

Proverbs 22:15 “15 Folly is bound up in the heart of a child; The rod of discipline will remove it far from him.”

It is essential to note the difference in the intentionally literal translation of the LSB and how it differs from what we are used to. In verse 6, we see that if a child is trained in *his way*, he will not depart from it. Remember what we learned in Proverbs 14,

Proverbs 14:12 “12 There is a way which seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death.”

Proverbs 22:6 is intended to be a warning: allow your child to be trained according to his way, what seems right in his own eyes (Prov. 12:15), and he will never depart from it. Why? Look again at the second parenting verse of chapter 22,

Proverbs 22:15 “15 Folly is bound up in the heart of a child; The rod of discipline will remove it far from him.”

In the end, when folly is removed and replaced by wisdom, when the child is trained in how He should go, every godly parent hopes that he will not depart from it. But the warning still stands: children must be taught the way of wisdom, to fear the Lord and keep His commandments (Eccl 12:13).

III. Collection 3: Thirty Words of the Wise (22:17-24:22)

Solomon shifts his role from author to editor in this section and the next. He collects 30 words (22:20) of wisdom and arranges them into flowing and extended teachings to his son that resemble the style of the first nine chapters of the book.

Solomon begins his first saying with an educational prologue, vs. 17

Proverbs 22:17–20 “17 Incline your ear and hear the words of the wise, And set your heart on my knowledge;” 18 For it will be pleasant if you keep them within you, That they may be established on your lips. ”19 So that your trust may be in Yahweh, I have made you know today, even you. ”20 Have I not written to you thirty sayings Of counsels and knowledge,”

Here again, Solomon calls on his son to hear his wisdom (vs. 17), to set it upon his heart to possess it and use it (vs. 18). Since this wisdom is God’s Wisdom, doing so will deepen his trust in YHWH, in His ways and goodness. This is the ultimate goal of Solomon’s instruction and falls at the center of the parallel vs. 17 and 21. Then, God’s wisdom will allow him to discern and respond with truth when encountering others (20-21).

The importance of wisdom when relating to other people is the key theme of the rest of the thirty sayings. Nearly every potential relationship is addressed in the following verses, from the poor (vs. 22-23), the angry (vs. 24-25) lenders of money (vs. 26-27), the thief (vs. 28), the skilled craftsman (vs. 29), kings (23:1-3), the ambitious worker (vs. 4-5), the stingy (vs. 6-8), the arrogant fool (vs. 9), the orphan (vs. 10-11), children (vs. 13-16), prosperous wicked (vs. 17-18), glutton (vs. 19-21), parents (vs. 22-25), the seductress (vs. 26-28), the drunkard (vs. 29-35), wicked peers (24:1-2), one’s enemies (vs. 17-18), the seditious (vs. 21-22).

Interspersed with these instructions on how to interact with others, there are sayings with an emphasis on wisdom itself, especially beginning in chapter 24:3,

Proverbs 24:3–4 “**3** By wisdom a house is built, And by discernment it is firmly established; ”**4** And by knowledge the rooms are filled With all precious and pleasant riches.”

Solomon is not speaking of literal homebuilding but is using it as a metaphor for building up one’s life, family, and legacy with wisdom. Doing so apart from wisdom will be ineffective, for true strength to build is found with wisdom, vs. 5,

Proverbs 24:5 “**5** A wise man is strong, And a man of knowledge strengthens his power.”

Likewise, wisdom is to be seen as nourishment for the soul, vs. 13,

Proverbs 24:13–14 “**13** Eat honey, my son, for it is good, Indeed, the honey from the comb is sweet to your taste; ”**14** Know that wisdom is thus for your soul; If you find it, then there will be a future, And your hope will not be cut off.”

There is an allusion here to Solomon’s father, David, who wrote of God’s Word in Psalm 19,

Psalm 19:10 “**10** They are more desirable than gold, even more than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb.”

Consuming wisdom will bring sweet soul satisfaction. It will also bolster one’s hope in the Lord’s fulfillment of all His promises. The word for the future is not obscure but eschatological. It is the same adjective in the phrase latter days, or last day throughout the prophets. This term was used before in Saying 14,

Proverbs 23:17–18 “**17** Do not let your heart be jealous of sinners, But be zealous in the fear of Yahweh always. ”**18** Surely there is a future, And your hope will not be cut off.”

Here, Solomon instructs his son not to be jealous of sinners, presumably who prosper and are not immediately punished. In the future, in the last days, justice will be accomplished, and the hope of those who fear YHWH and seek His wisdom will be fulfilled.

IV. Collection 4: Further Sayings of the Wise (24:23-35)

A new section is marked by the mention of additional sayings of the wise vs. 23,

Proverbs 24:23 “**23** These also are sayings of the wise. To show partiality in judgment is not good.”

The additional sayings of the wise in this section of Proverbs focus on sound judgment, vs. 24,

Proverbs 24:24–26 “**24** He who says to the wicked, “You are righteous,” Peoples will curse him, nations will be indignant with him; ”**25** But to those who reprove the wicked, it will be pleasant, And a good blessing will come upon them. ”**26** He kisses the lips Who responds with right words.”

The king who pardons the wicked will lose the favor of his people and the respect of surrounding nations. But the king who judges the wicked brings blessing upon his people and is received with the kiss of honor when greeted by the kings of other nations. His words of reproof are the right words. This is an allusion back to the words of Lady Wisdom in Chapter 8,

Proverbs 8:6–9 “**6** Listen, for I will speak noble things; And the opening of my lips will reveal upright things. ”**7** “For my mouth will utter truth; And wickedness is an abomination to my lips. ”**8** “All the words of my mouth are in righteousness; There is

nothing twisted or crooked in them. ”9 “They are all straightforward to him who understands, And right to those who find knowledge.”

Solomon shifts to speaking on good work in verse 27,

Proverbs 24:27 “27 Establish your work outside And make it ready for yourself in the field; And afterwards, you shall build your house.”

Before building one’s house, one must till his field. The security of food to consume and sell will allow for a stable foundation to move from living in a tent to building a house. Again, housebuilding is a metaphor. As Kidner comments, “*So a well-ordered life (in things material and immaterial) should be established before marriage.*”¹

V. Collection 5: Solomon 2 (25:1-29:27)

1. Wisdom from the KING for the King and His Court (25:1-28)

In 25:1, we see the fifth section of this book introduced with Solomon identified as the author of the following 137 proverbs,

Proverbs 25:1 “1 These also are proverbs of Solomon which the men of Hezekiah, king of Judah, transcribed.”

In God’s sovereign plan, these Proverbs were not initially included in this work until the men of the righteous king, Hezekiah, transcribed them, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, into this Book. Most likely, these were his steward, Eliakim, and Joah, his secretary (2 Kings 18:18; Isaiah 22:15-22).

In verses 2-5, Solomon begins appropriately with royal instruction,

Proverbs 25:2 “2 It is the glory of God to conceal a matter, But the glory of kings is to search out a matter.”

Solomon understood that much of God’s glory, character, and nature was revealed in the natural world and through His mysterious providences. God shows His glory in revealing Himself, yet He requires kings and men to seek Him and find Him in the unsearchable riddles of life. On the other hand, the king’s glory is revealed by his effort in pursuing this wisdom about God. The key is that the king and all seeking to find God recognize Him as God. As Paul says in Romans 1,

Romans 1:20–23: “20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, both His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.” 21 For even though they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish heart was darkened.”

The KING has gloriously revealed Himself in His creation so that kings and men might search for Him and, with wisdom, understand that He alone is God. Doing so establishes a hierarchy of authority in the king’s heart. He may rule, but He is not the Ruler of all creation.

¹ Derek Kidner, [*Proverbs: An Introduction and Commentary*](#), vol. 17, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1964), 148.

Similarly, the heart of a king is mysterious and seemingly unsearchable, vs. 3,

Proverbs 25:3–5 “3 As the heavens for height and the earth for depth, So the heart of kings is unsearchable. ”4 Take away the dross from the silver, And there comes out a vessel for the smith; ”5 Take away the wicked before the king, And his throne will be established in righteousness.”

However, like refining silver and gold, his righteousness is revealed by his trial of how he will judge the wicked. The wicked mentioned here are those who stand before the king—his royal court. If he wisely removes the bad company around him and correctly judges their character, his throne will be established in God’s good and right ways.

In verses 6-15, Solomon provides wisdom for those who stand before the king in his court. The king admonishes them to have humility (vs. 6-7), practice confidentiality (vs. 8-10), provide appropriate counsel and reproof (vs. 11-12), and possess trustworthiness - vs. 13,

Proverbs 25:13–15 “13 Like the cold of snow in the time of harvest Is a faithful envoy to those who send him, For he refreshes the soul of his masters. ”14 Like clouds and wind without rain Is a man who boasts of his gifts falsely.

A messenger who is faithful to deliver the king’s words without addition, subtraction, or deceit is as refreshing as a bit of snow would be to the workers in the field during summertime. On the other hand, the one who cannot follow through for the king in fulfilling his grand promises and boasts is like a cloud that brings no rain. Such a cloud would be a curse in a high desert climate that depended on rainwater to grow crops.

The courtier must also possess self-control, vs. 15,

Proverbs 25:15 “15 When one is slow to anger, a ruler may be persuaded, And a soft tongue breaks the bone.”

Those who can control their temper and tongue tone possess much diplomatic power with the king. The remaining proverbs of this chapter build off this theme of practicing wisdom in the king's court by instructing how to avoid and resolve conflict. The wise avoid overstaying their welcome (vs. 16-17), bearing false witness (vs. 18), disloyalty (vs. 19), and insensitivity (vs. 20). Instead, they resolve conflict by responding with love and kindness to those who have wronged them, vs. 21,

Proverbs 25:21–22 “21 If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat; And if he is thirsty, give him water to drink; ”22 For you will heap burning coals on his head, And Yahweh will repay you.”

The acts of kindness toward an enemy will produce burning shame within his heart and head, leading to possible remorse and repentance.

[Christ Connection](#)

Showing this kindness to one’s enemies with the intention of reconciliation is a true act of godliness. Doing so mirrors the heart and actions of the Father who, Romans 5,

Romans 5:8 “8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

And Titus 3,

Titus 3:3–5 “**3** For we ourselves also once were foolish, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, despicable, hating one another. ”**4** But when the kindness and affection of God our Savior appeared, ”**5** He saved us, not by works which we did in righteousness, but according to His mercy, through the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit,”

Moreover, His kindness and patience with us, in not immediately judging us for our wicked sins the instant we do them, is intended to reconcile us to Him through His Son, Romans 2,

Romans 2:4 “**4** Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?”

For this reason, we must also be kind to each other, Ephesians 4,

Ephesians 4:32 “**32** Instead, be kind to one another, tender-hearted, graciously forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has graciously forgiven you.”

And seek to live at peace with all men, Romans 12,

Romans 12:18–21 “**18** if possible, so far as it depends on you, being at peace with all men, ”**19** never taking your own revenge, beloved—instead leave room for the wrath of God. For it is written, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,” says the Lord. ”**20** “But if your enemy is hungry, feed him, and if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap burning coals on his head. **21** Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”

2. The Nature of Folly (26:1-28)

In Chapter 26, Solomon meditates on the nature of folly once more, vs. 1,

Proverbs 26:1 “**1** Like snow in summer and like rain in harvest, So glory is not fitting for a fool.”

Solomon contrasts his metaphors between 26:1 and 25:13. In Chapter 25, the snow refreshed those working in the hot sun. But here in Chapter 26, that summer snowstorm is condemned for being out of place, just like glory shouldn't be found amongst fools. Honoring such a fool encourages him to continue in his folly and tempts the ignorant to follow his foolish path. The damage that such honoring could bring is seen in vs. 8,

Proverbs 26:8 “**8** Like one who binds a stone in a sling, So is he who gives glory to a fool.”

Binding a stone in the sling would result in that stone not being slung but instead swinging back into the slinger.

Instead of elevating the fool, he is to be corrected, vs. 4,

Proverbs 26:4–5 “**4** Do not answer a fool according to his folly, Lest you yourself also be like him. ”**5** Answer a fool according to his folly, Lest he be wise in his own eyes.”

In verse 4, Solomon admonishes us from becoming fools when responding to and confronting fools. In verse 5, Solomon instructs us to expose the fool's folly to him so that he may not continue replacing God's wisdom with his own.

Sadly, even when a fool is corrected, they will most likely continue in their folly, vs. 11,

Proverbs 26:11–12 “**11** Like a dog that returns to its vomit Is a fool who repeats his folly.
”**12** Do you see a man wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him.”

Dogs are mentioned 32 times in the Old Testament, and the animal is painted negatively in every instance. They are inherently unclean (Exodus 23:31) because of their natural bent to scavenge through the garbage, consume the meat off of carcasses and corpses, and like the blood of the dead. They are even used as a word picture for evildoers (2 Samuel 16:9, Psalm 22:16). The repulsive natural bent to vomit, sniff their vomit, and then begin to consume it again paints the picture here of a fool who cannot help from craving their repulsive folly. They are uncorrectable because they have become wise in their own eyes. They mock and scoff at God’s truth and the correction it brings. There is more hope for an ignorant fool than for him.

3. The Nature of Friendship (27:1-22)

In Chapter 27, Solomon shifts from teaching on the nature of fools to teaching on the nature of friends, vs. 1,

Proverbs 27:1–2 “**1** Do not boast about tomorrow, For you do not know what a day may bring forth. ”**2** Let a stranger praise you, and not your own mouth; A foreigner, and not your own lips.”

Boasting and self-praise are the actions of a fool who thinks too highly of themselves and their ability to control their destiny. The famous poem, *Invictus*, ends with this line, “It matters not how strait the gate, How charged with punishments the scroll, I am the master of my fate, I am the captain of my soul.” These are the unobjective, proud words of a foolish man. Instead, the wise only allow praise from outside the self and the family. Therefore, a stranger’s praise carries a modicum of objectivity and is of some use. Ultimately, the wise should heed the words of James, who builds on this proverb,

James 4:15 “**15** Instead, you ought to say, “If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that.”

Even more valuable than a stranger’s praise is a friend’s rebuke, vs. 5,

Proverbs 27:5–6 “**5** Better is reproof that is revealed Than love that is hidden. ”**6** Faithful are the wounds of a friend, But deceitful are the kisses of an enemy.”

A love that hides the truth to avoid inflicting pain is cowardly. In reality, this is a deceitful love, a cowardly love, and an unfaithful love. In contrast, open correction, clear rebuke, and severe admonishment are among the most caring and loving acts. To be the correcting friend requires selflessness, a willingness to be wounded in return, and the hardship of dragging sin into the light. But the faithful friend corrects because they are entirely interested in the best interest of the one they are correcting. Waltke provides poignant commentary here,

“Secret love is like winking at a girl in the dark; it does neither her nor you any good. Open, loving rebuke is potent; hidden love is impotent. Out of love for their children, parents rebuke them (13:24), even as God, out of his love, picks up where the parent leaves off and continues to rebuke his children (3:11–12). Love and correction go hand in

hand. The command “rebuke your neighbor frankly” (Leviticus 19:17) is followed by the command “love your neighbor as yourself” (Leviticus 19:18).²

This reproof strengthens and purifies one’s character, vs. 17

Proverbs 27:17 “**17** Iron sharpens iron, So one man sharpens another.”

In verse 9, we see the need for faithful friends who are kept close,

Proverbs 27:9–10 “**9** Oil and incense make the heart glad, So counsel from the soul is sweet to his friend. ”**10** Do not forsake your friend or your father’s friend, And do not come to your brother’s house in the day of your disaster; Better is one who dwells near than a brother far away.”

Good counsel from a friend is like the enriching and costly oil that brings a depth of flavor to food or the sweet aromas of incense that fill the house. Both bring a sense of well-being. This sweet counsel comes from the friend who is wise in heart, Proverbs 16,

Proverbs 16:21 “**21** The wise in heart will be called understanding, And sweetness of lips increases learning.”

It is not wise to forsake personal or family friends, for in days of trouble and disaster, the friends that are close to you provide better aid than a brother who is far away. As Solomon said earlier in Chapter 18,

Proverbs 18:24 “**24** A man of too many friends comes to ruin, But there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.”

4. The Righteous Community (28:1-29:17)

A. The Reign of the Righteous vs. the Reign of the Wicked (28:1-29:2)

These two final chapters deal with the effects of righteousness or wickedness on God’s covenant community. Look at verse 2,

Proverbs 28:2 “**2** By the transgression of a land many are its princes, But by a man who understands, who knows, so it endures.”

Sinful rulers lead to unstable lineages. The Northern Kingdom of Israel was rife with idolatry and lawlessness, and they experienced nine dynasties in just over 2 centuries. In the southern kingdom of Judah, there was only one enduring dynasty for over three and a half centuries. Granted, this was due, in most part, to God’s faithfulness to the covenant He made with David. However, several righteous kings, notably Hezekiah, were the commissioners who added these proverbs. The stability that comes with a righteous king brings about rejoicing, vs. 12,

Proverbs 28:12 “**12** When the righteous exult, there is a great honor, But when the wicked rise, man has to be sought out.”

The people hide in the security of their own homes when the lawless rise to power. This theme is repeated at the end of the chapter, vs. 28,

Proverbs 28:28 “**28** When the wicked rise, men hide themselves; But when they perish, the righteous increase.”

This same refrain is repeated as a bookend one last time in verse 2 of Chapter 29,

² Bruce K. Waltke, [*The Book of Proverbs, Chapters 15–31*](#), The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2005), 375.

Proverbs 29:2 “2 When the righteous increase, the people are glad, But when a wicked man rules, people groan.”

The reign of the wicked is characterized by the oppression of the poor (vs. 3, 15), praising wickedness (vs. 4), miscarrying justice (vs. 5, 21), dealing in corruption (vs. 6, 18), decadence (vs. 7), extortion (vs. 8) and hypocrisy (vs. 9). They hide their sin (vs. 13), harden their hearts (vs. 14), lack discernment (vs. 15), are wise in their own eyes (vs. 11), and trusts in his own heart (vs. 26). In contrast, the righteous keep the law (vs. 4), seek YHWH (vs. 5, 7), possess understanding (vs. 5), and walk in integrity and blamelessness (vs. 6, 10). Like David, after understanding his wickedness, the righteous are penitent before the Lord when they sin, vs. 13,

Proverbs 28:13 “13 He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, But he who confesses and forsakes them will receive compassion.”

His heart always fears the Lord, vs. 14,

Proverbs 28:14 “14 How blessed is the man who fears *the Lord* always, But he who hardens his heart will fall into calamity.”

He finds security in the Lord, vs. 25,

Proverbs 28:25–26 “25 An arrogant man stirs up strife, But he who trusts in Yahweh will be enriched.” 26 He who trusts in his own heart is a fool, But he who walks wisely will escape.”

This king, or this man or woman, has the humility to distrust their own heart and to guard themselves from the arrogance that demands their way. Instead, they trust YHWH and walk in humility and wisdom, which keeps them from strife and conflict. Self-confident people live in a fairytale world where they’re always right and deserve to get their way. The wise trust not in their understanding but in the Lord. They rely upon Him to guide and provide for their lives.

B. Rearing and Reigning Righteously (29:3-27)

In this final sub-section of Solomon II, the King concludes with an emphasis on child-rearing and righteous ruling. First, we have child-rearing. The son who pursues and loves wisdom brings joy to his parents (vs. 3).

Proverbs 29:3 “3 A man who loves wisdom makes his father glad, But he who befriends harlots destroys his wealth.”

This contrasts with the fool who destroys his livelihood and life with the harlot. Such a fool brings sorrow and grief upon his mother, vs. 15,

Proverbs 29:15 “15 The rod and reproof give wisdom, But a child left to himself brings shame to his mother.”

Notice that the child left to himself, to his way, to his desires, to do what is right in his eyes, becomes the fool. Therefore, give your children wisdom through the rod, vs. 17

Proverbs 29:17 “17 Discipline your son, and he will give you rest; And he will give delight to your soul.”

Where there is no discipline, chaos ensues in society, vs. 18,

Proverbs 29:18 “18 Where there is no vision, the people are out of control, But how blessed is he who keeps the law.”

However, when the king rules with righteousness and justice, his kingdom is settled and established, vs. 14,

Proverbs 29:14 “14 If a king judges the poor with truth, His throne will be established forever.”

The poor were often judged with unfair scales, and due to their inability to pay a bribe, they could never escape punishment. But a righteous king who judges the rich and the poor equally, who refuses to take a bribe creates stability in society, vs. 4,

Proverbs 29:4 “4 By justice the king causes the land to stand, But a man of bribes tears it down.”

VI. Collection 6: The Royal Sage’s Wisdom (30:1-33)

The author of this Proverb, Agur, is unknown. As stated in my introduction, it could be a pseudonym for Solomon. However, what is known is that he was an inspired oracle of God (vs. 1). Agur presents in his chapter the heart attitude required to acquire God’s wisdom: humility and fear. Let’s begin in vs. 2,

Proverbs 30:2–3 “2 Surely I am more senseless than any man, And I do not have the understanding of mankind. ”3 Neither have I learned wisdom, Nor do I know the knowledge of the Holy One.”

On his own, Agur, like everyone, is ignorant, senseless, and lacking an understanding of the knowledge of God. He declares that he is even too senseless to be on the same level as most men when it comes to knowing what is true about God. He is the Holy One, the Set-Apart One, high above all man and all creation. Agur states from the very beginning that what took Job and his friends 40 chapters to arrive at on his own, the man knows nothing. This is the opposite of being right in one’s own eyes – he declares that he is blind. This is the antithesis of leaning on his understanding – he states that he is stupid.

In verse 4, Agur asks a question that men cannot answer on their own, vs. 4,

Proverbs 30:4 “4 Who has ascended into heaven and descended? Who has gathered the wind in His fists? Who has wrapped the waters in His garment? Who has established all the ends of the earth? What is His name? And what is His Son’s name? Surely you know!”

God’s glory is revealed throughout creation. His existence and His power are evident for all men to see. But who can know *Who* He is? No mere earthling can do this. No mere man controls the storm of wind and waves. No mere human established *all* the earth. Therefore, no man can know, on their own, the name of the One Who has this power.

Agur is here alluding to Job in Job 28

Job 28:20–28 “20 “Where then does wisdom come from? And where is the place of understanding?...23 “God understands its way, And He knows its place...28 “So He said to man, ‘Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; And to turn away from evil is understanding.’”

The answer to His question of “*Who?*” is the Lord. Out of His divine initiative, He has revealed Himself. He has disclosed His very name, Exodus 3,

Exodus 3:13–14a “13 Then Moses said to God, “Behold, I am about to come to the sons of Israel, and I will say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you.’ And they will say to me, ‘What is His name?’ What shall I say to them?” ”14 And God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM...””

Agur ends his probing with the assertion, “Surely you know,” implying that this knowledge of the Holy One is accessible. But it comes through *relational* knowledge of the One who possesses all wisdom and understanding. And where better to know Him than in His Word, vs. 5,

Proverbs 30:5 “5 Every word of God is tested; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him.”

The answer to Agur’s original despair that he does not possess knowledge of the Holy One is that God has already made Himself truthfully known in His written Word. Agur quotes from David in verse 5, Psalm 18,

Psalm 18:30 “30 As for God, His way is blameless; The word of Yahweh is tried; He is a shield to all who take refuge in Him.”

This was a victory Psalm of David, celebrating his escape from enemies. Immediately after Agur’s quoted verse, David explicitly gives God’s name, thus answering Agur’s question of Who

Psalm 18:31 “31 For who is God, but Yahweh? And who is a rock, except our God,” God’s word is tested and found to be true and pure. All who commit themselves to God and His Word find refuge in Him. The humble seek truth in God’s tried Word, and they humbly submit and embrace Him as their Source of protection. Moreover, the humble genuinely fear God and cannot imagine altering or adding to His Word, vs. 6,

Proverbs 30:6 “6 Do not add to His words Lest He reprove you, and you be proved a liar.”

To add to His Words would prove one to be a liar – a son of the father of lies. It was Satan who first altered and added to God’s Word in the garden (Genesis 3:1). Since humans, by nature, do not know true wisdom, adding to God’s Word, apart from divine inspiration, would falsify it. To do so would violate God’s Law, which Agur is alluding to, Deuteronomy 4,

Deuteronomy 4:2 “2 “You shall not add to the word which I am commanding you, nor take away from it, that you may keep the commandments of Yahweh your God which I am commanding you.”

In verse 7, Agur moves from meditating on God’s Word as the only source of true wisdom and knowledge to writing the only prayer in Proverbs,

Proverbs 30:7–9 “7 Two things I asked of You, Do not withhold from me before I die: ”8 Keep worthlessness and every false word far from me, Give me neither poverty nor riches; Feed me with the food that is my portion, ”9 Lest I be full and deny You and say, “Who is Yahweh?” Or lest I be impoverished and steal, And profane the name of my God.”

Agur seeks the aid of YHWH to protect him and provide for him. He aims to avoid falsehood and the pitfalls of riches and poverty. Too much would tempt him to think he does not need God. Too little will tempt him to act like God does not see him. Agur knows that apart from the aid of His God, his own heart is bent toward cursing God’s name with the arrogance of his mouth or the acts of his hands.

After commending his hearers to restraint (vs. 10-17) and inviting them to wonder (vs. 18-31), Agur concludes his teaching warning against arrogance, vs. 32,

Proverbs 30:32 “**32** If you have been wickedly foolish in lifting yourself up, Or if you have schemed evil, **put your hand on your mouth.**”

Those wise in their own eyes, boast in their understanding, and elevate themselves to possessors of the knowledge of good and evil should learn from Agur’s humility in verses 1-2. Instead of spouting off their arrogant words, they should cover their mouths. This self-imposed silence was a sign of being awestruck in the presence of true glory, as Job was after God spoke to him from the whirlwind, Job 40,

Job 40:1–4 “**1** Then Yahweh answered Job and said, ”**2** “**Will the faultfinder contend with the Almighty? Let him who reproves God answer**” ”**3** Then Job answered Yahweh and said, ”**4** “**Behold, I am insignificant; what can I respond to You? I place my hand over my mouth.**”

Christ Connection

In verse 4, Agur asks,

Proverbs 30:4 “**4** Who has ascended into heaven and descended? Who has gathered the wind in His fists? Who has wrapped the waters in His garment? Who has established all the ends of the earth? What is His name? **And what is His Son’s name?** Surely you know!”

The name of the Son of God, until this revelation, was understood to be Israel. In Exodus, God calls Israel His firstborn son when demanding their release from Pharaoh (Exodus 4:22). In Deuteronomy, Moses calls Israel the “sons of YHWH” and names Him as their “Father” (Deuteronomy 14:1; 32:6). Speaking of the second Exodus, Isaiah prophesies that God will cause his sons to return to the Promised Land (Isaiah 43:6).

And yet, in the New Testament, Jesus is revealed to be the perfect Son of God and the perfect Israelite. Like Israel, he fled the gentile tyrant Herod, who threatened his life at birth (Matthew 2:16). He returned from exile in Egypt (Matthew 2:13-15). He was brought through the river Jordan in His baptism (Matthew 3:13-17) and tested in the wilderness for 40 days, as Israel was for 40 years (Matthew 4:1-22). Like Moses, He instructed His people on the Law of His Kingdom from a mountaintop (Matthew 5:1-7:29). But unlike Moses’s sermon, He began with blessings. And unlike Israel, He perfectly obeyed His Father’s Law (Hebrews 5:7-10).

He is the Son of Man that Daniel promised and prophesied. He is the Son of David, promised and prophesied by Isaiah and Micah. He is the eternal Son of God who humbled himself by descending from the throne room of heaven to be born of a virgin in the feeding trough of animals. He obeyed His Father, even to the point of death on the cross. And after rising on the third day, He ascended into Heaven, where He will return when He comes again.

VII. Collection 7: The Royal Queen’s Wisdom (31:1-31)

In the final chapter of Proverbs, an unknown King, Lemuel, recounts the wisdom given to him by his mother. After giving a final warning against wayward women (vs. 3), strong drink (vs. 4-7), and injustice (vs. 8-9), she commends her son to marry a woman of wisdom.

Throughout Proverbs, Solomon's son has been instructed and admonished to pursue and love Lady Wisdom and reject Lady Folly. At times, Lady Folly merely symbolizes the lifestyle and pathway of fools (Chapter 9). But at others, Lady Folly is personified by a literal foolish woman (14:1), the adulterous woman (Chapter 5 and Chapter 7) and the contentious wife (18:18, 19:3, 21:9, 19; 25:24; 27:15). There have also been glimpses of the personification of Lady Wisdom throughout the book (12:4; 14:1; 18:22; 19:4), but in this chapter we see her in greater detail.

First, we see that this excellent wife must be sought after, found, and valued, vs. 31:10,

Proverbs 31:10 "10 An excellent wife, who can find? For her worth is far above pearls."

Similarly, Wisdom is found when sought after, Proverbs 8

Proverbs 8:17 "17 "I love those who love me; And those who earnestly seek me will find me."

Proverbs 8:35 "35 "For he who finds me finds life And obtains favor from Yahweh."

And wisdom is valued above pearls, Proverbs 3,

Proverbs 3:15 "15 She is more precious than pearls; And nothing you desire compares with her."

Proverbs 8:11 "11 "For wisdom is better than pearls; And all desirable things cannot compare with her."

Second, this excellent wife brings a good name and favor to the one who loves her, verse 12,

Proverbs 31:12 "12 She deals bountifully with him for good and not evil All the days of her life."

Because of her, his name is renowned in the gate of his city, vs 23,

Proverbs 31:23 "23 Her husband is known in the gates, When he sits with the elders of the land."

Wisdom also brings favor and goodness to the one who seeks her, Proverbs 3,

Proverbs 3:4 "4 So you will find favor and good insight In the eyes of God and man."

She brings a profitable yield to her family with her industry and work ethic, vs. 18,

Proverbs 31:13-18 "13 She searches for wool and flax And works with her hands in delight. "14 She is like merchant ships; She brings her food from afar. "15 And she rises while it is still night, And gives food to her household And a portion to her young women. "16 She makes plans for a field and buys it; From the fruit of her hands she plants a vineyard. "17 She girds herself with strength And makes her arms strong. "18 She senses that her gain is good; Her lamp does not go out at night."

Similarly, wisdom brings much profit and provision, Proverbs 8,

Proverbs 8:19 "19 "My fruit is better than fine gold, even pure gold, And my produce better than choice silver."

She is found in the city gates receiving praise for her excellence, vs. 31,

Proverbs 31:31 “**31** Give to her from the fruit of her hands, **And let her works praise her in the gates.**”

Just as Lady Wisdom is found at the gates crying out to be heard,

Proverbs 1:21 “**21** At the head of the noisy streets she calls out; **At the entrance of the gates in the city she utters her sayings.**”

Her speech is filled with godly instruction and wisdom, vs. 26

Proverbs 31:26 “**26** She opens her mouth in wisdom, **And the instruction of lovingkindness is on her tongue.**”

So, too, does Lady Wisdom instruct in godliness and provide knowledge, chapter 8,

Proverbs 8:6–8 “**6** “Listen, for I will speak noble things; **And the opening of my lips will reveal upright things.**” **7** “For my mouth will utter truth; **And wickedness is an abomination to my lips.**” **8** “**All the words of my mouth are in righteousness;** There is nothing twisted or crooked in them.”

Lastly, the enduring beauty of the excellent wife springs forth from her fear of the Lord, vs. 30

Proverbs 31:30 “**30** Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain, **But a woman who fears Yahweh, she shall be praised.**”

So, too, is Lady Wisdom inseparably connected with the fear of the Lord, Proverbs 8,

Proverbs 8:12–13 “**12** “I, wisdom, dwell with prudence, **And I find knowledge and discretion.**” **13** “**The fear of Yahweh is to hate evil;** Pride and arrogance and the evil way **And the mouth of perverted words, I hate.**”

Proverbs is masterfully concluded with this personification of wisdom. From a symbolic viewpoint, this is one final and grand appeal to the son to seek, pursue, love, and hold onto Lady Wisdom. She cries out to the son in Chapter 1 and is offered to him as his queen in Chapter 31. At the same time, this is an instruction to the son to marry a woman like Lady Wisdom. Marrying wisely is the most significant test of wise living throughout this book. Even in this chapter, this excellent wife contrasts with the seductress (vs. 3), who would rob him of his excellence and ruin his reign. Solomon himself is the greatest analogy of this truth. You can be the wisest man in the world, but if you fail to marry wisely, your heart will be turned to foolishness. Marry Lady Wisdom, seek, pursue, love, and remain faithful to her. She will help you marry well.