

**PROVERBS**

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Proverbs chapter 22 as we continue our study through the Word of God. We began way back in Proverbs chapter 10 with a section where every verse was its own Proverb and this continued on into Proverbs 22:16, some 375 different Proverbs that Solomon is giving to us and each one is distinct in itself. From Proverbs 22:17 on through Proverbs 31:31 we will see more of several verses dealing with a Proverb for the most part. With that said, let's begin reading in Proverbs chapter 22 starting in verse 1 and let's see what the Lord has for us as we study through His Word.

**PROVERBS 22****VERSE 1**

1. Interestingly enough many people today think money, possessions are more important than your character and that is what Solomon is talking about here, not your name given to you by your parents. And people will lie, cheat, steal, do whatever it takes to gain riches. If you doubt that just watch some of these reality television shows and see how these people behave to gain money.

As Christians our character should be above reproach, it should reflect the character of God. Let me share this story with you and then I will expound on it.

The story is told that, as Alexander the Great reviewed his troops one day, one of his soldiers slouched a bit. “What’s your problem?” Alexander asked him. The soldier explained that he had been out on the town the night before. “What’s your name?” Alexander asked. “Alexander,” the soldier answered. The general said, “Either change your conduct or change your name.”

- Source Unknown

I think that drives home the point. We are representing our Lord in all that we do. I realize that some of you may think that no one is watching but I will tell you this, they are watching you. And here’s the thing. If you take care of your character, then God will take care of your reputation no matter what false accusations may come your way.

Remember what Paul said in Philippians 2:14-15, “**Do all things without complaining and disputing, that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world.**” What a privilege it is to carry the Lord’s name and be His representative to a world that is in darkness. May we shine for Him, and as Solomon said, our character is more precious than great riches; it is more precious than all the possessions you could ever obtain!

VERSE 2

1. Let me clarify this. Solomon is not speaking of the universal brotherhood of man or that we are all saved. He is speaking of God being the creator of all men. You see, there truly is only one race, the human race and we are all part of that. Being rich does not mean that God loves you more and being poor does not mean that God loves you less. We are on an equal plain you might say. And yet here is where we need to be careful. Those that have more tend to look down upon those that have less and God says that is wrong. And think about this for a minute. All those class distinctions that we have built up in life are abolished in death! Thus, don't build them up now; we have all been created by God!

2. Yes God has created the rich and the poor, He has created all of us but there is one important point we need to touch on. He is not the Father of them all! What do I mean by that? Listen to what we are told in John 1:12, **“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name.”** You see, we only become children of God when we receive Jesus Christ into our life by faith, asking Him to be Lord and Savior of our lives! So there are those that are children of God the Father and there are those that are children of the Devil because they rejected the free gift of life that God is giving to them and that free gift is found in Christ!

VERSE 3

1. A wise person will count the cost of his actions before he ventures down that path. If it leads to destruction he will avoid it. A fool will run head first into it and suffer the consequences of his actions.

2. Now how does this apply to us as Christians? We find our refuge in Christ, we saw the danger that was out there and we have come to the strong tower for that safety. On the other hand, the foolish person does not see the danger or doesn't care and outside of Christ they are headed for destruction!

#### VERSE 4

1. I think many times we as Christians have bought into the world's mentality of grabbing for the gusto you might say at any cost. And yet Solomon is saying that we can be blessed by living a humble life in the fear of God! Some don't see this as being that great, maybe they even think it is dull to live like that! Have you ever tried it? We can have spiritual riches, honor from God and that abundant life that is only found in Him. It is as Paul said in Ephesians 1:3, "**Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.**" May we not forget that!

#### VERSE 5

1. Isn't it wise to avoid the thorns and snares that line the path of life? Of course it is and yet a foolish person is one who needlessly walks in these threatening places, not knowing or caring what a dangerous position he is in. In other words as we just read in Proverbs 22:4, "**By humility and the fear of the Lord Are riches and honor and life.**" Or as The Living Bible puts it, "**True humility and respect for the Lord lead a man to riches, honor, and long life.**" May we be humble and wise!

VERSE 6

1. Here's the thing, if you train up a child in the ways that he wants to go then he will grow up being spoiled and self-centered! Jay Adams points this out to us as he writes, "The verse stands not as a promise but as a warning to parents that if they allow a child to train himself after his own wishes (permissively), they should not expect him to want to change these patterns when he matures. Children are born sinners and, when allowed to follow their own wishes, will naturally develop sinful habit responses. The basic thought is that such habit patterns become deep-seated when they have been ingrained in the child from the earliest days." And we see the results of not disciplining children today. And we don't discipline children because we don't want to hurt their fragile self-esteem and thus, they grow up being spoiled and self-centered like I have said!

2. Solomon is telling us what we are to do as parents in raising our children. He says that we are to "**Train up a child**" and the Hebrew word is CHANAK, (khaw-nak') and it speaks of discipline, dedicating that child to the Lord you might say. And training is different than teaching. Yes we need to teach our children the things of God, the ways of God but then we need to train them up or help them to put these things into practice.

I have seen over the years many Registered Nurses that were book smart, a lot smarter than me. But when it came to application it was scary, they did not know what to do. They had the information but could not apply it to their life! The same is true here. We need to let our children see that our faith is real and we will make mistakes and how we handle those situations will help them to grow as they see us live out our faith! And help them to apply the lessons, the Word of God to their lives as they live out their faith!

Henry Ward Beecher makes this interesting and I believe correct observation. He wrote, “It is not hard to make a child or a tree grow right if you train them when they’re young, but to make them straighten out after you’ve allowed things to go wrong is not an easy matter.” How true that is.

3. Solomon also says, “**And when he is old he will not depart from it.**” Does that mean if we train our children in the things of God that every one of them will grow up to be strong, mature Christians, none will fall away? I wish that were true. This is a principle and I will say this. If you don’t train your child in the things of God it is going to be a lot harder for them to come to faith, not impossible because all things are possible with God! You see, the problem comes because each person has a free will to do what he or she wants. They have a choice. But if you fill their lives with the things of God they will always be there and like I have said there is a much better chance for them coming to the Lord if they have been trained in the ways that they should go when they are young! You do your part and let God do His part and see the salvation that He can bring to our children’s lives!

#### VERSE 7

1. First of all we see that money is power and many times people will use that for evil. Yes, it can be used for good or evil, but the heart of man is evil and many times that is the direction he goes. Also, don’t get yourself into such a debt that you become a slave to it, working 2 jobs to stay afloat! Make no mistake about it; debt is a form of bondage. Be careful and be warned!

VERSE 8

1. Again we see the principle of what you sow is what you will reap. Another way to look at this is if you go looking for trouble you will find it! And you can get angry about it, you can take it out on others, but in the end you will lose!

VERSE 9

1. Do you close your eyes to the needs of those around you? If you do then you do not have a good eye, you are not looking out for others and in the end you will not be blessed. But if your eye is good, if you are looking out for the needs of others, there is a blessing.

Remember what Solomon said in Proverbs 11:24-25, **“There is one who scatters, yet increases more; And there is one who withholds more than is right, But it leads to poverty. The generous soul will be made rich, And he who waters will also be watered himself.”** And from Proverbs 19:17 we are told, **“He who has pity on the poor lends to the LORD, And He will pay back what he has given.”** May we keep our eyes open to those in need and not just physical needs, those who are in spiritual need, those who need the Lord!

VERSE 10

1. This is pretty straight forward but let me also say this. When a person causes trouble you first go to them and talk with them. But if they are bent on trouble, if they continue to mock and cause disrespect, then evict them you might say from your life, cast them out! If you don't, it will only cause trouble. That may seem harsh but remember what Proverbs 26:20 says, **“Where there is no wood, the fire goes out; And where there is no talebearer, strife ceases.”** Remove the fuel, don't feed the fire, and it will go out.

VERSE 11

1. God wants us to have a pure heart and to speak forth with grace upon our lips. I don't know about you but to me it is a blessing to be around people with a gentle spirit like this. And folk's, I think we need to start every day surrendering our lives to the Spirit of God so that these things would be manifested in our lives instead of the works of the flesh. And as we live this way the King of kings will be honored by it.

VERSE 12

1. I realize that as you look at what is going on in churches across America and the world it can get very discouraging. You see God's Word covered up with all kinds of other things and it looks like God's Word will fade away. The problem is we are looking at things through the eyes of man and not through the eyes of God. We need to put our Bible glasses on and see things through God's Word. You see, make no mistake about it; God's truth will always stand.

Remember what Jesus said in Matthew 5:18, **“For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.”**

Now to us, that which may seem very small, very unimportant in regards to the Word of God, Jesus says it is very important. He speaks of a “**jot**” which is the smallest Hebrew letter, yod, and it looks like an apostrophe. There are approximately 66,420 yods in the Old Testament!



He also speaks of the “**tittle**” which is a very tiny stroke to a letter and is the Hebrew word serif. This mark distinguishes one Hebrew letter from another. And there are an innumerable number of little serifs in the Old Testament. Think of these serifs like this. In the English language there is a little mark on the bottom of a capital E that distinguishes it from a capital F. That is all it is! And Jesus is saying all that is written in the Word of God is significant, it is important, even a yod and a serif or a jot and a tittle! In fact, the rabbis believed that even the spaces between words have meaning and when the Messiah comes He will explain them!

And notice the exclamation mark that Jesus puts on all this. He tells us that heaven and earth will not pass away until all this comes to pass! You see, when God creates a new heavens and the new earth, all this will be done away with, it will no longer be needed. But until that time God’s Word will continue on and there are consequences to not obeying God and/or teaching others not to! You see, the false teaching, the lies will be exposed and they will be overthrown. They will not stand and everything they built their faith upon will come crashing down upon them.

### VERSE 13

1. We have missed this guy, we have not heard about this slothful or lazy man since last week! No we really have not missed him. Here’s the thing. A lazy person will find any excuse for not going to work and if that is not good enough, he will make one up, even if it sounds foolish like this one. Really, a lion out on the city street, it is probably a cat but a cat is not going to stop you from working. So he exaggerates and says it is a lion and you have to stay inside, it is too dangerous to go outside now! “Meow!” Man, if they would put that kind of energy into work they would be doing good. But they don’t and that is the problem!

VERSE 14

1. Here is this immoral woman with her seductive words and she is out looking to find someone to trap them. Also, here is a man who has turned from the Lord and guess what happens? You got it, he falls right into her trap and he can't escape. You see, as you rebel against God you are drawn into many perverse lifestyles.

Listen to what Paul said in Romans chapter 1 and it should open your eyes if you are heading in that direction. He said, **“Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves . . . For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. . . . And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting.”** Romans 1:24, 26, 28. Notice the key, they turned from God and God gave them over to these vile passions, the things that were in their own heart. That is the warning, may you listen and obey what the Lord has said or you will be caught in this seductive trap!

VERSE 15

1. How often do we hear people, psychologists try to tell us that children are good and yet the Bible tells us the exact opposite. They need to be trained up in how to live out their lives, they need correction. And think about it, if we are sinners why do we think our children are any better, they are not! And please understand that Solomon is speaking of discipline, not abuse. If a child is left to his own nature, which is sin, he will become an adult who is out of control. They have to be taught and trained in how they are to walk and that continues on through life as God molds and shapes our lives. We never stop growing and if we do we are backsliding!

It is as Matthew Henry wrote, “Children need to be corrected, and kept under discipline, by their parents; and we all need to be corrected by our heavenly Father (Heb. xii 6, 7), and under the correction we must stroke down folly and kiss the rod.”

#### VERSE 16

1. Again the idea here is that what you sow you will reap. If you take advantage of people to make money, you will not win in the end. If you give to the rich to court their favor for something, again, you will not win in the end. God is the defender of the underdog. He watches over the orphaned, the poor, the widow and the stranger. And I know many like to take advantage of people who are in these positions, but God will deal with you as you have dealt with them. Be warned!

2. This closes out the section of one verse Proverbs that began back in Proverbs chapter 10, some 375 different Proverbs!

#### VERSES 17-21

1. Solomon is going to speak on some issues here and he wants us to pay attention. He wants us to hear, apply, keep, stay fixed upon these things, understanding that these truths are from God and share them with others.

Now let me say this. Yes Solomon is speaking of these words that he wrote but I believe it is speaking of even more than that. I believe it is speaking of the whole counsel of God, from Genesis through the book of Revelation is God’s Word to us and it instructs us how to live out our faith as we are brought to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

2. Today we see Christian counselors and therapists and-so-on, but do you realize that is what we all are! When people are struggling, when their marriage is on the rocks, when their home is in disorder, when this is happening or that is happening do you really need a degree to solve that problem? Of course you don't. You need the Word of God!

God's Word says, "**So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.**" Isaiah 55:11.

The only time God's Word can't help a person is when they refuse to receive it into their lives, apply it to their lives. It doesn't mean that God's Word is weak it is just that we refuse to accept it into our lives and God will never force us. When I do counseling I give them the Word of God. For people with marriage problems, I have a booklet that I put together that makes them go into the Word of God and see how they are to be living out their faith in a marriage relationship. Again, they can accept it or reject it but it does not change the fact that God's Word is living and powerful and it can change lives if you allow it to!

#### VERSES 22-23

1. Once again we see this played out in our society where people take advantage of the poor, the less fortunate because they see them as an easy target. But if you do that you have a bigger problem, you are fighting against God and if you take advantage of the poor, you will lose!

VERSES 24-25

1. Solomon is warning us not to befriend an angry person. Why? The reason is simple, you will become like the person you keep company with. He will bring you down to his level. You will learn his ways. And before long you too will be an angry person. Paul put it like this in I Corinthians 15:33, **“Do not be deceived: ‘Evil company corrupts good habits.’”** And let me say this. I am not saying we can’t talk with unsaved people, that would be foolish and it is not Scriptural. But we are not to be close friends, intimate friends with them because they will bring you down.

VERSES 26-27

1. Solomon keeps going over several points and this is one of them. He is telling us that we are not to co-sign a loan if you can’t afford to pay it off when they stop paying. You can lose everything if you extend yourself this way. Count the cost before you do it and if you can’t afford to do it, then don’t do it!

VERSE 28

1. The boundary lines were set by placing piles of stones up and these boundaries were established for generations. Now at night some may sneak out and change those boundary lines to give them extra land and God is warning against this kind of activity.

2. How does that relate to us spiritually speaking? Remember what Jude said to us in Jude 3, **“Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.”**

You see, God has set the boundaries, the doctrines of our faith and He has delivered it to us and yet there are those that are trying to change those boundaries you might say, move those stones. They use to do this in the stealth of the night you might say but now it is just blatant.

I want to take a few minutes to expound on this because I believe it is important for us to understand in these days we are living in. When Jude says that we are to **“earnestly contend”** he uses the Greek word, EPAGONIZOMAI, (ep-ag-o-nid’-zom-ahee).

It is a word that was related to an athletic competition, it speaks of being diligent, to agonize earnestly, it speaks of hard work, not pacifism! And this word is in the present infinitive, which means it is a continuous struggle for us Christians! It will continue until the Lord comes. It was going on in Jude’s day and it continues on into our day and it is getting more intense this battle for the truth. Paul exhorted Timothy, **“Fight the good fight of faith”** in I Timothy 6:12. You see, it is not time to give up or give in because lives are at stake!

I want to dig a little deeper regarding this faith that Jude is speaking of, this faith that we are to be fighting for. Jude is speaking of “the essential truths of the Gospel that all true Christians hold in common.”

Thus, we must earnestly contend for the truths of God found in the Word of God! Now, do we see that happening in the church today, this departure from the truths of God found in the Word of God? Yes and the reason is simple, many are not contending earnestly for this faith, they are unwilling to fight this good fight of faith! You see, it is not about what I believe or what you believe, but it is the Gospel message, the truths of God found in the Word of God! These false teachers, these false doctrines would disappear if people would expose them for what they are instead of embracing them! But we don't see that happening much today!

Also note that Jude says that this faith **“was once for all delivered to the saints.”** Have you ever heard someone say something like this, “We are living in different and difficult times from when the Bible was written and thus, we must adapt the Bible to the way we are currently living, to fit in with the culture of our day”?

Sorry, but what God has said is unchanging, it has been delivered and we don't need new revelations or a new Gospel for the days we are living in. It is as Erdman put it, “There is no other gospel, there will be none. Its content will be more fully understood, its implications will be developed, its predictions will be fulfilled; but it will never be supplemented or succeeded or supplanted.” Paul makes it very clear what he brings to people and what it is able to do in their lives as he wrote in Romans 1:16, **“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.”**

Don't let people, teachers, leaders move those ancient landmarks or boundaries. Stand strong in the faith that was delivered to us and proclaim it loud and strong!

VERSE 29

1. Solomon is telling us to do our best on the job, be honest in our business dealings. If we do we will be blessed. One example is that of Joseph, sold into slavery by his brothers. Then thrown into prison for something he didn't do. And because in all his actions he did not compromise, God raised him up to be second in command over all of Egypt and placed him in a position to save his people, his family from the famine that had swept across the land. In other words, cream rises to the surface! And we see this in the lives of Moses and Daniel and Nehemiah and Jeremiah and-so-on.

And the key as we are diligent in serving the Lord is that one day we will hear Him say to us, “**. . . ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’**” Matthew 25:21.

**PROVERBS 23**VERSES 1-3

1. Kind of a strange Proverb by Solomon and I don't believe that this is a warning about over eating, even though we should not, that is important. As you look at verse 3 it gives us an indication of what this is about. You see, after you are filled to the brim with this meal this person may ask you to do a favor for them. They are trying to get you to do something by satisfying your hunger and that can get you in trouble. Count the cost, be wise, know what you are getting yourself into!



VERSES 4-5

1. The idea here is that this person is spending his life pursuing false values and trusting in things that won't last. Solomon wants us to be wise in this area so we don't allow money to consume our life. And those that do are never satisfied. J. Vernon McGee wrote, "A wealthy man told me, 'I do not make money for the sake of money. I make money for what it can do. At first I made money for what it could do for me. Now I make money for what it can do for God.' There is nothing wrong in a man becoming wealthy. The wrong comes when there is the overweening desire of the heart for money. That is covetousness; actually it is modern idolatry." Exactly!

Noticed how Paul warned Timothy about the destructive powers money has on people. We are told in I Timothy 6:9-10, "**But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.**"

Don't focus on the temporary things of this world, but on the eternal. Have a proper perspective of money, riches, and possessions. Paul told Timothy, "**Now godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content.**" I Timothy 6:6-8. Be satisfied in what God has given you and don't put your focus on what money can do for you, but how it can assist in building up the Kingdom of God!

VERSES 6-8

1. Here is another one that is strange you might say. This is a person who tells you to eat up, there is plenty for everyone, but deep down inside he doesn't want you to eat a lot. Why is that? Because he wants leftovers, he wants more for himself. And those thoughts in his heart will surface from his lips and will make you want to give back what you have eaten. He will make you feel guilty for eating as much as you did!

VERSE 9

1. In other words, don't waste your breath speaking to a fool; don't waste your time because they are not going to listen to you. And the reality is, a fool is someone who refuses to heed the Word of God and you can waste a lot of time going nowhere with a person like this.

Along those same lines, Jesus said in Matthew 7:6, "**Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces.**" The pearls are God's holy truth, the wild dogs and filthy swine are those that refuse to listen and obey God's truth. We must discern what to say and who to say it to. If some people refuse to hear, then shake off the dust from your feet and move on, don't cast pearls before swine. They are not interested in the wisdom of God!

VERSES 10-11

1. The idea here is simple. Don't dishonestly take the property of someone else, in this case by moving their landmarks. Don't take away the fields of the defenseless person, the poor, the fatherless. Why? Because the Lord is watching out for them and He will repay you for the wickedness you did upon them! It is as Psalm 146:9 says, "**The LORD watches over the strangers; He relieves the fatherless and widow; But the way of the wicked He turns upside down.**"

VERSE 12

1. We don't necessarily like this. We like, "Learn seven foreign languages in three easy lessons!" But that is not how it works. It takes time and what I want you to see here is that we are not just to listen with our ears, but also with our heart. In other words we need to let the Word of God sink deep down into our heart, and like a surgical instrument, cut away the hardness that builds around it. Head knowledge will puff up if that is as far as it goes. Let it sink deep into our lives and become part of our walk!

VERSES 13-14

1. "Did you hear what Solomon said? We need to call Child and Family Services and report this guy!" I realize that this is not politically correct but if you don't discipline your child it just shows that you don't love them. This is not child abuse; you are not beating them to death. You are giving to them the rod of correction so that they may see their error and be delivered from a life that will lead to destruction!

The whole intention is to prevent the child from growing up and being a rebellious, troublesome adult. A good spanking won't kill a child, but a lack of discipline can destroy him. We must be careful not to discipline our children out of anger, but out of love. Proverbs 19:18 says **“Chasten your son while there is hope, And do not set your heart on his destruction.”**

2. Even God corrects us not because He hates us or is angry with us but because He is our heavenly Father and He loves us so much that He does not want us to continue down that path of destruction. Let me illustrate this for you with this illustration. A shepherd that had a wayward lamb, a lamb who refused to obey but continually wandered away from the rest of the flock, is only looking for trouble. He may even cause the other sheep to follow him!

Because of that the shepherd may have to break one of his legs, re-set it, and then carry that lamb close to his heart until his leg is healed. Out of that love and discipline that lamb will stay close by his shepherd, not wandering into dangerous areas and getting into trouble, maybe even killed. Now I am not saying go and break your child's leg, but many times that stubborn, rebellious will of the child needs to be broken in love. You see, if you really love your children you will teach them and train them in the things of God, and at times you will have to correct them. Look at our society today and see the results of what no discipline does!

VERSES 15-16

1. Out of that discipline we see the son who grows up loving the Lord and his life is blessed.

Make no mistake about it, there is tremendous joy when we see our children walk in the ways of God, make wise decisions. John said in speaking of those that he lead to the Lord, **“I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.”** III John 4. On the other end of that spectrum there is pain when we see our children make foolish decisions and go against the ways of God.

VERSES 17-18

1. What a great warning to us and really, perspective is everything folks. When we take our eyes off the Lord we many times begin to covet what the world has. We desire to have the toys they have, the homes they have, the cars they have, the vacations they have, and-so-on. Solomon is telling us not to lose focus, keep your eyes focused on the Lord, walk in His ways, because the wicked are not going to get away with anything. You see, our reward is not found in this world, even though we are tremendously blessed, but when Jesus comes, our rewards will be with Him.

Now I am not saying we are not blessed in this life, we are. And there is great joy in serving the Lord, but for us, this is the worst that it gets! This life is not all there is, even though some may live that way. This life is but a vapor in these bodies of flesh. Thus, what path are you taking in this life, one that leads to everlasting life in Christ, or everlasting punishment outside of Christ?

VERSES 19-21

1. Solomon is saying that if your life is focused on eating, drinking and being merry then you will wake up one day and you will find yourself poor! It may not be monetarily but it will definitely be spiritually poor! Solomon is warning us to stay away from the destructive life of people that party all the time, for they will bring you down.

VERSE 22

1. Why don't young people listen to their parents? Because they know it all! This is one of the tragedies of our society, we don't look upon the wisdom of the elderly, our parents, and in doing so we don't learn those lessons that they have learned. We need to benefit from their wisdom!

VERSE 23

1. I don't think people today realize how important truth, wisdom, instruction, and understanding in the things of God are in your life! Are you willing to sell everything, go to great lengths to obtain these things of God, not willing to sell or sacrifice them for anything else? We should be willing to do that!

What do I mean by going to great lengths to obtain these things? In Job 28:12-15 we are told, **“But where can wisdom be found? And where is the place of understanding? Man does not know its value, Nor is it found in the land of the living. The deep says, ‘It is not in me’; And the sea says, ‘It is not with me.’ It cannot be purchased for gold, Nor can silver be weighed for its price.”**

Then how do we obtain this wisdom? Job tells us that it must be mined like gold or silver or precious stones. What I mean by that is that you must dig through the Word of God and as you do you will find things that are more precious than these metals or stones, for these things are eternal truths, life changing truths. Never let go of them and never sell them for the fleeting pleasures of this world!

#### VERSES 24-25

1. Solomon is admonishing his children to walk in the ways of the Lord so they could be proud parents, rejoicing in the path their children have taken. That is the best present any child can give their parents!

#### VERSES 26-28

1. Notice the heart of Solomon here. He is pleading with his son's to listen to this warning, to pay attention and learn this lesson before they are taken captive by a harlot, a seductress. Once you fall prey to their enticing it is like falling into a narrow well from which you can't get out of.

The point is that not only do women do this, but men also lie in wait to cause people to stumble, to sin, to fall prey to these promiscuous activities. Solomon speaks of the woman because he is speaking to his sons. How many lives have been destroyed by these activities and how many more are lying in wait? Don't be a fool; don't go down that path of destruction, for Solomon said, **“Her house is the way to hell, Descending to the chambers of death.”** Proverbs 7:27. There is the warning, now be wise and listen, obey what the Lord is saying.

2. In the next several verses Solomon is going to speak on drunkenness and its effects on our life. Remember what he said in Proverbs 20:1, **“Wine is a mocker, Strong drink is a brawler, And whoever is led astray by it is not wise.”** Now he is going to continue that thought beginning in verse 29. And let me just say this. The Bible does not condemn drinking alcohol, it condemns drunkenness. I just think, in our society today, it is not wise to drink alcohol. It is not wrong, just not wise.

### VERSE 29

1. Solomon paints for us a picture of what it is like to wake up in the morning after a person has drunk themselves to the point of drunkenness the night before. They feel the pain because of the fights they were in. The heartaches they have caused and they don't even remember what they did. They wake up with bruises they don't even know how they got. And their eyes are red, blood shoot. And what are we told, “It doesn't get any better than this!” I can tell you it does and I am a living example of that. I would rather be filled with the Holy Spirit than drunk like a skunk with alcohol because I know what I am doing as I am filled with the Holy Spirit. I won't be hurting myself or anyone else! Listen to what he says as he goes on.

### VERSES 30-31

1. Solomon is speaking of wine after it has fermented and notice the picture that he is painting here. Don't be enticed by it, taken captive by it. Why? He is going to explain the reason why!



VERSE 32

1. Alcohol is a poison, it will destroy your liver and brain cells, and let's face it, some of us can't afford to lose those brain cells we have.

VERSE 33

1. I have been around some people who have drunk way too much and many times they become obnoxious and do things that they would not normally do. I have done that in the past as well. And what happens is it allows us to do things we would not normally do, things that seem to be out of character for us. And Solomon tells us that there comes a point when they begin to see things that are not there, those pink elephants or whatever before your eyes.

VERSES 34-35

1. Let me ask you this. When a person is drunk do they really care where they lay down? Absolutely not, they lay anywhere and everywhere! They crash on park benches, lawns, floors, and-so-on. Sometimes they place themselves in a position where it takes their life!

2. Solomon concludes this section by saying that when this person is drunk they don't feel it. Now that is not exactly true. They will feel it the next day! And this is not a good thing; many times it leads to bondage, bondage to alcohol. Night after night they drink and they wake up in the morning longing for another drink, and they are slowly killing themselves and many times other people because of their actions!

So should Christians drink? I guess a better question is, “Can Christians drink?” As I have said they can, drunkenness is what the Bible speaks against. But I just don’t think it is a good idea today. We have so many different alternatives today, which they did not have back then.

And I do understand we are free in Christ, but let me give you a little test to use in whatever you do, not only drinking alcohol. Does it help me or hurt me? Does it build me up or tear me down? Does it help me to grow or hinder my growth? Will this cause others to stumble or fall? When you apply your actions to those ideas I think you will have a clear indication of what you are to do and what you are not to do!

If you have a glass of wine with a meal you are not headed for Hell. If you have a beer watching the game you are not damned for eternity. Just be wise and don’t become in bondage to alcohol, it has destroyed many lives and it continues to do so. Approximately 30% of people in the U.S. report experiencing an alcohol disorder at one point in their lifetime. It is a problem and the solution for those involved in this bondage is Jesus. He came to set us free from the bondage this world puts upon us. I will close with these words from Jesus in John 8:36, “**Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.**” Amen to that!