

Wisdom from Proverbs 20

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Preacher: Nathan Rambeck

- [0 : 0 0] Us, we're going to be in Proverbs chapter 20. So open up to Proverbs chapter 20.
- I should have bookmarked it. If you're newer to the Bible, not sure where Proverbs is at, it's right about smack dab in the middle.
- And so just as a reminder, we have been going through the book of Proverbs. I think this is maybe the fifth or sixth week. We're not going through every chapter, but we've been just hitting several chapters, trying to get just an overall feel for how to approach Proverbs, how to read it.
- Some of the things like figures of speech, themes, ways of speaking that we find in the Proverbs. Today we'll be going through chapter 20.
- And again, this is another one of those chapters that's just a list of little nuggets of wisdom. Today, some of the things that we'll cover are the topic of laziness.
- [1 : 1 5] Also, seeking counsel from wise people. Some advice on seeking counsel or some wisdom regarding seeking counsel from wise people.
- The risk of an inheritance or a windfall. Well, how could that be risky, getting a windfall? And then towards the end, we'll be considering the wisdom of corporal punishment.
- So as we usually do or have been through Proverbs anyway, we're just going to go verse by verse. Some of these we'll go through quickly. Some of them I might just read because we've already kind of covered the same type of thing in the previous weeks.
- And others we'll spend more time on. So verse 1. This is referencing, obviously, alcohol and the need to be careful when it comes to alcohol.
- We've talked about this before, but alcohol is something that is in the Bible, wine specifically. And it is a biblical thing to drink wine.
- [2 : 3 0] Jesus had his miracle where he turned water into wine at a wedding. There are even certain verses that have a certain amount of positivity towards wine.
- But drunkenness is something that the Bible thoroughly condemns as something that is both sinful and is sinful because it is destructive.
- Here, there's interesting two kind of views or illustrations given to wine. Wine is both a brawler, somebody who is a fighter, somebody who gets into fights.
- And it is also a mocker, a mocker. We think of somebody who's making fun of people. And I think people understand today that there tends to be two kind of outcomes of somebody who gets drunk.
- You have your angry drunk, right? And then your silly drunk. And a lot of times, most people, I think, generally condemn the angry drunk. But a lot of times we laugh, you know, oh, that's fun when somebody is a silly drunk.
- [3 : 3 2] And it's not funny. The Bible doesn't think it's funny. And we shouldn't either. Both are equally destructive. One may be destructive in the immediate term when somebody gets into a fight.

But even if you're one of those silly drunks, it's going to bring a lot of destruction, not only into your life, but into the life of those around you. Verse 2.

When you have somebody with a lot of power or a lot of authority over you, you don't want to take them off.

And, you know, this applies, obviously, we don't have kings. We have presidents. We have governors. We have other people that rule over us in the civil realm.

But we also have people who, you know, maybe your boss or, if you're a young person, your parents, they have authority over you. And so, hey, it's just not a good idea to make somebody mad like a roaring lion by provoking them to anger.

[4 : 41] You're going to suffer the consequences. You know, there's an example of this. And in this example, it's actually a righteous example. Who was it in the New Testament that really made a king angry because he rebuked their sin?

It was John the Baptist, remember? John the Baptist rebuked King Herod because he took his, what was it, his brother's wife? And he suffered the consequences.

Now, was it wrong for John the Baptist to do that? No, not by any means. But he did suffer the consequences, didn't he? The wrath, he felt the wrath of King Herod ultimately losing his head for righteousness sake.

But still, the proverb still rings true. It doesn't mean that you should never provoke somebody, especially when they need to be provoked, when it comes to something like sin.

But, hey, just keep in mind, there will be consequences to that. Verse 3, it is honorable for a man to stop striving since any fool can start a quarrel.

[5 : 51] This is about making peace. And, you know, like Solomon says here, it's not hard to start a quarrel. Any fool can do it. It doesn't take wisdom.

Anyone can do it at any age to start a fight. But ending a quarrel, now that's another matter. It takes wisdom, skill, humility to end a quarrel.

There's multiple ways. Sometimes it's through appeasement. The Proverbs have talked about giving gifts to people as a way to appease them. Proverbs also talks about a soft answer turns away wrath.

Sometimes just talking, responding gently or softly to somebody. And, you know, sometimes a quarrel needs to be ended through an apology. And it's not that we should make up an apology and pretend that we were at fault.

But many times we are at least one person at fault. A lot of quarrels are because there's two people or maybe even more that are at fault. But if there's an apology that's due, we can give that.

[6 : 52] And a lot of times that will diffuse a situation. Again, there are some quarrels that are worth starting. You have a family member in your life that, going back to the previous verse, is getting drunk all the time.

And you need to confront them. And it causes a rift, a quarrel between the two of you. And it's worth it to try to prevent them from destroying their life.

But, you know, when there is something that you can diffuse, a situation that you can diffuse or bring it into, to stop the striving, we should seek to do it and use wisdom to do so.

Verse 4. The lazy man will not plow because of winter. He will beg during harvest and have nothing. You know, there is no end to excuses on why we shouldn't do work.

But the bottom line is life doesn't care about your excuses. When it comes to farming, here is farming is in view. Does the ground care that it's really cold outside?

[8 : 06] Does the ground care that you're sick right now and you can't plow? It doesn't care. If you don't get out there and plow the ground, if you don't get out there and sow the seed, if you don't get out there and fertilize the seed, is the ground going to produce fruit?

It's not. The ground actually is a merciless and unforgiving thing. It doesn't care that it's winter. And so, you know, being lazy, having all kinds of excuses on why we can't do this or can't do that, doesn't solve any of those problems.

It doesn't make the principles of seed time and harvest go away. We live in an age, it seems, and I don't know if anybody else has experienced this, but I see this a lot in the workplaces that I've been.

So many excuses for why I can't work today. And a lot of it's tolerated. I'm surprised at how often it's tolerated. I guess there's some businesses, they have enough money where it can work.

It kind of works. They're able to put up with those types of things. But in other businesses, it just doesn't. And so after so many excuses, we're going to let you go.

[9 : 33] My brother has this saying in his household regarding excuses. Excuses. You know, kids like to give excuses on why they can't do this or that or why they didn't do this or that.

And so he tells his kids, excuses are like armpits. Everybody has two of them and they both stink. And so there's plenty, there's always a reason, there's always an excuse on why we can't do what we need to do.

But we ought to be diligent at all times and get the work done that needs to be done. Verse 5. Counsel in the heart of a man is like deep water, but a man of understanding will draw it out.

This is about getting wisdom from other men or women. You know, when we're seeking wisdom from other people, there might be a person in our life or in our sphere that has wisdom that we need.

But they're not the kind of person to write a book or to give a speech or a sermon or something like that. There is wisdom on the inside of them that does not come out easily.

[10 : 47] And so if you want that wisdom and you see the value of it, there's some work that you have to do on your part to draw that out. And what is the best way to draw out wisdom from somebody who has it?

It's to ask questions. And not just any questions, but really probing questions to dig deep. And the deeper you dig, a lot of times, the more wisdom and the deeper wisdom will come out.

You know, everyone likes to answer questions, especially about themselves, and especially when you're asking for advice. A lot of times, I think people are afraid to ask questions, especially somebody maybe that they don't know too well.

But just some examples, you're somebody who's starting a business and you know somebody who's been successful in business for many years. And so you can go to them and say, hey, here's my business idea or things that I'm having problems with in my business.

How can you help? Sometimes there are mentorship groups. What do they call them these days? These mastermind groups, are people familiar with that term? Where a lot of business owners will get together and they'll talk about things that they're dealing with in their business.

[12 : 01] But I also think about children to adults. You know, when you're young, you don't have a lot of wisdom. You're new. You're new to life. And so you need lots of wisdom.

And you can get some from your parents, but then there are other people around you. And so it's good for young people to find opportunities for older people in their life to just ask questions about this or that, things that you're interested in.

I think about the single to the married, somebody who's looking to find a mate. And you can ask, well, how did you find your spouse?

How did you meet? And what kinds of things did you do? And what kinds of things went wrong during the dating process? You can learn from people who wouldn't maybe share otherwise. Or I think about a new parent with a brand new baby, and they can find somebody who's had children for many, many years and ask for their advice.

Ask those probing questions. And the more you dig, the more you can draw that wisdom out, like drawing water from a deep well. Verse 6. There's no shortage of people who think that they're awesome, is there?

[13 : 21] But finding an actually awesome person, who can find them, right? There's not many. There's not many out there. Verse 7. The righteous man walks in his integrity.

His children are blessed after him. You know, the blessings of righteousness, the blessings of walking in integrity, don't just last in your life, in your generation, but they actually produce fruit to your children and even to your grandchildren.

You know, the opposite is true as well. When you build up for your life just trouble and mayhem, your life is one of rebellion and foolishness, that will also impact your children.

And it's not fair to them, but it is the way that the world works. And if that is something that you've experienced, you have an opportunity to turn that around.

That generational, some people call it generational curse. And, you know, the Bible talks about blessings and curses. And so your children can be blessed because of your life, or they can be cursed.

[14 : 33] And if we have been dealing with the curses of our parents or grandparents, we can turn that around by living an upright life, and our children can enjoy a different experience.

But just a little warning here to young people. You know, you might be enjoying in your life the blessings that come about through your parents' faithfulness and integrity.

And you might get the idea that the blessings that I'm enjoying are because of me. And so we ought to be careful, right? And don't fall into that trap or that deception.

We shouldn't deceive ourselves. We should look at our own lives. And if our parents have been upright, we need to follow them in that integrity and not just kind of ride their coattails of blessing.

I think this happens also on a national level, right? Nations. I see this in our country. There's a lot of faithfulness towards the Lord from generations past in this country.

[15 : 37] And we are, in many ways, appreciating or, what's the word I'm looking for, experiencing the blessings of that faithfulness from past generations.

But not because there's as much righteousness today. We're just experiencing those generational blessings from the past. Verse 8.

You know, we talked about this last week. What is the job of a ruler or a king?

It's to uphold justice. That is the one job of a ruler, to uphold justice. And it seems like so many leaders, it seems they do everything but that. And it's not just today.

It's been throughout all of history that has happened. But when you have a good king, somebody who upholds justice, then those who are evildoers, those who are criminals, will be scattered.

[16 : 43] They'll flee just by him looking at them. And that's how it ought to be. If you are a criminal, if you are exploiting others, then you ought to be afraid to be in the presence of a king or any kind of ruler.

But if you are an upright person, then you ought to feel comfortable and safe with him. Paul talked about this whole concept in his letter to the Romans.

This is in chapter 13. He said this, For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Isn't it interesting he uses the word terror?

Rulers are supposed to be a terror. They're supposed to terrify evildoers. He says, Do you want to be unafraid of the authority?

Then do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, you ought to be afraid. For he does not bear the sword in vain.

[17 : 51] For he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil. I think we could use some more of that in our day. What do you think?

I see some nodding of the heads. Verse 9. Who can say, You know, sin is universal.

Romans 3.23 says, For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. And like the previous proverb said, everybody seems to think that they're pure, that their heart is fine, that they are good, or at least good enough, better than most people.

But who, Solomon says, can truly say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure for my sin. And you know, if you don't recognize the impurities in your heart, can you change that?

Can you remove those impurities if you don't recognize them, if you don't see them? And that's one of the most important things. For somebody who does not know the Lord, for somebody who does not seek after the Lord.

[19 : 01] So many people who I've talked to through evangelistic means, the number one kind of response is, Oh, I'm a pretty good person. I don't really need religion or God or whatever.

I'm doing okay. And they're just wrong, aren't they? I mean, the Bible says so, but really all you have to do is ask a few probing questions a lot of times. And you'll find out pretty quickly that they aren't the kind of good person that they think they are.

And recognizing that you're not a good person is the very first step towards coming to the Lord. But also as Christians, we also ought not to think more highly of ourselves than we ought.

And to recognize the sin that might still remain in our own lives so that we can have it exposed and then also dealt with. So that we can become more like the Lord.

And you know, one of the benefits of God's grace where he gives us as a gift his righteousness, a perfect righteousness, regardless of how successful we are at keeping the Proverbs or keeping the law, he declares us as righteous.

[20 : 14] And because of that, there isn't this temptation to kind of paint ourselves as really better than we are. That temptation is so common, isn't it?

Whether it's to paint ourselves that way in front of others or sometimes even to just try to deceive ourselves into thinking that we're better than we are.

But when we know that our peace with God is founded on his righteousness that he gifted to us alone, we don't have to do all that pretense.

We don't have to make things up. We can just let the light of God's word expose any impure thing in us and then work to root it out and become more like him. Verse 10.

Diverse weights and measures and diverse measures, they are both alike, an abomination to the Lord. We've talked about this before so I won't get into it, but this talks about cheating in your business dealings.

[21 : 16] And so we need to be fair in our business dealings and make sure that whatever we promise to somebody, that's what they're getting. But I wanted to at least talk about this word abomination. It's not something we use in everyday English.

And so what is an abomination anyway? Well, I think probably the best synonym in English that we use regularly today is disgust. When something is an abomination, it is disgusting to you. And that's what is being described here.

When the Lord sees unfair business dealings, he's disgusted with it. And not just with it, but with those who deal unfairly.

Verse 11. Even a child is known by his deeds whether what he does is pure and right. And so really this gets down to how can you tell if somebody is a good person or not?

An upright person. And we've already talked about nobody's completely pure. But some people walk in integrity and others don't. So how can you tell? Well, just look at their lives.

[22 : 20] Look at the fruit of their lives. And even with children, right? And I don't know why Solomon brought up children, but here's what I imagine.

It is so common, and I think this is especially the case with moms. Their child just beat up a kid in school, stole his lunch money, and then went out and smoked a joint.

And you get a call from the principal and they tell the parents, this is what happened and what your son did. And you say, oh yeah, but Billy, he's a good boy.

He's such a good kid. It's like, no, he's not. He's rotten. When kids do rotten things, it's because they're rotten. And so what does the Bible say?

Where does sin come from? Is it in our fingers? Is it in our toes? Is it in our nose? Our ears? No, it comes from the heart. It comes from the inside. And so if your child is doing rotten things, then something needs to change.

[23 : 23] There's an adjustment that needs to be made. There's discipline that needs to happen. And a change, preferably from the heart. A change from the heart.

And so if we see that, if you see that in your children, don't ignore it because it's not going to correct itself on its own. We'll talk a little bit more later in a few verses about one of the things that you can do to provide that correction.

But some kind of correction needs to happen. Verse 12. The hearing ear and the seeing eye, the Lord has made them both.

You know, God made us and his creation, the way he made us is just so amazing. A lot of times, we don't, just in our day-to-day life, appreciate all the things that God gave us.

You know, a lot of times when you're sick or something goes wrong in your body, that's when you really appreciate what you had before, right? And the same with somebody who goes blind, somebody who goes deaf or starts to lose their hearing, especially in old age.

[24 : 33] You really appreciate, wow, I appreciate that great hearing that I had. I don't have my glasses on me, but sometimes I might have to step back here and look at my notes. I don't see as well as I used to and I think back in the days, man, I never really appreciated like I should the great eyesight that I used to have.

But God gave us these perceptions. These are the ways that we perceive the world. We have the five senses, right? Hearing and seeing are just two of them, but they're the most common. But I think the reason that this is probably in Proverbs is not just as a matter of thanksgiving to how God created us, but I think really the wisdom of using these senses and not just using them in a very shallow sense, but using them to the fullest extent, right?

We can use our hearing to listen to music, you know, to bebop, to whatever, or we can use our eyes to watch television or whatever it might be, but really, we need to be using our senses, our eyes and our ears and things that are much more important than those things.

To perceive truth and to perceive wisdom. I don't know if you remember this from Mark or reading through the Gospels, but Jesus had, and I didn't write down the reference, but he talked about those, he said, who have ears yet they don't hear, and they have eyes but they don't see, and if they would just look, if they would just perceive with their eyes and listen with their ears, then they would see God's truth.

And so, we need to use our eyes and our ears and all of our senses of perception to not just, you know, enjoy the world around us, but also to perceive good things, true things, righteous things, and grow in that way.

[26 : 33] Verse 13, do not love sleep lest you come to poverty. Open your eyes and you will be satisfied with bread. You know, sleep is a good thing. God designed our bodies to rest once a day.

Sometimes, it can be multiple times a day. Every once in a while, I like to enjoy a nap, and especially, I know, as you get older, those naps become more common. You know, when you're younger, you take a nap when you're a baby, and then as you get into your older age, you also take those naps as well.

But we should not love sleep. We shouldn't love sleep. We should love industry. That's the kind, that's how God created us, to love industry, to love building things, making things, doing work.

And so, if you love sleep, you're gonna, you're gonna find yourself in trouble, and you're gonna find that poverty comes your way. Because, well, you can't make much money while you're sleeping.

I'm sure lots of people have tried, but it doesn't work too well. And if you find yourself that you really love sleep too much, I think, you know, it's an opportunity to evaluate our lives.

[27 : 46] Do I just love sleep more than I ought to? Well, what adjustments can I make to change that? Because, we don't want to love sleep inordinately, more than we ought to.

Verse 14, It is good for nothing, cries the buyer, but when he has gone his way, then he boasts. This is talking about some kind of market arrangement, some buying and selling going on.

And you can see somebody, you know, we don't have this as much today, but I remember I was a missionary in Vietnam, and it seemed like I couldn't go buy anything where I had to haggle for it.

You know, just buying a t-shirt, I got to haggle about the price and of course they see me, they see I'm this rich American and I was living on almost nothing at the time and they're trying to charge me double for just basic necessities and so I got to haggle my way through and so we don't haggle as much these days, usually it has to, it's just bigger purchase items, maybe a car or a house or if you're in business, certain things like that, but we can just go to the store, the price is there and that's what we pay.

But you can imagine maybe going to buy a car and you see this car, it's really nice, you really like it, but as you're talking to the salesman, you point out all these things that are wrong or try to convince them that there's all these things wrong with the car and then you use that as leverage to write get the price down and then maybe the salesman's a sucker and he believes you and gives you that better deal, but it's not a fair price and when you take your car home, you brag to all your friends about how you suckered the salesman by talking down this car that you bought.

[29 : 41] In our business dealings, whether you are a buyer or a seller, we have to be fair. A lot of times we think about the sellers, those who are selling things as the ones who tend to cheat, but also buyers can do the same thing.

So whether you're a buyer or a seller, in all of your business dealings, we need to be fair, honest, and truthful. Verse 15, wisdom is like a treasure.

We should treat it like a treasure. Seek for it like we would any treasure. Verse 16, take the garment of one who is surety for a stranger and hold it as a pledge when it is for a seductress.

Now, I don't know about you, but I had to read this about 15 times to try to figure out what in the world is this talking about. And I think this is probably the most difficult proverb, at least in this chapter.

And so let's see if we can figure this out. Let's just look at some of the details. Taking a garment of one who is surety for a stranger.

[30 : 55] Well, what is surety? Surety is where you kind of put up a collateral or you maybe vouch for somebody. You're putting something on the line regarding either a loan or some other risky thing.

And when it says taking a garment, that is an indication of some kind of surety, some kind of collateral. In fact, in the law of Moses, there is a law about taking someone's garment.

Now, today, taking someone's garment is probably not worth more than 20 bucks at Walmart maybe, if you take somebody's coat. But back then, your coat was something that was of great value, especially if you were a poor person.

This might be one of your most important possessions. In the law, it said if you take somebody's coat as collateral or as surety, give it back to them each night.

Don't let them sleep in the cold if they need their coat for warmth. Anyway, that's why I think why garment is used here. That's part of the law when it came to surety or collateral.

[32 : 11] surety for a stranger. A stranger is somebody that you don't know. Then it talks about holding as a pledge.

That's the same thing as surety. I need something from you to guarantee that I'm going to get back something if this risk goes south, if it goes sideways.

Now, the whole seductress thing adds a whole other complexity and confusion. Looking into this, there are some translations that don't use seductress.

In fact, I think it might just be the King James and the New King James that use the word seductress. It's actually the word for stranger, which typically means a foreigner. There is a masculine version of stranger, which just means foreigner typically.

The feminine of stranger tends to mean a harlot. A strange woman, sometimes we read, is a harlot or a seductress. Even though in the Hebrew here, the word is masculine, most translations actually translate this as stranger instead of seductress.

[33 : 28] There's one primary reason why I think the King James translators use seductress and that's because there's another proverb several chapters away that's almost exactly like this and it uses the feminine of stranger.

So, what do you do? But, I think regardless, the big idea here is that there is somebody who is vouching for a stranger.

Let's give an example. Let's say there is somebody who needs a job, but they're a stranger and you know a business owner who is hiring and you know the stranger to some degree.

And so, you ask your business owner friend, would you give this person a job based on my recommendation? And the business owner says, well, I don't know this guy and the only thing I have is your word.

And so, maybe there's some kind of risk involved with this proposition. And so, as the business owner, there's this middle person that you know, he's got some means, right, but this stranger doesn't have any means.

[34 : 42] And so, you're going to ask your friend, as the business owner, you're going to ask the one who's vouching for the stranger, I want you to put up something. I want you to give me your garment as some kind of assurity, assurance, or a collateral in case this guy ends up stealing my stuff and running off or whatever the case might be.

And so, basically, the big idea is, hey, if there's somebody who, there's a risk when it comes to a loan or some other kind of financial transaction, then having some kind of assurance to protect yourself is a good idea.

All right, verse 17. Bread gained by deceit is sweet to a man, but afterwards his mouth will be filled with gravel. I think this one speaks for itself, but what an illustration, right?

You know, when you steal something, you get away with it, and it's like sweet victory, even if it's not food, right? Or if it is food, it just tastes extra sweet, you got away with it.

But you know, it doesn't take long to where that sweetness turns sour. And like the picture is, your mouth instead of being filled with sugar, it's filled with rocks, filled with gravel.

[36 : 04] Verse 18. Plans are established by counsel, but wise counsel, by wise counsel, wage war. When you're making plans, and we've talked about this again before, when you're making plans, you know, don't neglect counsel, don't neglect wisdom.

Read books, get counsel from others, and especially when you're waging war, what kind of a king goes to war without getting counsel from his generals or other counselors around him, right?

And when a king does so, what happens? Usually things go very, very poorly. Verse 19. He who goes about as a tailbearer reveals secrets, therefore do not associate with one who flatters with his lips.

You know, there are certain people in your life that you just should not associate with. You shouldn't be friends, you shouldn't hang out with them, you shouldn't do business with them. And two things to look out for, those who spread rumors and those who flatter people, manipulate people by saying nice things to them.

Those kinds of people are not trustworthy, and you shouldn't interact with them, you shouldn't associate with them. Verse 20. Whoever curses his father or his mother, his lamp will be put out in deep darkness.

[37 : 30] This one is, wow. He who curses his father or mother, his lamp will be put out. What does that mean?

Your lamp will be put out? I mean, that sounds like death. And you know, it's actually part of the law. And this, by the way, cursing your father and mother, that can certainly be done by a child, right?

But it can also be done by an adult son or daughter to curse their parents. And it doesn't just mean, you know, saying rotten things to them.

but doing things. For example, Jesus brought up, there is a law in the Old Testament, in the law of Moses, that says whoever curses his father or mother, what does it say?

Should be put to death. Wow, that's shocking, isn't it? To be put to death. Now, some people think that that's talking about children. That is not talking about children.

[38 : 37] What is the proper punishment for children who do these types of things? Well, it's a good solid spanking, which we'll talk about in a second. But if you are an adult, Jesus talked about this, he talked about a situation where children, adult children, who are supposed to have the responsibility of taking care of their parents in their older age, when they're not able to work anymore and take care of themselves, that they do some kind of a religious ritual in order to avoid taking care of their parents.

And Jesus points to that Old Testament law and rebukes the Pharisees and says, you let people get away with this. You know what you should be doing? You should be stoning these people who do that kind of thing.

But instead, you let them do their religious ritual and maybe you get a cut from this religious ritual that they do. Does God take lightly the dishonoring of parents?

And this is even in the Ten Commandments, isn't it? Honor your mother and your father. And what will happen if you honor them? It will go well with you and you will live a long life.

What's the reverse of that? If you don't honor them, it leads to death. And so I think, especially in our culture today, we take this thing way, way too lightly.

[39 : 59] When it comes to honoring your parents, this is something that we should treat as a life and death matter. honoring our parents.

And it's not always easy to do. And some parents are not honorable. But we should find ways in whatever way we can to honor our parents throughout all the seasons of life.

Verse 21, John, an inheritance gained hastily at the beginning will not be blessed at the end. You know, this is talking about what we might call a windfall.

You get an inheritance, money that you didn't have, money that you didn't earn, that comes to you suddenly, hastily. But Solomon here says that in the end, it doesn't go well.

It's not blessed at the end. And why would that be? Well, I think this is actually really easy to see. And many of us, I'm sure, have experienced this or seen this maybe in other families.

[41 : 07] A lot of times you hear stories about lottery winners, right? Those who win the lottery. And what generally happens to those who win the lottery? Their life turns into a complete and total disaster.

And a lot of times, these people are dead within a decade. so many times, obviously not always, some people, they're fine. But for many people, they're dead within a few years even.

And why? Because they came into all this money, and because they didn't have the wisdom to earn the money, they don't have the wisdom to know how to spend it, to know how to invest it, to know how to use it.

And this can happen, I think, because in this case, we're talking here about an inheritance. inheritance. And in Proverbs also, I think it's in Proverbs, it says, a wise man gives an inheritance to his children's children. And so an inheritance is a good thing.

But we have to be careful, right, of giving money, especially to young people, right, who don't have the experience and the wisdom to know how to deal with that. So especially if you have a lot of money, which can be destructive, take care.

[42 : 16] You know, some people have set up trusts, right? A trust to where you can leave an inheritance to your children, but they just kind of get a little bit of it at a time. Because if you give them the whole thing, it could lead to disaster.

You know, at a place I used to work, somebody was going around and say, hey, anybody want to go in on a one of these lottery things.

You know, we'll all go in and put in money together and we'll get a bunch of numbers, you know, 20 different numbers or 50 different numbers, and if one of us wins, we'll all just share it. And there was one of the ladies in the office, I thought it was so wise.

I didn't participate, but she thought about it and she said, you know what, I'm not going to do it. And she said, I'm not going to do it because I don't want to win the lottery.

And she said, if I won the lottery, I think it would go very badly. And there's wisdom there because I think the worst thing that can happen by playing the lottery is not losing the five bucks.

[43 : 22] It's what happens if you win the lottery that you have to worry about. So be careful, especially when it comes to these windfalls, large amounts of money. And by the way, I have a note here, there's actually a story in the Bible of this happening and it going poorly, right?

The prodigal son. Dad, give me my inheritance early. I want to be able to spend it right now. The foolishness of youth and how does that go? It does not go well. And he shouldn't have done that, right?

The father should not have done that. But then Jesus wouldn't have had a story to tell about the redemption of the prodigal son. Verse 22, do not say I will recompense evil.

Wait for the Lord and he will save you. Don't avenge yourself. You know, there's many people throughout your life who will cheat you, who will do things, you know, commit crimes against you.

And there are those who will be vigilantes, we call them, who will try to get justice for themselves. And the Bible is very clear that that is not how God ordered the world. It is not appropriate for individuals to pursue justice, punishment, to try to punish criminals.

[44 : 31] God put in order governments, rulers, judges, those kinds of people in place to bring about justice. And even if that justice system is not working how you think it ought to, if we allowed each individual person to pursue justice for themselves on their own, to take out the bad guys like Batman or, you know, whatever, that would lead to more mayhem than we could even imagine, I think.

And so we need to allow God's order to work, even if it's not working exactly how it ought. And, you know, even if we don't get the justice that we need or deserve in this life, wait for the Lord, even if you have to wait all the way to judgment day, because justice will finally come on that day.

Proverbs, or excuse me, verse 23. Diverse weights are an abomination to the Lord and dishonest scales are not good. Verse 24.

A man's steps are of the Lord. How then can a man understand his way? This is another one where it seems to indicate that every step you take is something that is God's doing.

He's the one behind everything that you do, whether you're serving your neighbor or whether you're committing adultery. And some people teach that. I think that's horrific that every sin that you make, it's because God planned that you would do that from the foundation of the world.

[46 : 08] We shouldn't think that at all. So it's not that all of our actual steps are of the Lord, but really all of our steps ought to be of the Lord.

We ought to get our direction from the scriptures, from God, from his wisdom. Because if we try to understand our own way on our own, it's not going to lead to a solid path.

It's going to lead to disarray. But if we look to the Lord and have our steps ordered by him, by gaining wisdom from the scriptures and from other people who follow the Lord, then our steps will be ordered.

And our steps will then be considered as of the Lord or from the Lord. Verse 25. It is a snare for a man to devote rashly something as holy and afterward to reconsider his vows.

We see this a lot of times, I think, in books, stories, movies about somebody who, especially in a divine sense, they're in a pickle and they ask God for help.

[47 : 20] God, if you get me out of this, then I'll do this for you. We actually see this in the Bible, too. This happens. And Solomon is saying, that's not a good idea.

Don't make these kinds of promises. Because you know what is almost certainly going to happen? You're going to fail to keep your promise. Because especially in those situations where things are tight, where emotions are high, you're going to make a promise that you just are not able to keep.

And then you're going to have to bear the consequences of being an untrustworthy liar and swearing even before God. This, I think, also applies making those kinds of promises before men.

But we shouldn't rashly make those kinds of vows. Verse 26. A wise king sifts out the wicked and brings the threshing wheel over them.

So again, the job of a king, of a ruler, is to be a terror to evil works. Make the wicked scatter.

[48 : 29] Make them flee. Don't give them jobs like we see so often. The wicked, they come to Washington so that they can get high-paying jobs.

We want them to flee Washington, D.C. or Columbus, Ohio, or whatever it might be. Verse 27. The spirit of a man is the lamp of the Lord, searching all the depths of his heart.

You know, the spirit of a man is the innermost being of a man. This is talking about our heart, maybe even our mind.

And it's described here as the lamp of the Lord. You know, God is the one who breathed his life into us. He, as it were, lit our hearts like a lamp.

And so, the spirit of the man is the lamp of the Lord. And so, God made us different than the animals.

[49 : 37] I don't think that the Bible would say this about the animals. That they are the lamp of the Lord. There is something in us, a light, if you will, that is in us that is different from the rest of the animal kingdom.

We know right from wrong. We have a conscience. We are able to search out truth and wisdom, evaluate right and wrong. And that lamp that we find in us, whatever we call it, is lit by God himself.

And it's what sets us apart, like I said, from the animals. And really, it's what makes us like him. And that lamp, we, unlike animals, can search our own hearts.

Do animals search their own hearts? They don't do that, do they? But we can, because God enabled us to be like that, to be like him in that way.

Verse 28. Mercy and truth preserve the king. And by loving kindness, he upholds his throne. Another proverb, another proverb here about kings. You know, rulers ought to uphold justice and righteousness, like we've said.

[50 : 43] But here, it's not just justice. It's not just righteousness. righteousness, but also mercy and kindness.

Not treating unrepentant criminals with mercy and kindness, but treating the upright citizens with kindness. And even for those who are criminals, those who are, those who humble themselves, using mercy in those cases.

Verse 29. The glory of young men is their strength, and the splendor of old men is their gray head. You know, young men lack wisdom.

They haven't been around for very long. But they can glory in their strength. And so many young men do that, right? They lift weights and, hey, mom, watch this.

Hey, can I carry this heavy trash bag out for you? It's wonderful. And so they can glory in their strength. Older men, the older you get, you start to lose that strength. But older men can glory in the experiences of life that they've had and the knowledge that they've gained through that.

[52 : 05] So in all seasons of life, there's strengths and weaknesses. weaknesses. And we can glory and pursue those things. But there's nothing more pitiful in life than a man who has reached old age and the strength of his youth is gone.

And he never gained the wisdom of old age. And so his gray head or his bald head is not a glory. Instead, it's a curse.

The last verse here, verse 30. Blows that hurt cleanse away evil as do stripes, the inner depths of the heart. Blows that hurt.

I think the actual wording here, if you look at the Hebrew, is the blueness of the wound. Blueness of the wound. It cleanses away evil.

Blueness of the wound. Blueness of the wound. Blueness of the wound. Blueness of the wound. Blueness of the wound. And so this is talking about corporal punishment. And it doesn't say here regarding whom, but this can apply to both children through what we typically call today spankings.

[53 : 09] But this also can apply to adults. Sometimes adults need spankings, don't you think? Now, it shouldn't be by their parents, but it should be by our justice system.

As you read through the Old Testament justice system, you actually find only three types of punishments. Capital punishments for capital crimes.

Murder is one of them. There are a few others. Corporal punishment for crimes of violence and other things. Somebody gets into a fight. And then the third one is restitution.

Somebody has to pay back what they owe. And by the way, it's never paying back the exact value of the thing. It's always at least double. Sometimes up to sevenfold what you stole or destroyed.

And so there are three types of punishment found in the Old Testament law. But corporal punishment is one of the common ways to punish people.

[54 : 11] Do we have any kind of corporal punishment today in our justice system? Does anybody know of anything? I don't see it anywhere. And it used to be a common part of our justice system, even in this country and for centuries around the world and to great effect.

When somebody feels the pain of the crime they committed within a few days or a week of committing that crime, they connect the dots much more easily.

But a lot of times people commit crimes and nothing happens. Or maybe they go to jail for a week where they, you know, watch television and get three meals a day served to them.

And that's not going to really connect the dots with the destructiveness of their crimes. The same thing with children. Children need sometimes, not always, but that corporal punishment or that spanking as well to connect the dots with the sin that they committed, the thing that they did that was super foolish and dangerous to the immediate pain that they feel on their backside, that that is something that you shouldn't do ever again.

There's a, and I'll wrap up with this story. This is years ago when I was a boy, I think, Singapore. Singapore seems to have a much more, they have less leniency than here in America.

[55 : 40] We treat criminals with kids, kids gloves. And what it leads to, right, is that the criminals wreak havoc on the citizens of the country. But there was an American in Singapore and I think he spray painted a car or something like that.

Well, they don't wink at those types of things, or at least back then they didn't in Singapore. And so they had a nice little punishment they called caning. We take a stick of bamboo and you beat the living snot out of somebody until they pass out.

And there was this whole debacle, oh, he's an American, should they do that to an American? And well, sorry guys, this is what we're going to do. And they did it. And he was interviewed after, if I can remember correctly.

And somebody said, you know, how was it? And he said, it was basically the worst thing in my entire life. And they said, so do you think you would ever spray paint somebody's car again? He said, I wouldn't even think about doing that again.

Corporal punishment works, if it's applied. But it seems that in this country, at least we prefer that criminals wreak havoc on the citizens than to, you know, just do a nice, simple lashing, beating, caning.

[56 : 55] There's lots of ways you can do it, but each of them effective. But we're too nice and sweet in this country to criminals. Well, how was that?

Anybody feel wiser this morning? Anybody feel more foolish? There was a few, like, oh me's in there. Just a reminder, you know, we looked at this a few weeks ago, but there's always opportunities for us to grow in wisdom and whatever age we're at.

But just like when it comes to righteousness and the law and doing right and wrong and sometimes we fail and sometimes we succeed and we want to succeed, obviously, more than we fail. We want to have wisdom more than we have foolishness in our lives.

But Paul said that, you know, Jesus, because of what he did, he became unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption.

He is our all in all. And so we don't have to look for keeping the law to give us life or to keeping the Proverbs and making, you know, trying to make sure that we do all these things so that we can have life and peace with God.

[58 : 05] We have life with him. We have peace with him just because of what he did and our trust in him. And we can just read the Proverbs with confidence and our peace with God and look to grow to be more like our Savior.

Amen. Let's pray. Father, we thank you for this book. So many nuggets in here that are just incredible things to remind us of ways that we should live wisely in this world.

We thank you for Solomon's wisdom that was written down for our benefit. We pray that you would work in us as we need you. We can't do this on our own. We need you to work in our lives to grow in wisdom and to avoid foolishness.

And we thank you for your willingness to help us out at any time that we call upon you. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.