

Commentary on Proverbs Chapter 23 by Chuck Smith 5.9.21

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March memory verse: **Revelation 22:20 (NKJV)** He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming quickly." Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

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Now the next three verses are coupled together.

When you sit to eat with a ruler, consider diligently what is before thee: And put a knife to your throat, if you be a man given to appetite. Be not desirous of his dainties: for they are deceitful meat ([Pro 23:1-3](#)).

So you don't go in and start scarfing up the hors d'oeuvres, you know. All of these dainty little fancy things, you know, and you go in and just start woofing them down. And never any way you're going to fill up on hors d'oeuvres. So when you sit with the ruler, just consider diligently what's put before you. And if you're given to appetite, better to just take your knife, put it to your throat. Don't be desirous of those little dainties. Keep your hands off. They're deceitful.

Labor not to be rich: cease from your own wisdom ([Pro 23:4](#)).

The Bible says, "If riches increase..." Now it says, "Labor not." Don't let that be a goal of life. But, "If riches increase, set not your heart upon them" ([Psalm 62:10](#)). God may see fit to increase riches. Just don't let your heart get set on them.

Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? for riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven ([Pro 23:5](#)).

The next three verses are coupled together.

Eat not the bread of him that hath an evil eye ([Pro 23:6](#)),

Now, this isn't referring to the old superstition that there are some people that have an evil eye, that they can look on you with that evil eye and put a hex on you. It's almost humorous to watch the preliminaries of some of these boxing matches where they have these guys over in the corner, you know, to put the evil eye on the other boxer, and you see them trying to put this evil eye and hex, and you see the boxer deliberately avoiding, won't look and see that evil eye. But this is not at all a reference to some kind of a power that a person has to put a hex on you with an evil eye.

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Actually, it is just referring to a person whose mind is evil, to an evil person. "Eat not the bread of him who is evil."

neither desire his dainty meats: For as he thinks in his heart, so is he ([Pro 23:6-7](#)):

If he is thinking evil in his heart, then he's an evil person.

Eat and drink, he says to you; but his heart is not with you. The morsel which you have eaten you will vomit up, and lose thy sweet words. Speak not in the ears of a fool: for he will despise the wisdom of your words ([Pro 23:7-9](#)).

And again, we had in the last chapter.

Remove not the old landmark; and enter not into the fields of the fatherless: For their Redeemer is mighty; and he shall plead their cause with thee ([Pro 23:10-11](#)).

In other words, God will take up the cause of the widow or of the orphan, of the poor. If you're a widow, if you're an orphan, you're poor, you got a fantastic ally. God will take up your cause.

Apply thine heart unto instruction, thine ears to the words of knowledge. And withhold not correction from the child: for if you beat him with the rod, he shall not die ([Pro 23:12-13](#)).

You'll get arrested.

Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell ([Pro 23:14](#)).

Now, as we mentioned this morning, "Train up a child in the way he should go." In the Hebrew literally is, "Train up a child according to his way." That is, recognize that there is a vast difference in the character, in the personalities of children. And there are some children where spanking is excellent discipline. There are other kids you can beat all day and it's not going to do any good. So learning that children have different temperaments, you're training then is according to their temperament. "Train up a child according to his way." And there's no sense of wailing on a kid that doesn't do any good. Find another form of discipline. You can find an effective form of discipline. Maybe the depravation of certain privileges or desires that the child has is an excellent form of discipline for particular children. But I don't advocate child beating, and neither do I believe that the scriptures advocate that. But for some kids, a good spanking once in a while isn't a bad idea.

As I said, several years ago I knew much more about raising children than I do now. In our first pastorate, small little church, sort of a one-room church, and for Sunday school we just had curtains to divide off the auditorium into the classrooms. It wasn't an ideal situation at all. In fact, it was a very difficult situation, especially because the lady who was teaching the high school class had a little girl that she never disciplined. And a child

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left to itself will bring reproach to its parents. And because this little girl was never disciplined, she would just start screaming, and because we were all in the same room only divided by curtains, it would disrupt the whole Sunday school. And, of course, I was very young and very new to pastoring, and I didn't have any children so I had all the answers for raising children and everything else.

So the second Sunday that we were in this church and the same procedure started again as this mother started to teach the class, her little girl started screaming and yelling. I went up to her and graciously offered to take her little girl for a walk.. I'll tell you, from then on whenever that little girl would start to scream, I'd look at her and she'd would stop.

These next few are coupled together.

My son, if your heart is wise, my heart shall rejoice. Yes, my reins shall rejoice, when your lips speak right things ([Pro 23:15-16](#)).

Now the reins are really the kidneys. And they felt that the deepest emotions of a person are not really felt in your heart, Valentine's Day notwithstanding, but the deepest emotions of a person are felt down in the stomach region. When you really feel an emotion extremely deep, you feel it in the region of the stomach. That's why in the New Testament you have "bowels of compassion" ([1 John 3:17](#)). As the deepest area of feeling is way down and we say, "I had a gut-level feeling, you know." And we're trying to describe a feeling that is more than just an emotional moment. But where I feel something very deeply. So here is the father talking to his son. "My heart will rejoice. Yea, even deeper than that. If you're a wise son and you speak wise things and right things, down in the deepest area I rejoice."

Let not your heart envy sinners: but reverence the LORD all day long. For surely there is an end; and your expectation shall not be cut off. Hear thou, my son, and be wise, and guide your heart in the way ([Pro 23:17-19](#)).

Again, there is an end. Look down the road. Consider the end result. There is an end to all things. That is, of this life, and then I'm going to stand before God. So consider that.

Be not among winebibbers; among riotous eaters of meat: For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty: and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags. Harken unto your father that begat thee, and despise not your mother when she is old. Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding. The father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice: and he that begets a wise child shall have the joy of him. Thy father and thy mother shall be glad, and she that bore thee shall rejoice. My son, give me your heart, let your eyes observe my ways. For a whore is a deep ditch; and a strange woman is a narrow pit. She also lies in wait as for a prey, and increases the transgressors among men ([Pro 23:20-28](#)).

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Now this next portion is all together to the end of the chapter and it's just extremely interesting.

Who has woe? who has sorrow? who has contentions? who has babblings? who has wounds without cause? who has redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine. Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his color in the cup, or when it moveth itself aright ([Pro 23:29-31](#)).

Or when it moves by itself. Some believe that this is talking of the fermentation process. And after the fermentation has taken place, then you should avoid it. In other words, they did have non-fermented types of wines. And once the wine moves of itself in the cup, the fermentation process, then leave it alone.

For at the last it bites like a serpent, and stings like an adder. [As the result] Your eyes will behold strange women ([Pro 23:32-33](#)),

You will lose your inhibitions.

your heart shall utter perverse things ([Pro 23:33](#)).

Things that you would not normally say. Things that you would not normally do. But now that you're under the influence, your inhibitions have been loosed, you're going to do all kinds of weird and stupid things.

Yea, thou shalt be as he that lies down in the middle of the sea ([Pro 23:34](#)),

Doing just really dumb things.

or as one who lies on the top of a mast. They have stricken me, you will say, and I was not sick; they have beaten me, but I didn't feel it ([Pro 23:34-35](#)):

You'll wake up with all the bruises and cuts and you don't know how you've got them.

when shall I awake? ([Pro 23:35](#))

And then what happens?

I'll go right back and seek it yet again ([Pro 23:35](#)).

The tragic effects of alcoholism described quite graphically here in Proverbs