

Proverbs

by Peter Conlan

Peter Conlan's sermon on Proverbs emphasizes the importance of wise speech and the consequences of harmful talk and sexual sin.

Duration: 52:21

Topics: "Christian Life"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on the importance of faith and the promises of God. He compares the good report received by those who had faith in the Bible to his own school reports, which were not always favorable. The speaker also emphasizes the qualities of a virtuous woman described in Proverbs, such as being wise with money, hardworking, and a good mother and neighbor. He discusses the consequences of sexual sin, lying, and other immoral behaviors as described in the book of Proverbs. The sermon encourages listeners to live a righteous and faithful life.

Transcript

Many things that I'd like to say in a different way if I were preaching, but the task before us is the book of Proverbs. I have really been injured as I have read this book now a number of times, the book of Proverbs. I said to you that it's impossible to do exegesis of the book of Proverbs without getting your nose bloody.

Well, I've had some nosebleeds this week and just the whole area of talking and my big mouth and the number of times that has got me into trouble. I was thinking at a time when I was on the ship on the Lagos in Bombay and we were waiting for the mayor of Bombay to arrive and I was sort of coordinating the activities for this opening ceremony and we waited and all the other guests had arrived and I was getting impatient and I just didn't know what was going on and I'd go to the side of the ship and look to see if he was coming and he wasn't there and finally I walked into the lounge where everybody was waiting and there under the spotlights, the television spotlights, was Captain Paget sitting talking to an Indian gentleman and I thought I better go and tell old Paget what's going on and I went up and said Captain I'm awfully sorry for this 10 minute delay but we're waiting for the mayor of Bombay and I said you know these mayors they think they can come at any time and Captain Paget said well I don't know what you're talking about but this is the mayor of Bombay right here and he introduced me to the mayor of Bombay. Proverbs has a lot to say about talking and about the tongue but I want to read from the book of James just to give, I think I've seen many times how the New Testament completes the message of Proverbs and we need the whole to get a look at the whole scripture although we're not able to do that all the time as we're just

looking at Proverbs.

James chapter 3 and verse 5, just think how large a forest can be set on fire by a tiny flame and the tongue is like a fire it is a world of wrong occupying its place in our bodies and spreading evil through our whole being it sets on fire the entire course of our existence with the fire that comes to it from hell itself man is able to tame and has tamed all other creatures wild animals birds reptiles and fish but no one has ever been able to tame the tongue. That is quite a powerful statement about this little tongue of ours that waggles around in our heads. Harmful talk, what does the book of Proverbs say about harmful talk? Chapter 14, temper is the first point and we find in chapter 14 verse 29.

I find it a bit difficult in the good news bible to locate the verses all that quickly they seem to smudge them all together. Verse 29 if you stay calm you are wise but if you have a hot temper you only show how stupid you are. I wonder if there's ever been any sadder words than I'm sorry I ever married you spoken in anger or a child maybe you can remember saying to your parents boy I hate you and then afterwards just thinking how that must have affected your mother.

Repenting afterwards may make you feel better but it does not heal the deep wounds that are inflicted when we lose our temper. We have a saying in England sticks and stones may break my bones but names can never hurt me but that's not true. You can forget the sticks and stones sometimes just the next day apart from the bruise certainly the next week or the next month but I'm sure that some of us can remember things that were said 10 years ago to us that really hurt us and it went deep deep down into our subconscious.

Harmful talk the first point is temper hot temper I hate you or something like that which hurts so much and then we feel we can repent so quickly but it doesn't always heal and then cold temper chapter 12 and verse 18. Two kinds of losing your temper all that wicked people want is to find evil things to do sorry a wicked man is trapped by his own words but a nice man gets himself out of trouble. Now I wonder in someone else's version does that say something about cutting words gossip can be sharp as a sword in another version it talks about cutting words chapter 12 oh chapter 12 18 maybe that's the verse I'm looking for yeah thoughtless words can wound as deeply as any sword but wisely spoken words can heal.

I think the British people have something of a corner of the market on cutting words and dry cold digs that really you're not even quite sure what they said to you but you felt the blow. Cynical words critical words irritable words temper that's the first point the second point gossip chapter 10 and verse 18. A man who hides his hatred is a liar anyone who spreads gossip is a fool.

Chapter 16 and verse 27 there is so much in this book about gossip verse 27 evil people look for ways to harm others even their words burn with evil. Gossip is spread by wicked people they stir up trouble and break up friendships chapter 18 and verse 18. If two powerful men are opposing each other in court wait a minute didn't look right okay let's not do we won't forget that reference oh eight sorry verse eight gossip is so tasty how can we love to swallow it what a picture we actually love swallowing gossip there's so much good in the worst of us and there's so much bad in the best of us that it hardly becomes any of us to talk about the rest of us.

Gossip is particularly dangerous in a community like ours in O.M. and we're particularly vulnerable to this sin I wonder what your immediate reaction is when you hear somebody say to you this have you heard no I'm not surprised what they they have one of the happiest marriages I've ever seen that's right you didn't expect that kind of comment to come out because we naturally believe the worst when we're about to hear

a little bit of tic-tac or gossip about somebody we tend to always expect to hear the worst don't allow your own ears to burn I hope you got that there's two sides of gossip there's people who are actually talking about you and there's you who are imagining you're being talked about and perhaps you're not I have known people in O.M. open letters that were not addressed

because they were so worried that somebody was talking about them and they wanted to know what was in that letter I've known people listening to telephone conversations because they were desperately concerned about what was being said about them don't allow your ears to burn just trust that to the lord gossip is the second point I wanted to try and hurry through this flattery chapter 26 and verse 28 you have to hate someone to want to hurt him with lies flattery or insincere talk brings nothing but ruin how can you ruin somebody with flattery first of all in chapter 11 verse 16 we we read that flattery can lead you into sexual sin chapter 11 and verse 16 a gracious lady is respected but a woman without virtue is a disgrace and I want to read that in the authorized version chapter I have

so many verses here that it's no wonder I may have some of them mixed up chapters 11 and verse 16 have I oh wait a minute chapter 26 verse 28 if I tell you that I haven't slept hardly a night this week because I've got a daughter with measles that coughs all night uh you may understand why I'm having some difficulty concentrating 26 28 when wicked a lying tongue hateth those that are afflicted by it and a flattering mouth worketh ruin that's what I wanted a flattering mouth worketh ruin how does it work ruin it leads to sexual sin we read in the book of proverbs that the prostitute flatters the silly young man the foolish young man she tells him how nice he is how interesting he is and he's flattered by that also the girl the weak and silly girl is deceived by flattery you say nice things

and her resistance is lowered secondly it ruins leaders in the book of Daniel we read how they flattered king Darius and told him how wonderful he was to try and get him to make this proclamation so that nobody else could worship anybody but himself and that ended up in his own ruin and also in Daniel being in prison the fact the pharisees they try to flatter Jesus I don't think we should swing to the opposite extreme and be so blunt maybe that's our problem in OAM we're so blunt that we just go into somebody's house and say what an awful smell what have you got on the oven and I think we can be gracious as well as being truthful fourth point lying chapter 12 and verse 5 honest people will treat you fairly the wicked only want to deceive you the words of wicked men are murderous but the

words of the righteous rescue those who are threatened there are so many verses about lying in the book of proverbs first point about lying lies trap the liar chapter 12 and verse 13 the wicked is snared by the transgression of his lips but the just shall come out of trouble remember as a little boy I was smoking with some other boys on a rubbish tip near to my home and the police came along they were looking for some other people I think and we were I think about 11 years of age the policeman stood me up and said now son have you been smoking I put my best smile on and said nope and sticking out of my top pocket was a package of half-dried cigarettes lies have a short life chapter 12 and verse 19 a lie has a short life but truth lives on forever you will never progress beyond an

unconfessed lie in your spiritual life you will never progress beyond an unconfessed lie even if that was a year ago you'll never really get any further than that unconfessed lie god hates liars oh sorry that's all underline god hates lies chapter 12 verse 22 the lord hates liars but is pleased with those who keep their word now I see a problem here for evangelicals because we have an inbuilt kind of resistance to downright bold lying and our temptation is maybe a little more subtle to deceive with a look or maybe to set up a smoke screen and emphasize some other area of truth hoping that that will take the heat off something

else that we're being questioned about or we're talking about and so we learn how to deceive in very very subtle ways lying particularly between friends and people

and trusted people who trust you that's a particular evil lying is one of the harmful ways of talk in the book of proverbs now helpful talk chapter 15 and verse 1 a soft answer turneth away wrath but grievous words stir up anger healing talk we read in samuel chapter 25 how david wanted to feed his men and he sent them off to see nabal who was a rich man that had a lot of crops and food and everything nabal didn't think there was any threat from david at that particular time so he said forget it why should i feed you and he went off and got drunk and david then when he heard about this decided he would go and murder nabal and all of his men and nabal's wife abigail found out about that and she ran to david and it says with soft words with healing soothing words she managed to change his

what his mind what kind of helpful talk do we see in proverbs chapter 16 and verse 13 it is honest talk righteous lips are the delight of kings and they love him that speaketh right chapter 17 verse 28 it's often talk of few words um even a fool when he holds his peace is counted wise and he that shuts his lips is esteemed a man of understanding i was on a panel at a missions conference in gothamburg a few weeks ago and i didn't say anything mainly because i didn't understand what was going on they were all talking in swedish and finally they all calmed down and said we want to know what peter has to say and i really didn't have anything to say but because i hadn't said anything up to now it seemed like whatever i was going to say was going to have tremendous authority and it really

wasn't much that i did say but if you keep quiet keep your cool then when you do have something to say that has an awful lot more power and uh it's much more helpful and then linked with this uh helpful words are calming words 17 verse 27 he that hath knowledge is worth and a man of understanding is of excellent spirit or of a calm spirit how how can we uh why is it calming first of all it gives us time to hear the facts chapter 18 and verse 13 listen before you answer if you don't you are being stupid and insulting it gives you time to hear the facts before you jump in with your answer this is so practical also secondly it allows tempers to cool chapter 15 and verse 1 a gentle answer quiets anger but a harsh one stirs it up thirdly why is it calming it gives you more authority i just

mentioned that chapter 25 and verse 15 and then the final point uh healing words or helpful talk is appropriate chapter 15 and verse 23 what a joy it is to find just the right word for the right occasion what a gift that is to be able to say the right thing at the right time to the right person i like some of the things i read about john wesley says that he was walking over a narrow track one day with mud on either side and he met this great big fella who stood in his way and said mr wesley i never stand aside for a fool and so john wesley just stepped into the mud to one side and said oh i always do want to move on now from helpful harmful talk and helpful talk to see what the book of proverbs says about uh sex now i want to just begin this by saying that we're not going to look at what

the bible says about sex this is a look at the book of proverbs so you'll see that there are areas that are missing but uh there's still an awful lot to find here in the book of proverbs on the subject of sex chapter 5 and verse 22 will be a good place to to begin the sin of a wicked man are a trap he gets caught in the net of his own sin um actually chapter 5 is is is the whole chapter is a warning against adultery i'm trying to think of of uh my earliest sexual memory maybe this is not the appropriate time to tell you that but i thought i think it was probably when i was about 11 years of age or 10 and my father one day sort of quietly slipped a little book into my hands a little booklet and it was called knowledge for the growing boy i can remember the opening paragraph so you're

growing up estimation mark you may have noticed hairs growing under your armpits do not be alarmed this is quite normal that was more or less the level of my sexual education as a young boy i wish i had been shown the book of proverbs and it's far more straightforward about the whole issue of sex and solomon we read in in the book of kings was speaking from sad experience also the book of ecclesiastes chapter 7 and verse 26 we read the words of solomon he knew what he was talking about i found something more bitter than death woman the love she offered you will catch you like a trap or like a net and her arms around you will hold you like a chain now again there's a special problem for evangelicals proverbs deals in in hot and cold and right and wrong and drunk and sober and prostitutes

and purity and wisdom and enemies and friends and wisdom and foolishness and friends and enemies there's no middle ground in proverbs there's no gray area and when we come to the area of sex especially amongst us evangelical christians there's a whole gray area most of us are not involved in sexual intercourse outside of marriage that's too too much we wouldn't step so far over the line for most of us and so we're in danger of missing the full impact of the book of proverbs unless we realize that there are a multitude of sexual sins that we can be involved in that fall short of sexual intercourse and sometimes they're even far more uh damaging and perverse than we can imagine i was reading one of walter trowbridge's books uh this week and he says most people this is a shattering statistic

most people spend 25 percent of their working time sexually fantasizing i don't know how many people he went around and asked to get that statistic but that is amazing maybe you feel that you think a little bit too much about sex perhaps it will encourage you just to know that the person sitting next to you might also occasionally have one or two thoughts along those lines now what does the book of proverbs say about sex sin not about sex sex is good and honorable the bible teaches us that within marriage well first of all it sets the trap it tells us how the trap is set and we read it's about an ox going to the slaughter young man going into immorality it's like an ox going to the slaughter also we read it's like a deer caught in a trap prancing away uh caught in a trap or like a bird

caught in the net how is the trap set first of all by a clever woman chapter five and verse three the lips of another man's wife may be as sweet as honey and her kisses as smooth as olive oil but when it's all over she leaves you nothing but bitterness and pain who is this clever woman there are four different schools of thought about who the clever woman is in the book of proverbs some people say it's just the hebrew harlot or adulterous then the second view is that when the book of proverbs talks about a prostitute it's referring to canaanite or phoenician women who were involved in the religious prostitution as part of their religion then a third viewpoint is that it's talking about a foreign love cult by the name of astarte who is the goddess of love and the goddess of some of

israel's trading partners and then the fourth view some people feel that actually it's not even talking about a prostitute in the book of proverbs but it's an allegorical story referring to the seduction of greek philosophy well we are accepting the first view that it's talking about what it says it's talking about which is an adulterous woman or a prostitute in different parts it changes in the book of proverbs i want to just say this that it's not just a woman that sets a trap but it's also a man a clever man can set a trap and second point how is the trap set clever words a clever woman rather secondly a beautiful moment chapter 7 and verse 16 i've covered my bed with sheets of colored linen from egypt i've perfumed it with myrrh aloes and cinnamon come on let's make love all night all

night long we'll be happy in each other's arms a beautiful moment is promised it all sounds so so good and of course it's satan's greatest contract and then thirdly the trap is set actually perhaps it should have been

the first point the trap is set by walking in the wrong direction chapter 7 and verse 8 there's a if you look through the book of proverbs you can do a whole study on walking in the right way and chapter 7 and verse 8 we read he was walking along the street near the corner where a certain woman a woman lived sexual sin rarely comes to you uninvited you have to walk towards it how do we walk towards sexual sin well some of us literally walk to it we get on a bus and we go somewhere or we get in our car we go so we get out of the car we walk down we actually have to go to a

person or a bookshop or a film show or something that we know is going to lead us into sexual sin we can walk towards sexual sin by just daydreaming about it we can walk towards sexual sin by the company we see by the lack of discipline in our lives we begin to walk towards sexual sin chapter 5 verse 23 says he dies because he has no self-control his utter stupidity will send him to the grave walking in the wrong direction and then the third major point is the cost of sexual sin first of all the spiritual cost chapter 5 and verse 21 the lord sees everything you do wherever you go he is watching god sees it chapter 6 verse 27 can you carry fire against your chest without burning your clothes can you walk on hot coals without burning your feet it is just as dangerous to sleep with another

man's wife your soul is scarred by sexual sin ecclesiastes again proverbs rather solomon writing chapter 12 and verse 14 god is going to judge everything we do whether good or bad even things done in secret and then secondly the emotional cost the emotional price we pay chapter 5 and verse 12 in the book of proverbs and you will say why would i never learn why would i never let anyone correct me i wouldn't listen to my teachers i paid no attention to them and suddenly i found myself publicly disgraced not only other people's opinion of you suffers when the word comes out but your own opinion of yourself suffers and you begin to see yourself as a failure and as a dirty individual you don't actually experience forgiveness and joy there's emotional damage done and then thirdly physical

damage chapter 5 and verse 16 we read about unwanted babies chapter 5 and verse 9 the risk of blackmail imagine that uh it's indicated there in the text also chapter 5 and verse 10 we lose our money we lose our wealth and chapter 5 and verse 11 there's an amazing description of venereal disease what is the alternative to sexual sin a way of escape proverbs describes the alternative way of living in chapter 5 and verse 15 be faithful to your own wife and give your love to her alone your children to grow up to help you not strangers be happy with your wife and let your joy with the girl you married pretty and graceful as a deer let her charms keep you happy let her surround you with her love i want to just say two things there is forgiveness we read in one god one night that if we confess

our sin he is faithful and just to forgive us we read in isaiah 118 that though our sins be a scarlet they shall be white and the new testament in some ways completes the picture of the book of proverbs there's forgiveness and secondly there is victory and again i look to the new testament to see the completion of this in romans chapter 7 and verse 24 romans 7 24 what an unhappy man i am who will rescue me from this body that is taking me to death thanks be to god who does this to our lord jesus this then is my condition on my own i can serve god's law only with my mind while my human nature serves the law of sin there is no condemnation now for those who live in union with christ jesus one of the great dangers is that we know uh the way of victory solomon knew the way of victory the

tragedy was that this one sin probably more than anything else led to his own ruin as we finish i want to just read um a passage from a book that i've been reading sex is not love by james robinson you may feel that we've raced over the important issues homosexuality masturbation pornography uh fantasizing and all kinds of things that perhaps are beginning to invade some of them anyway invading your life but let me

just give you what i feel is a good summary what a contrast god's way offers to this wilderness of unfulfilled lusts and insatiable sensuality in the real father we thank you for this new day and we thank you for salvation this morning in your son the lord jesus we pray that you would bring your word of life to us this morning in jesus name amen i have changed the title of this

morning's talk from superwoman to wonder woman for two reasons one is that me i'm out of touch with these things but david armstrong is up to date on all the uh television characters and he told me yesterday that i was in the last generation today it's wonder woman not superwoman so and the second reason is that she's really a wonderful woman and i thought that might be a little more appropriate we'll read chapter 31 of proverbs verse 10 to 31 how hard it is to find a capable wife i wonder if a woman had written this if she might not have said how hard it is to find a capable husband she's worth far more than jewels her husband puts his confidence in her and he will never be poor as long as she lives she does him good and never harm she keeps herself busy making wool and linen cloth she

brings home food from out of the way places as much as merchant ships do she gets up before daylight to prepare food for her family and to tell her servant girls what to do she looks at land and buys it and with money she has earned she plants a vineyard she is a hard worker strong and industrious she knows the value of everything she makes and works late into the night she spins her own thread and weaves her own cloth she is generous to the poor and needy to her neighbors that is she doesn't worry when it snows because her family has warm clothing she makes bedspreads and wears clothes of fine purple linen her husband is well known one of the leading citizens she makes clothes and belts and sells them to the merchants she is strong and respected and not afraid of the future not afraid of

the future it's very interesting she speaks with a gentle wisdom she is always busy and looks after her family's needs her children show their appreciation and her husband praises her he says many women are good wives but you are the best of them all charm is deceptive and beauty disappears but a woman who honors the lord should be praised give her credit for all she does she deserves the respect of everyone the kind of girl to marry or the kind of wife to be now i'm conscious that we're not talking to so many married couples this morning that's why i put in that little thing uh the kind of girl to marry rather than already to a married woman i believe there's a lot here for single men as well as single women uh to learn from this the character of this woman just a little note on the text

um probably although we begin this chapter saying that these are the solemn words which king lemuel's mother said to him many scholars feel that this particular passage uh from chapter from verse 10 to 31 may not have actually been written by king lemuel in the septuagint version of the bible there are five other chapters in between those first few verses on the king and alcohol and then these verses from verse 10 onwards on the subject of the virtuous woman and then also in the hebrew language this passage from verse 10 to 31 is what we call an acrostic somebody could tell me what an acrostic yes that's right each section begins with a different letter of the alphabet and then all those letters together make up a special word a simple acrostic would be for the word grace god's riches at

christ's expense that's an acrostic for the word grace it's a beautiful picture of a woman or of of the person that god wants us to be and before we get too discouraged i would remind you that watchman knee says that he believes it takes at least 20 years to make a man or woman of god i don't believe any of us are going to become this kind of person overnight it takes time and uh there are many uh pitfalls on the way but we leave behind now the fools and the gossips and the drunks and the failures of the previous chapters of proverbs and we come to uh this amazing woman what qualities should we look for in a wife

somebody once gave me some advice which i may already have passed on to you i don't remember eyes that over coffee look so very sweet may not look so tender over shredded wheat

that is not a paraphrase from the book of proverbs the first thing we notice is that it is not easy to find a person like this it is not easy to find nor to be a person like this verse 10 we begin how hard it is to find a capable wife i remember as a single oema out in india i used to have my list of all the qualifications that this super wonder woman uh was going to have to have and one day greg livingston who is now the director of the north africa mission the american director of that mission uh he said to me uh what have you got to offer this wonderful woman that makes you feel uh you deserve such a qualified female and that made me think just a little bit and before perhaps some of us single men or single women make our list of spiritual superman and man of faith and man of god and

all the rest of it perhaps we ought to ask ourselves what we have to offer such an individual should the lord ever allow us to marry somebody like that first the next point she is she is adored by her husband and she wins people's confidence verse 11 her husband puts his confidence in her why is that well we read also uh well first of all she's trustworthy verse 11 uh in the authorized version has someone got the av in front of them yes please can you read that the heart of her husband does safely trust in her she is adored and loved by her husband first of all because she's trustworthy she's truthful she's loyal she's discreet let me just say this that some of the there are secrets that should stay in your marriage in your family not necessarily wrong and evil things but there's a

sanctity and a privacy to the family that in om in particular we must respect and i would say to om husbands always be careful what you're revealing about your your partner to others even if it's in prayer or fellowship there are some things where discretion and loyalty should close our lips secondly she is loving verse 12 we read as long as she lives she does him good and never harm and in chapter 5 and verse 19 we read about the wife that surrounds her husband with love she's a loving wife thirdly she never nags in chapter 19 and verse 13 we read that a nagging wife is like water going drip drip drip drip and in chapter 25 verse 24 we read that it's better to sleep on the roof than to sleep in the same house as a nagging woman and um i wonder why they had flat uh rooftops in the middle

east i understand now i read somewhere if you want to find out what your wife is going to be like before you marry her uh in this area then just listen to the way she talks to her little brother because that's the way she'll end up talking to you fourthly he loves her because and he adores her because she has discretion and discernment verse 26 she speaks with a gentle wisdom and then in chapter 11 an even more graphic picture of this chapter 11 verse 22 i love this picture um beauty in a woman without good judgment is like a gold ring in a pig's snout you must admit that uh old solomon was pretty uh picturesque and had quite an imagination and fifthly she she looks good she uh she looks good verse 22 she makes bedspreads and wears clothes of fine linen that doesn't mean say she's a

dazzling beauty but it means that she takes care of herself and i don't believe that a mark of the spiritual woman is that she has to dress as though she's a mobile jumble sale i think that even in om we can uh we can take care of ourselves and then the third major point under the qualities of this uh virtuous woman this uh wife we're looking for she is capable in the home first of all we read in verse 13 she made clothes verse 13 and verse 9 and she keeps herself busy making wool and linen cloth and then verse 19 in this chapter she spins her own thread and weaves her own cloth it was very interesting a few weeks ago to be in sweden uh with regita's family and her mother is about 74 i think now and uh she actually spins her own cloth and then makes the clothes and there's an old spinning

wheel there and her mother used to do that and it's the same spinning wheel that her mother used and just in that little farming family there's something very healthy and just sort of ministered to me to see this kind of ability that they had and then secondly we read she's capable in the home because she is in verse 14 an interesting cook she brings home food from out of the way places now it doesn't say she's a good cook it but i think she was an intro it does say she did a good breakfast because she got up early and prepared food for her family so she did lay on a fairly reasonable breakfast as far as i can understand it but she was an interesting cook and then thirdly in verse 16 she was wise with money what a blessing that is she looks at land and buys it and with money she has

earned she plants a vineyard before i married before i even met regita there were a few things i very seriously was praying that i would find for in my wife and one of them was that she would be good with money and wise and then fourthly in verse 17 we read she is a hard worker uh strong and industrious i believe she kept a tidy house now the fourth major section she is a good mother verse 27 and 28 how do we know that she is always busy and looks after her family's needs her children show their appreciation and her husband praises her first of all she looks after their needs and then secondly she was appreciated by her husbands and some of you husbands i hope you tell your wife how much you appreciate her and what she's doing fifth main point she is a good neighbor verse 20 says she is

generous to the poor and needy and then in the ab it says uh she stretches out her hand to the poor yea she reaches forth her hands to the needy first of all she was not so totally wrapped up in her own family uh including all the problems of the family that she was unselfish to those around her not only did she give to her neighbors but it was she that gave she stretched forth her hand she personally got involved with those around her i hope this year in om in bromley that we have somewhere on our list of priorities to get to know the person living next door to us the person outside of om and we begin to minister to our neighbors what a tremendous step forward that is in our christian lives when we somehow get disentangled and disengaged from our own problems and anxieties and we begin

to reach out and touch the needs of those around us our bible school principal used to say that there are those there are two kinds of people in the world those are that are part of the problem and those are the answer to the problem and may god help us to be those that are the answer to other people's problems and then finally we read that she honored the lord verse 30 charm is deceptive and beauty disappears but a woman who honors the lord should be praised in the authorized version it says she feareth the lord now she had charm and grace and beauty and that's not a bad trio to be going on with is it i'm almost afraid to tell you what frank fortunato once told us in a public meeting on board the doulas when he was uh giving his qualifications of a spirit of the kind of wife to look for

and he said she should be elegant she should be sexy and she should be spiritual i suppose perhaps the most modern way uh he felt he could put it but proverbs gives us a picture of um a charming and a beautiful and a graceful woman but her supreme quality was way beyond all of that she was a god-fearing woman and that is the it's from that position that she was able to develop all of these other qualities and strengths and that's where we began this book of proverbs with god-fearing men and women you might feel that the drunk and the gossip and the impure person and uh the fool and all of these characters we've been looking at this week you may feel they've knocked you flat already and now we come to this perfect specimen that absolutely uh crushes you and crushes me because how can we

hope to uh have the qualities and strength of character that this woman very evidently had you may say well we don't have servants in om she had servants and she obviously had a rather cushy situation to

begin with uh maybe she did but uh there are plenty of people with servants and comfortable homes that do not have these kind of qualities that this woman had can i ever make it can i ever uh experience the fear of the lord which is the beginning of wisdom and the knowledge of the holy which is understanding we've met kings and drunks and friends and enemies and adulterers and gossips and liars and sluggards unattractive characters and finally we meet this wonderful woman of chapter 31 when you feed all these characters into solomon's computer call the book of proverbs they basically all

show up on the screen at the end of the day uh falling into two distinct categories the wise and the foolish not the clever and the foolish not the gifted and the foolish not the intelligent and the foolish not the knowledgeable and the foolish but the wise and the foolish the wisdom is not the ability to say wise things it is the ability to live wisely to live in honesty and purity and in self-control how did solomon do chapter deuteronomy chapter 17 somebody finds that before i do please uh read from verse 16 you got that david deuteronomy 17 verse 16 and 17 but he shall not multiply horses to himself nor cause the people to return to egypt to the end that he should multiply horses for as much as the lord has said unto you he shall henceforth return no more that way neither shall he

multiply wives to himself his heart turned away neither shall he greatly multiply to himself suffering god god had given some instructions for kings and one of them was that a king should not multiply horses we read later on that solomon amassed together 12 000 horsemen and 1400 chariots another instruction from god was that kings should not multiply wives we read that solomon had 700 wives and 300 concubines we read that uh god instructed kings that they should not multiply wealth solomon became probably the richest man alive at that time solomon failed on that computer solomon would have to have stood amongst the fools at the end of the day he knew the way he knew how to say wise things but ultimately he did not know how to live a wise life two generations before him king saul towards

the end of his life before he committed suicide said i have played the fool the turn of the 18th century uh one of the most brilliant poets uh that england has ever produced lord byron who i would call a brilliant fool said towards the end of his life i now have ashes where once there was fire the poet in my bosom lies dead the things i once loved i now merely admire my heart is as gray as my head persistent foolishness and disobedience makes us incapable of enjoying the very things we crave i wonder when we feed our private or acting public life into god's computer um i wonder what shows up on the screen at the end of the day which side we come on whether we stand with the fools she played the fool or with the wise people who like paul could say he fought the fight the characters in

proverbs have their priests their prophets and their wise men those three great traditions that we read about right at the beginning of these lectures to lead them into the fear of the lord reverent worshipping submission to god's will which is the beginning of wisdom and the knowledge of the holy which is knowledge question is will i ever make it can i ever get there chapter 11 of the book of hebrews uh gives us a list of those people that made it and then uh these are the champions of god i'm so thrilled when i read this chapter it gives me something to go for something to aim for and then in verse 39 we read and these all having obtained a good report through faith reminds me of my old school reports um which were never all that good uh i remember one of them well they usually would

say he could have done better if he concentrated and um then another one that said would do better if he ceased to be the former joker or the class joker but these people received a good report but it said they received not the promise god having provided some better thing for us for you and i will we ever make it one john chapter 4 verse 4 greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world i believe the question as

we come to the end of our study of the book of proverbs is not uh will we ever make it from those on the foolish side to those on the wise side but the question is do we really want it in the uh in chapter 1 and verse 22 we read foolish people how long do you want to be foolish how long do you really want to be foolish not will i ever make it will i ever be a uh wise

and discerning and a person of real character after this year in no way but the question is this morning do i want it so much that i'm willing to put aside the foolishness that actually i crave because i enjoy it um even though it robs me of the character that god wants me to be here are proverbs that will help you to recognize wisdom and good advice and understand sayings with deep meaning they can teach you how to live intelligently and how to be honest just and fair they can make an inexperienced person clever and teach young men how to be resourceful these proverbs can even add to the knowledge of wise men and give guidance to the educated so that they can understand the hidden meanings of proverbs and the problems that wise men raise we'll end with a verse from james in the new

testament any of you lack wisdom let him ask of that giveth to all men liberally let's pray together father we thank you that as we read this book of proverbs together we see that you want to take us along this road of wisdom just as far as we are willing to go ourselves and we pray that you help us to have the uh desire and the hunger in our hearts to know you which is wisdom which is the beginning of living the way we ought to live in jesus name we pray amen

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