

Proverbs Chapter 23

Proverbs 23:1-3

"When thou sittest to eat with a ruler, consider diligently what [is] before thee:" "And put a knife to thy throat, if thou [be] a man given to appetite."

"Be not desirous of his dainties: for they [are] deceitful meat."

Here is a warning to exercise restraint when confronted with the luxuries of a wealthy ruler who seeks to lure you into his schemes and intrigues.

Daniel is the classic illustration of one who lived by this proverb, refusing the allurements of the pagan monarch, which he knew could corrupt him. (See Daniel 1:8).

This has to do with the king's food and wine so he asked the commander of the officials that he might not defile himself and asked to be able to eat vegetables and drink water.

Proverbs 23:4-5

"Labor not to be rich: cease from thine own wisdom."

"Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? for [riches] certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven."

Labor for purpose is much more rewarding than laboring to be rich.

First of all, you may never be rich; but if you are, it is fleeting in nature.

Usually a person who gains great riches and has never been rich before cannot hang on to it, and it is soon gone.

The same chances that you took to get rich, you will still be taking to get richer (because one is never satisfied); and to get more, you endanger what you have.

For sure when we die, we leave our earthly possessions behind.

We came into this world naked, and we shall not take possessions with us when we leave.

Riches are uncertain, Godliness is forever.

Rather than wearing one's self out pursuing wealth, pursue the wisdom of God and what glorifies Him, and He will bless with prosperity as He chooses.

Proverbs 23:6-7

"Eat thou not the bread of [him that hath] an evil eye, neither desire thou his dainty meats:"

"For as he thinketh in his heart, so [is] he: Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart [is] not with thee."

We see in this that a man with greed may invite you to eat with him, but he begrudges every bite you eat.

He really has some motive for inviting you to eat that he hasn't told you about.

This is the greedy one who, to be rich, hoards his riches, withholding from the poor and needy to keep and increase his own wealth.

This man is full of jealousy and even spite.

He really cannot bear the sight of other's happiness and joy.

Verse 8 is going right on with this also.

Proverbs 23:8 "The morsel [which] thou hast eaten shalt thou vomit up, and lose thy sweet words."

He invites someone to enjoy his courtesies, feigning generosity, while really being sickeningly hypocritical, as his real god is to take advantage in some way so as to increase his wealth at his guest's expense.

This is just saying in the company of this man; this food is no good.

Food eaten under begrudging eyes never tastes good.

Good fellowship is what makes food good.

You will really wish you hadn't eaten it, and long to get rid of it to get this bitter taste out of your mouth.

When you get this feeling at someone's table, it is hard to find nice things to say.

Proverbs 23:9 "Speak not in the ears of a fool: for he will despise the wisdom of thy words."

You are wasting your time and his, to speak to a fool.

This is true because fools hate wisdom.

We have learned in lessons before this one that a fool is not interested in learning anything.

He will think you are just trying to act smart, and instead of appreciating you're talking to him, it will make him angry

Proverbs 23:10 "Remove not the old landmark; and enter not into the fields of the fatherless:"

We learned (in Prov. 15:25), about evil men who try and take the property of widows.

This is saying beware of trying to defraud someone, who cannot help himself, out of his land or property.

God Himself will take up his cause and fight for him.

You would be trying to defraud God.

God will not hold him guiltless who tries to defraud the helpless.

Proverbs 23:11 "For their redeemer [is] mighty; he shall plead their cause with thee."

In a normal situation, the near kinsman would rescue the one who had fallen upon hard times or avenge in the case of a murder.

"Redeemer" is applied to God as the Savior of His people since the helpless had no voice.

Proverbs 23:12 "Apply thine heart unto instruction, and thine ears to the words of knowledge."

This is saying let the desires of your heart be to learn, and in learning, accumulate knowledge.

Listen to words of knowledge, turn on your understanding, and keep it in your heart.

Proverbs 23:13-14

"Withhold not correction from the child: for [if] thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die."

"Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell."

We see here, that punishment should not be overlooked in training a child.

If he cries, it is not because you are killing him.

The child will survive the punishment and thus avoid an untimely or premature death due to sinful conduct.

A lesson learned where punishment is involved is remembered better.

In the Old Testament, a rebellious child was killed.

Rebellion was associated with witchcraft.

This is just saying, whip him and drive the rebellion out of him, before it gets too much hold on him.

In the long run, you will save him.

Proverbs 23:15 "My son, if thine heart be wise, my heart shall rejoice, even mine."

This has to be said by the person who is the instructor.

The instructor rejoices more than the student when the student learns well.

It is a good reflection on both.

The instructor, because he has taught well, and the student, because he has learned well.

Proverbs 23:16 "Yea, my reins shall rejoice, when thy lips speak right things."

In the NASE edition, the reins are actually speaking figurative of expressions of the inner man or the seat of one's thoughts and feelings.

The result of discipline is the child's wise choices, bringing the parents joy.

In Psalms 37:30 "The mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom, and his tongue talketh of judgment."

We see, here, the reins of the teacher again.

We know when righteous words come from the student's mouth that righteousness is in his heart.

For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.

Proverbs 23:17-18

"Let not thine heart envy sinners: but [be thou] in the fear of the LORD all the day long."

"For surely there is an end; and thine expectation shall not be cut off."

We see here, that sometimes sinners seem to be prospering in this world.

We are not to envy them or their evil ways.

Never look longingly at what they are doing.

Anyone who might envy sinners needs to know that their prosperity is brief.

They will die ("be cut off"); then there will be a time when all iniquities will be dealt with and divine justice will prevail.

We must keep our eyes on the LORD and his teaching all the way.

The overarching theme of this book and particularly the first 9 chapters is reverence for God.

This reverential awe and admiring, submissive fear is foundational for all spiritual knowledge and wisdom.

Never let your eyes off the path of righteousness.

Righteous living sometimes in this life seems not to be noticed by anyone.

There is an end.

The end is heaven, if you stay on the path that leads to God.

The righteous will live forever.

Proverbs 23:19 "Hear thou, my son, and be wise, and guide thine heart in the way."

The way of wisdom is the only right way.

These are the things that a good teacher teaches.

First, the student has to open his ears of his understanding so that his heart may receive.

Proverbs 23:20-21

"Be not among winebibbers; among riotous eaters of flesh:"

"For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty: and drowsiness shall clothe [a man] with rags."

Winebibbers are drunkards and riotous eaters of flesh are gluttons.

Both are sinners and both are avoided by the wise man.

People who take in a great deal of wine or other strong drink find that their thinking is affected and they cannot think clearly.

The "riotous eaters of flesh" are those who do not eat a balanced diet, but can eat several pounds of meat at one sitting.

Alcohol and terrible excesses of food are very expensive and will take all of the money one can muster to buy all of this.

Even worse, is the fact that you cannot work drunk, and a glutton is so big he can't work.

You can easily see these people would be poor.

Proverbs 23:22 "Hearken unto thy father that begat thee, and despise not thy mother when she is old."

We have discussed before that your father and your mother only want to help you.

You are their own flesh, and they want even better for you than they had themselves.

Be glad when God is good to you and lets your parents live a long time.

The child in the home is to be willingly under the authority of parents with obedient submission to them as the agents of the LORD placed over him, obeying parents as if obeying the LORD Himself.

The reasoning here is simply that such is the way God has designed and required it.

Proverbs 23:23 "Buy the truth, and sell [it] not; [also] wisdom, and instruction, and understanding."

Tell the truth at all cost.

Whatever it takes of this world's goods to learn the truth, do it.

This world will pass away, but the truth is eternal.

This "buy" is speaking of knowledge and understanding.

Obtain the truth at all costs.

Then never relinquish it at any price.

Proverbs 23:24-25

"The father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice: and he that begetteth a wise [child] shall have joy of him."

"Thy father and thy mother shall be glad, and she that bare thee shall rejoice."

As we learned (in Proverbs 13:24), about early childhood teaching is that it requires both parental discipline, including corporal punishment, and balanced kindness and love.

There is great hope that the use of the "divine ordinance" of the rod will produce godly virtue and parental joy.

Such discipline must have the right motivation and appropriate severity.

One who has genuine affection for his child but withholds corporal punishment, will produce the same kind of child as a parent who hates his offspring.

Parents are very proud of their children who live a righteous life.

The joy of the father and mother of a child, who God has blessed with wisdom, and who has increased in righteousness and knowledge, is even greater than the joy the child has.

Proverbs 23:26-28

"My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways."

"For a whore [is] a deep ditch; and a strange woman [is] a narrow pit."

"She also lieth in wait as [for] a prey, and increaseth the transgressors among men."

We see some of the things of wisdom and understanding teaches (in verses 26, 27, 28).

The first verse is another warning to listen to.

The word "whore" (prostitute), is a very emphatic word showing just how revolting this sin is.

These terms refer to any immoral woman.

Falling into her clutches should be as frightening as the prospect of falling into a deep pit or well, from which there is no escape.

We have said before that devastating diseases are associated with whoredom and homosexuality today.

A man or woman of wisdom will not get involved in this type of sin.

This sin involves the body, and the body (if you are a Christian), is the **TEMPLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**.

This sin, more than others, involves God in the sin; and this is an abomination to God.

Don't let the desires of the flesh; draw you out of fellowship with God.

Verses 29-35

We find these passages offer a powerful warning against drunkenness, presented as a riddle (verse 29 with its answer in verse 30).

Following the riddle, come exhortations and descriptions of the drunkard's delirious thoughts.

Proverbs 23:29 "Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? Who hath redness of eyes?"

A question drives home a lesson.

This is what we see here.

The teacher is asking these questions to get you to thinking seriously about what really does cause all of this; and then (from verse 30 through 35), the teacher gives us the answer.

Proverbs 23:30 "They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine."

Lingering long at the wine is indicative of constant drinking, so as to induce drunkenness.

Searching for more to drink indicates the same pursuit."

Proverbs 23:31 "Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his color in the cup, [when] it moveth itself aright."

This describes wine when it is especially desirable and when it is most intoxicating, perhaps as "strong drink" or mixed with spices only and not water, as opposed to the "new wine", which was fresh and unfermented or less fermented.

Proverbs 23:32 "At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder."

This recounts the hangover, but also the more than likely destructive consequences.

Proverbs 23:33 "Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things."

The delirium and distortion of reality are part of the drunkard's miserable experience.

Proverbs 23:34 "Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast."

Here is the warning about the dizziness, sickness and confusion of the drunkard, like being seasick at the top of the mast, the most agitated point on a ship in strong seas.

Proverbs 23:35 "They have stricken me, [shalt thou say, and] I was not sick; they have beaten me, [and] I felt [it] not: when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again."

The drunkard's lack of sense is so severe that his first waking thought is to repeat his debauchery and dangerous sin.

These last six verses are talking about people who drink too much.

Alcoholism, drunkenness, and drugs are a real problem today.

The hangover from alcohol is like the serpent's bite the next day.

The drunk cannot remember the terrible things he did under the influence of alcohol.

One of the worst things now is driving while drunk.

When the driver of a car is under the influence of drugs and alcohol, the car becomes a deadly weapon.

Drugs can cause a hangover that lasts for literally years.

Drug flashbacks can be devastating.

We see above that even though the person who was drunk was beaten severely, he wasn't even aware of it at the time, because he was unconscious and didn't notice.

That part of his life is a blank.

He can't remember.

He doesn't even know who he was with, so he doesn't know who beat him.

This should surely convince you to leave drugs and alcohol alone.

Proverbs 23 Questions

1. What should you do, if you are a man of appetite when you sit with a king?
2. What are the king's dainties called in verse 1?
3. What reason should you not labor for?
4. Riches make themselves _____ and fly away.
5. What kind of labor is more rewarding than riches?
6. In verse 8, What is meant, "the morsel which thou hast eaten shalt thou vomit it up"?
7. What makes food good?
8. Why should you not speak wisdom in a fool's ear?
9. Who will fight the battles of the fatherless?
10. Apply thine heart unto_____, and thine ears to the words of_____.
11. What are we not to withhold from our children?
12. Rebellion is associated with what evil?
13. Who besides the one being taught, rejoices at the knowledge learned?
14. What is intended by "my reins shall rejoice"?
15. Let not thine heart envy whom?
16. In verse 20, he is warned not to be among whom?
17. What 2 shall come to poverty?
18. What do you call someone that overeats?
19. What lengths are we told to go to, to get the truth?
20. What do you think that means? (wasn't talked about)
21. Which two want only the best for you in life besides God?
22. Obeying Parents is the same as _____.

23. The world will pass away, but truth is _____.
24. Loving parents, which withhold corporal punishment, will produce the same type of a child as a parent who _____ their offspring.
25. What is a whore called?
26. What is another word for whore?
27. Why is sex sin worse than some other sins?
28. In verse 29, for what purpose are all these questions?
29. What is red wine describing?
30. Who is meant by "they that tarry long at the wine"?
31. A hangover is compared to what in verse 32?
32. The _____ and _____ are part of a drunkard's miserable experience.
33. What should these last verses in this lesson convince you not to do?
34. What does a car become in the hands of someone drunk on drugs or alcohol?
35. What is meant by "he that lieth upon the top of a mast"?