of those who are willing to work hard for a living as opposed to those who seek to get rich overnight and how that leads to poverty and not riches!

VERSE 6

1. Dishonest gain will not be a blessing but it will ensnare you into its evil path that will eventually lead to death. If you are making money by a lying tongue then your actions are like that of the guy in the desert, he is chasing a mirage, something that he will never obtain and in the end he will lose everything!

VERSE 7

1. Solomon is saying to those who are ripping people off in one way or another they will never get away with it, there will be justice eventually and in the end they will be destroyed!

VERSE 8

1. This is pretty straight forward. When a person is doing wrong they have to lie, they have to cheat, they have to do all kinds of things to cover-up what they have done so their evil actions won't be manifested. For the upright, they don't have to hide anything for their actions are right. In other words, walk in the light as He is in the light!

VERSE 9

1. To live on the housetop meant you were open to the elements of nature; the rain, cold, wind and-so-on. And Solomon, having 700 wives and 300 concubines felt it would be better to endure the storms from nature than it would be to try and endure the storms that were raging inside the home. He said in Proverbs 19:13, “**... And the contentions of a wife are a continual dripping.**”

VERSE 10

1. Here is a person who we might say is addicted to evil. He shows no mercy at all. You see, that inward drive to do evil is manifested in his actions and it affects the lives of those around them.

VERSE 11

1. The idea here is that the scoffer may not learn from his mistakes. But when he is punished those witnessing this punishment, the naïve person will see and they will learn from him. Also, the wise will listen to instruction; they will learn from it and apply it to their lives.

VERSE 12

1. People look at the wicked and see what they get away with and they feel it is unfair. Asaph, in Psalm 73 had the same problem. He saw the wicked prosper and he struggled. How did he get re-focused? In Psalm 73:17 we are told, **“Until I went into the sanctuary of God; Then I understood their end.”** What does that mean? It means that when he spent time with God he had a proper perspective of the situation - the wicked will not get away with anything, they will be judged for their evil. That is an important lesson for us. Don't lose perspective of things, for in these days it is easy to do when you see evil people prospering. And think about this. For the wicked, this is the best it will get for them. For us, this is the worst it will get! In other words, that is the proper perspective to have!

VERSE 13

1. The implication is if we ignore those in need, then when we are in need our requests will be ignored. What you sow you will reap!

VERSE 14

1. Now Solomon is not endorsing bribes, but just stating a fact. The angry man will quiet down if the offender slips him a gift of something and the man in a rage is appeased by a bribe! I guess another way to look at this is that we can send flowers, candy and they can help dispel anger between our spouse and us. There is nothing wrong with that, in fact I encourage it.

VERSE 15

1. There is joy in serving the Lord. At least there should be. A love to do what is right should be the desire of our heart. You see, there is a joy in knowing where we are going, but there will be horror for those that reject Christ.

Paul put it this way in II Thessalonians 1:6-10, **“since it is a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you, and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, when He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe, because our testimony among you was believed.”** Just the reality!

VERSE 16

1. This is a sad picture that is painted here. Solomon is saying that outside of Christ people are nothing more than spiritual zombies. They are dead in their trespasses and sins. When people reject the truth, move away from it, instead of being around the living, they are living among the dead and that will be their final resting place, with the dead!

VERSE 17

1. Solomon is not saying that we can't enjoy life, but our satisfaction is in the Lord. If the focus of your life is pleasure, you will be poor; it will not bring to you all that you want. The same is true with luxurious living; they tend to impoverish a man. What is important in your life? You see, whatever it is that will be the passion of your life, it will be what you do! May the Lord be the most important thing in your life and it is in Him you will find true satisfaction in life!

VERSE 18

1. God will deal with the unrighteous; no longer will the righteous suffer at their hands. Now let me also say this. The Scriptures are clear; justice demands the punishment of the guilty. That is a problem for us because we are all guilty before God. But, by the grace of God we see Jesus Christ, the Righteous One, become a ransom for us, the wicked so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him! That means all of mankind has the opportunity to receive Christ, but not all will and they will be judged for their sin! Unrighteousness will not continue forever!

VERSE 19

1. You have to feel sorry for Solomon. He has moved from the rooftop to the wilderness now because to him it is better than dwelling with a contentious angry woman!

VERSE 20

1. The wise man saves, he plans his days. He does not waste what he has. On the other end of the spectrum is the foolish man who allows his sin to waste away all that he has.

VERSE 21

1. Solomon is saying that anyone who follows after righteousness, they do the right thing and shows mercy will be blessed in this life. What you sow is what you will reap and this principle can be good or bad depending on what you are doing.

VERSE 22

1. Victory is not obtained by strength but by wisdom. Using what God has given you in your daily life and realizing that our weapons are not carnal in the battle we are in, but spiritual. That is what Paul tells us in II Corinthians 10:4. What does that mean?

We don't fight with physical weapons this spiritual battle; you will not win this battle in the flesh! Our weapons are spiritual and they are the Word of God, which is the sword of the Spirit and prayer for our offensive weapons. Our defensive weapons are the belt of truth which holds us up and keeps us from tripping over ourselves. The breastplate of righteousness is that which protects our heart. Our feet are firmly planted upon the Gospel of peace. There is the shield of faith that will quench the fiery darts that Satan will fire at us. There is the helmet of salvation that will protect our mind from the evil one.

What are we fighting against? Those that are exalting themselves above God and against the knowledge of God like Scientists, evolutionists, philosophers, and religionists and the like! The Word of God defeats them and prayer defeats them and they will not get at us if we put on our spiritual armor!

Does that really work? You bet it does! Clarke tells us, “In like manner the doctrines of the *reformation*, mighty through God, pulled down – demolished and brought into captivity, the whole papal system; and instead of obedience to the pope, the pretended vicar of God upon the earth, obedience to Christ, as the sole almighty Head of the Church, was established, particularly in Great Britain, where it continues to prevail. Hallelujah! The Lord God Omnipotent reigneth!” Thus, may we bring our thoughts to the obedience of Christ and pull down the strongholds of the enemy in our families, neighborhoods, work places, cities and-so-on!

VERSE 23

1. Men, do I need to say more?

VERSE 24

1. The Amplified Bible puts this verse like this, “**The proud and haughty man - Scoffer is his name - deals and acts with overbearing pride.**” In other words Solomon is saying that the name reflects the character of a person. What do people call you?

VERSES 25-26

1. The lazy person wants so much and yet he can’t obtain it because he refuses to work. And that passion to obtain things that he refuses to work for kills him. On the other end of the spectrum is the righteous man who works hard and he earns money and the money he earns he uses to minister to others with. Please understand that he does not help the lazy person but the needy person!

VERSE 27

1. Talk about wicked. Here is this wicked person who gives to God and God does not accept it. Not only that but the wicked person is giving to God to buy God off you might say, to get God to approve of what he is doing and God will never approve of sin, of wickedness!

VERSE 28

1. Let me share with you how The Amplified Bible puts this verse, “**A false witness will perish, but the word of a man who hears attentively will endure and go unchallenged.**” How often the false witness will speak of telling the truth but that is just another lie! But the person who listens carefully and gives an honest answer, his words will not be challenged!

VERSE 29

1. Here is a person who is un-teachable, they know it all and there is nothing you can say to change their mind. They have hardened their hearts to God. They refuse to be directed by God. On the other hand, we rejoice in God’s direction, that He establishes a path for us to take for His way is the best way for us. He is our Shepherd and He leads us, may we follow after Him!

VERSE 30

1. Do you think that there is even the slightest chance you can outsmart God? You can’t fight against God and win. If you try to go against the will of God, His Word, you will lose. It is as Paul said in II Corinthians 13:8, “**For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth.**” And as Jeremiah 51:29 says, “**... For every purpose of the Lord shall be performed ...**”

VERSE 31

1. We might not think much of a horse today but the horse back then was like the tank of today. It would give you an advantage in battle. What is interesting is that the Lord told Israel not to multiply horses. Why?

Because He did not want them trusting in them for their military strength to give them the victory. You see, human nature would take over and they would give themselves a pat on the back for the victory instead of praising and thanking God for the victory! He wanted them to trust in Him for the victory and thus He would get the glory.

It is as Psalm 33:16-20 says, **“No king is saved by the multitude of an army; A mighty man is not delivered by great strength. A horse is a vain hope for safety; Neither shall it deliver any by its great strength. Behold, the eye of the LORD is on those who fear Him, On those who hope in His mercy, To deliver their soul from death, And to keep them alive in famine. Our soul waits for the LORD; He is our help and our shield.”** We need to learn to trust in the Lord and not in the power of our might!

2. As I close this evening let me leave you with this to think about regarding the last two verses we looked at this evening. You can sum up verses 30 and 31 in the following way. There is nothing you can do that will avail against God, nothing you can do to outsmart Him or get the upper hand upon Him. And there is nothing you can do that will avail without God; you can do nothing apart from Him!

As we are told in II Chronicles 14:11, “**And Asa cried out to the Lord his God, and said, ‘Lord, it is nothing for You to help, whether with many or with those who have no power; help us, O Lord our God, for we rest on You, and in Your name we go against this multitude. O Lord, You are our God; do not let man prevail against You!’**” Asa understood that he could do nothing on his own to gain this victory and thus, he brought it to the Lord because apart from the Lord there would be no victory. May we never lose sight of that!