

## Final Words – Proverbs 30:1-4 and 31:1-9

Including today, we have spent the past six weeks looking at one of the most valuable books in God's Word. When studied with the proper mindset, Proverbs prove valuable in directing the reader about how to live a successful life, all while dealing with the complexities of life. In other words, as I have previously mentioned, most proverbs are not "promises" but are instead general truths which give points of advice on how to accomplish a desired outcome. Proverbs are not limited to the ones we find in King Solomon's book. In fact, the Bible is filled with many proverbial sayings. What I have found as I study the Bible is that many of the proverbs are encouraging points which direct us towards living better. Many of the proverbs also serve as warnings about things we should avoid. Remember the words of **Proverbs 1:7**, "*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.*" Simply put, if we follow the wise advice associated with encouraging proverbs and avoid the things other proverbs warn us of as detrimental to our success, then we can avoid stupidity, or foolishness.

Jesus gave us a proverb as recorded in **Matthew 10:16** – "*Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves.*" What's the advice? Be wise and innocent (without fault or malice in your heart) as you serve and minister to those around you. Simply put, the pursuit of knowledge gives us useful wisdom that will help us succeed in life. For the disciples, they were going to face some serious challenges, but if they kept their focus on Jesus and the things He taught them, they could trust Him to help them succeed.

Now, what is the difference between knowledge and wisdom? Allen Nolan suggests that we consider **knowledge** as "being book smart" and consider **wisdom** as being "street smart." If that doesn't suit your needs, then think of it this way – some people operate with an elevated level of intelligence but lack common sense. How many of you know someone like this? Think of it another way. Knowledge is something gained through seeking, searching, and listening that provides complete understanding of the subject being considered. Wisdom is taking that understanding and determining how best it can be applied into your life. The best example of can think of for this revolves around God's Word. How many of you would like to know more about the Bible? Well, you must read its pages, seek out its message, search for its truths, hear it taught. If you continually do these things, your "knowledge" will grow. Once you have increased your knowledge level, the wise thing to do then is put the things you have learned into practice. Here are few examples for what I'm talking about...

1. God exists. How do I know? The truth of the creation narrative divinely fulfilled prophecies, and the complexity of our bodies. These are all things which inform us of God's existence. "In the beginning, God" is a statement that points to His existence from the very start. The prophet Isaiah reminds us in **Isaiah 46:9**, "*for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me.*"
2. The world is the way it is because of man's disobedience. Disobedience leads to sin and sin leads to eternal death. Death is the enemy of all man. The more I study the Bible the more I understand why the world is far away from the paradise God created it to be.
3. Satan is real. **2 Corinthians 4:4** informs us that he is the god of this world. Paul says, "*the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.*"

4. Jesus is the rescuer. **John 3:16 – 18** “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.”

I say all this to encourage you to study the book of Proverbs because it will help you become a better person. You'll become a better friend, a better spouse, a better parent, a better child, a better student, a better employ, a better Christian. You'll know the things to do and the things to avoid in life and in your relationships. Don't just trust me, trust the man God used to give us the information. Let me remind you of why God gave Solomon the wisdom he shares with us in the book of Proverbs. **Read Proverbs 1:1-7.**

Let me show you something I discovered about Solomon. I think it will help you decide some things this morning. Remember the story of Solomon from 1 Kings 3 where God appeared to Solomon in a dream and told him to ask for anything of Him and He would give it to him. Solomon asked for wisdom and of course God granted it to him. But that was too easy and simple for God. He decided to bless King Solomon with more. Look at this – **Read 2 Chronicles 1:11-12** What's important to note here is that Solomon started out with God on his side. However, if you know the rest of King Solomon's story, you'll know that his heart would eventually turn away from God. **Read 1 Kings 11:1-13.** Now... here's Solomon, the wisest man to ever live, a man who God had appeared twice, around the age of forty, found himself with a hardened heart and far from God.

However, near the end of his life, Solomon eventually discovered how foolish he had been. He finishes the book of Proverbs by telling us what he had learned. He eventually repented and returned to God. Look at Proverbs 30:1-4. To understand this chapter, we must know who Agur is. Who is this guy Agur? Have you ever heard of the term **Epithet**? Don't worry, I hadn't either, until a few weeks ago. An epithet is a word or phrase often used to describe a characteristic of a person and is used in place of one's birth name. Agur is Solomon. Solomon gives himself this nickname to describe who he was near the end of his life. Agur's translated meaning is “gathered.” Some Biblical scholars believe Solomon, because of his shame and disappointment with himself decided to write the words of chapter 30 using this replacement name. King Solomon gathered up all this Godly wisdom, he gathered up all his success, yet he did not truly know God. Look what he said of himself though. “I am too stupid to be a man.” “I have not learned wisdom.” Solomon knew, but did not practice. He also says, “nor have I knowledge of the Holy One.” Solomon discovered, with all that he had gained in life, something was missing. He did not truly have a relationship with God. Let me say this, and I'm saying this out of concern and love for each of you. **PRINCIPLE:** You can know and completely understand everything the book of Proverbs has to say. Heck, you can know and understand everything the Bible has to say, but if you do not know God and His Son Jesus Christ, you'll be no different than King Solomon

was throughout most of his life. As he says, “stupid and foolish.” Not my words, but the words of God from the wisest man to ever live.

Listen... you can have every worldly thing imaginable, but without a relationship with God and His Son, you'll miss the treasures of heaven.

Let me show you one more thing. Look at chapter 31. **Read Chapter 31:1-9.** Who is Lemuel? Of course, it's King Solomon using another epithet to describe himself at the end of his life. Lemuel translates to mean “for God” or “devoted to God.” Fortunately, before it was too late, King Solomon repented and returned to God. Men... the proverbs of verses 3-9 are there to guide you about how to be a virtuous man.

You can have tremendous success in this life. You can be book smart and possess every ounce common sense available, but if you die without knowing Jesus, every bit of it will be in vain. King Solomon wasted a lot of time thinking he was in the right place. Fortunately, he discovered this truth, repented, and left this world truly knowing God and His Son.

Who are you today? This is your wake-up call. Will you be like King Solomon who discovered that he was not as wise as he thought because he did not truly know God. He called himself Agur because he was too stupid, he lacked common sense and had not mastered human wisdom. And then, he turns around and calls himself King Lemuel and decides he will be a king for God during his last few years of life. I want to encourage you today to be King Lemuel and live your life for God. And you can't live your life for God if you haven't surrendered your life to Jesus. If you're here today and you just discovered that you're Agur, but you want to be Lemuel. You've just discovered that you don't truly know God, but you want to, then will you come today and confess your sins, repent (turn from those sins), and accept Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord?