

Thirty Truths to Wisdom (Part 3)

Thirty Truths to Wisdom

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I invite you to open your Bibles to Proverbs 23. Proverbs 23. We're looking at these thirty sayings of Solomon where he lays out these truths that really embody wisdom, and we are going to pick this up in verse 17, and really what Solomon is going to say from verse 17 all the way to the end of the chapter is he's going to describe wisdom in terms of self-control. Self-control that's an important word. That's a biblical word. Paul says the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and what's the last one? Self-control. Self-control is the ability to say no to yourself. It's the ability to restrain your impulses. It's the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Christian. When you become a believer, you still have what's called fleshly desires, you still have to wage war against the impulses of your flesh. The impulses of your flesh want to take your carnal desires and lead you into sin, and so one of the marks of the believer is that that battle against sin really starts when you become a Christian and the Christian is marked by this self-control. And we do this ultimately for our greater joy, right? Sin promises pleasure for the moment, but we say, no, for the joy that lays forward in the future.

So jot this verse down, 1 Corinthians 9:25. By the way, maybe you're used to having the notes, the printer was broken this morning so we are going to do this old school. You know what a pen and paper are, so you're going to have to make notes with pen and paper and we're going to do this the old fashion way. So jot down 1 Corinthians 9:25. Paul says, "Every athlete exercises self-control in all things." So think about an athlete training for what Paul is describing, the Isthmian Games. He says, "They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable." So they exercise self-control to win an earthly trophy, but we to win a heavenly reward. He says, "So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. But I discipline my body." That phrase "discipline my body" literally is

translated, "I give myself a black eye." I give myself a black eye. We had this phrase in the Marine Corps when somebody would do something dumb, we would say take a knee and punch yourself in the face, and the idea is you need to discipline yourself. Well, what Paul's saying is, "I discipline my body. I give myself a black eye so that I don't do the things that my flesh wants to do," he says, "and I keep it under control lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified." The Greek word that Paul uses to describe this competition in the Isthmian Games is agonizomai, which where we get our English word agonize. So this is difficult. This isn't easy. It's a work of the Holy Spirit in our lives that causes us to restrain ourselves in order for the greater good, our greater joy in the end.

So this is where Solomon picks up in verse 17. This is the 13th saying and it is this: play the long game of eternity. The 13th saying is play the long game of eternity. Look at verse 17. He says,

17 Let not your heart envy sinners, but continue in the fear of the LORD
all the day.

When you're living your life, when you're living the Christian life and you look around you, it looks like the wicked are having all the fun. It looks like the wicked are getting ahead and the disciplined Christian life restrains you from having the joy that you want. Have you ever wondered how does the wicked keep living this life and it seems like God does nothing? It seems like God does nothing. They get away with it time and time and time again, and they're having these pleasures, and you look at that, and you ask the question, "Where is God? I'm living this disciplined Christian life. I'm trying to live the life of wisdom, and I'm encountering hindrances. God, what would you have to do with this?" And the psalmist asked the same question in Psalm 73. He says, "I look around me and I see the wicked getting ahead," and he said, "My feet almost stumbled when I considered how the wicked advanced." My feet almost stumbled. It was difficult for me to understand this. And he said, "Everything became clear when I went to the house of God, when I went to the sanctuary of the Lord, and then I saw the end of the wicked." What's the end of the wicked? The end of the wicked is that ultimately before God they're cut off. The end of the wicked is that they go to hell. It's fun now, in hell for eternity. So he says, "When I considered what happened with the wicked, man," he says, "then I discerned therein truly you set them in slippery places, you make them fall to ruin, how they are destroyed in a moment, swept away utterly by terrors." Solomon says in Ecclesiastes 8:13, "But it will not be well with the wicked, neither will he prolong his days."

There's a picture up in my office and it's a picture of what Jesus said in Matthew 7. You remember Jesus in Matthew 7, he said there's a broad road and there's a narrow road, and the broad road is the party life. And in this picture, it's all the pleasures that the world has. They're all on the broad road and most of the people that you encounter in life, they're on the broad road and everything looks nice on the broad road until you get to the very end. The end of the broad road is what Jesus says? Destruction. So he says enter through the

narrow gate, go through the narrow path, the narrow way is what leads to life. So it's the cross now and the crown later for the Christian.

Look what he says, he says in verse 17, "continue in the fear of the LORD all the day." Don't envy the sinner but you continue in the fear of the Lord all the day. The fear of the Lord you could describe as Scripture itself. You continue in reverence to God. You continue fearing God and then he says this,

18 Surely there is a future, and your hope will not be cut off.

You will walk in God's blessing. Psalm 37:9 says, "For the evildoers shall be cut off, but those who wait for the LORD shall inherit the land." The Christian is someone who plays the long game of eternity. The long game of eternity. The sinner wants all the pleasures now, "But for the joy set before us, we endure." The cross must precede the crown, but the crown awaits us. Jesus said this, "For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses," or forfeits, "himself?" So the righteous, it's wise to play the long game. It's wise to play the long game. It's wise to think about your soul and where you stand before God and know that it might not always be fun and games. It might not always be a rose garden. It might be difficult to live the Christian life, but God rewards his own and he will not cut off. You will inherit, he says in Psalm 37:9, the land, which means heaven itself. Heaven itself.

So that's the 13th saying 14: do not live the party life. Do not live the party life. Look at verse 19. He says,

19 Hear, my son, and be wise, and direct your heart in the way. 20 Be not among drunkards or among gluttonous eaters of meat,

Now obviously God gives us food and drink on the one hand for our enjoyment, so Solomon says Ecclesiastes 2:24, "There is nothing better for a person than that he should eat and drink and find enjoyment in his toil." So on the one hand, we're to enjoy the good things that God has given us. When you go and get some chicken fajitas, you are to enjoy that. You are to enjoy the Blue Bell ice cream at night while you're sitting there watching Andy Griffith or whatever you like to watch. You're to enjoy the simple pleasures that God gives, right? We're to enjoy God's good gifts but the problem is when you indulge, when you take that to the extreme, and what Solomon is really describing here is this party life, those who get together for the purpose of indulgence. He talks about drunkards, literally wine-bibbers. These are people who come together for the express purpose of drinking wine, to drink excessively. He talks about gluttonous eaters literally you could translate that flesh to themselves. People who just want to eat, eat, eat, eat, eat, get the buffet, all for me. People who gather to eat to excess. That would put some Baptist picnics off limits, wouldn't it? But really, what he's describing is what you could call, Jesus called it in Luke 15 in the parable of the prodigal son, reckless living. Do you remember that? The prodigal went away to a far country and spent all his money on loose

living, reckless living, on prostitutes, on food, on wine. He went through his money quickly. It was reckless.

Look at verse 21. The reason why you shouldn't do this is,

21 for the drunkard and the glutton will come to poverty, and slumber will clothe them with rags.

In other words, your indulgence will bring you down. When you live the party life, you will not be able to say no to your passions. You will eat more than you want. You will drink more than you want and you won't be able to get up when the alarm clock goes off, and therefore you can't go work a job. When you're hungover, you cannot go work a job. You sleep in and you ultimately get fired from your work. You have no income coming in. And he says you will be clothed with rags as a result. And this is the story, of course, of the prodigal son. He spent all of his money on loose living, and here's this Jewish boy, where does he find himself? Working with pigs. Working with pigs. He comes to poverty.

I heard Alistair Begg tell this story. He said a guy showed up at his church and the guy was from Texas and he said, "Well, what brought you to Cleveland?" And he said, "Well, to be honest, I was Johnny Manziel's high school football coach." And he said, "Okay, well, what are you doing all the way up here?" He said, "Well, the Cleveland Browns have hired me to babysit Johnny Manziel because he won't stop partying." Well, about three weeks later he said he came up to him and he said, "I'm going back to Texas. Johnny just won't listen. He just won't listen." He was supposed to have some treatment, one was either Saturday or Sunday, and the night before he's supposed to have treatment, he got on a plane and went to Vegas, even wore a wig so people wouldn't recognize him. Of course, didn't make it back in time and the Browns cut him. The Browns cut him. He's been trying to get back in football ever since. I saw recently he said, "I'll play for free if somebody will just give me a chance." But that party lifestyle led him to that position where ultimately he was out of a job.

So you have to have this self-control. You have to say, look, this is what the world is doing, this is not where I'm going. The world is going to indulge, you have to learn to say no. One of the ways that we do that, by the way, is through fasting. Fasting. Jesus said "when you fast." It's an expectation that every believer at some point fast, and fasting is you telling your body no. It's saying, "I will not eat. I will not drink. I will not do this." Maybe it's a fast from social media. "I will say no to myself for the express purpose of focused time in prayer and time with the Lord." But it's important. We need to be able to tell ourselves no. "No, I do not need that extra basket of chips. No, I do not need this." We need to be able to exercise self-control.

So that's 14. 15 is keep to the old paths. This one is really important. Keep to the old paths. Look at verse 22. He says,

22 Listen to your father who gave you life, and do not despise your mother when she is old.

There's a temptation and every generation is prone to this temptation and the temptation is this, to say we know better than our parents' generation. We know better than our grandparents' generation. It's called chronological snobbery where you think that you're smarter than the people who came before you just because you came after them. And it's simply not true. Simply not true. Yeah, we're more technologically advanced, we're not any smarter. What did Solomon say in Ecclesiastes? He said there's nothing new under the sun. There's nothing new under the sun. We're not any smarter or more righteous or better morally than the people who came before us.

So the Jews understood that the parents, that the parents that we have God gives us in order for them to teach us about who God is. Now obviously not everyone's parent is a God-fearer. Not everyone's parent is a Christian. But the idea is this, that we are to listen to the wise of the past. We are to listen to the wise of the past. The path of wisdom and godliness has already been established. So wise people look to the old paths, the paths of righteousness. What did the saints do 50 years ago that worked? What did the saints do 100 years ago that worked? What did the saints do 2,000 years ago that worked? Moral righteousness and wisdom isn't reinvented in every generation, it's just recycled. So you want to look back and say what were people doing to live righteous lives and then you want to get in that path. That's what you want to do.

When Isaac was in the land of Canaan, the Philistines and Abimelech said there's not room for you and us, so you're going to have to leave. And so Isaac went into Gerar, which was a desert land, and it was a desperate time for him because he had many flocks, he had all these animals, he had all these herds, he had all these people that he needed to feed and now he finds himself in a desert land. What did he do for water? Did he go and dig new wells? No, he did not. Listen, this is Genesis 26:18, "And Isaac dug again the wells of water that had been dug in the days of Abraham his father, which the Philistines had stopped after the death of Abraham. And he gave them the names that his father had given them." So he went and dug the old wells. He said, "I don't have time to figure this out. I don't have time to find water in new places. I need to go to the old wells, the wells that I know where water was." And that, my friend, is what every Christian needs to do and is what every church needs to do. We're not to come up with some newfangled thing. We're to find the old paths. What did the churches of God where God was found in the ages past, what did they do? We need to be old school. It's by going back that we will find the blessings of God. We need to rediscover intercessory prayer. We need to rediscover holiness in the life of the church. We need to rediscover personal discipleship. We need to rediscover the word of God. We need to rediscover the Bible where we long for truth from this book, we long for the truth and to conform our lives to the truth more than we desire to conform our lives to the world.

Look at verse 23. This is what being old school looks like. This is what the old paths look like. This is a remarkable verse. Solomon says,

23 Buy truth, and do not sell it; buy wisdom, instruction, and understanding.

He says do everything you can to get the truth. At all cost, you spend your money on the truth. You don't compromise truth for the expense of money. You do everything you can to get the truth.

Every great movement of God has occurred when people desired to go back to the Bible and say what does God's word say, when people yearn to hear the word of God read, and they say, "This is God's word. I will do it and I will submit my life to it." Psalm 119:72, "The law of your mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver pieces." Psalm 119:127, "I love your commandments above gold, above fine gold." Therefore, the path of wisdom is when you love the truth. He says you buy wisdom, that's knowledge applied. You buy instruction, that's the truth being taught. You buy understanding, that's when you can comprehend the knowledge of God. You seek after those things. Solomon says Proverbs 2:4, "if you seek it like silver and search for it as for hidden treasures, then you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God."

So that's the mark of a great Christian is that you buy the truth and you do not sell it. Martin Luther said, "My conscience is held captive by the word of God." My conscience is held captive by the word of God. It's that you wouldn't trade the truth for anything else in the world, and that means, by the way, that we are lifelong learners of the Scriptures. You don't get to the place where you have mastered this, but the Bible keeps mastering us. Every time you sit down and read the Bible, you're a different person facing new challenges, and the Bible intersects you where you are and teaches you about those challenges, about those temptations that you're facing, about the difficulties of life. The Bible reads you and so we submit our lives to the word of God. We buy the truth. We buy wisdom. But it takes self-control to stay on this path, this old path, but this is what makes Christians great, and what makes churches great is that they say this is the truth. This is the truth and we will not sell it. We will not sell it. There will come a day, and I don't know who, maybe it's the government, maybe it's the city, maybe it's just the world around us, is going to say you need to compromise the truth if you're going to get along in this world. If you want to keep your doors open, you will need to compromise the truth. Uh, uh. Uh, uh, you buy the truth and you do not sell it.

16. You pursue righteousness. You pursue righteousness. Look at verse 24.

24 The father of the righteous will greatly rejoice; he who fathers a wise son will be glad in him. 25 Let your father and mother be glad; let her who bore you rejoice.

We saw almost this exact same thing earlier except it wasn't the righteous, it was the wise, those who speak wisdom the father greatly rejoices. So here Solomon just simply replaces this idea of being wise with being righteous, with being righteous. Righteousness is an attribute of God. It means just. It describes someone who acts justly in the world. The righteous do just acts.

Now here's the thing, just like wisdom, are we born wise? No, we are not. We're born fools. Let me ask you another question: are you born this side of Adam righteous? Now do you remember what Paul said in Romans? There is none righteous, no, not one. None have sought after God. So here's the thing really important to understand: for you to do righteousness, God has to make you righteous. God has to make you righteous. How does that happen? How does God make you righteous? Through the gospel of Jesus Christ. 2 Corinthians 5:21 is one of the clearest statements of the gospel, "For he made him," Jesus," who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf that we might become the righteousness of God." That's called imputation. Jot down that word imputation, it's an important theological word. It means that God credits you with something that you don't have, and what God credits you with in the gospel is the righteousness of Jesus Christ, that Jesus Christ lived a sinful life or a perfect life? Perfect life. When you come to Christ in faith, there's an exchange that happens: all of your sin is taken by Christ and his perfect life is taken by you. Isn't that remarkable? God credits you with his righteousness. God credits you with his righteous, that's called justification. You could say he imputes you with his righteousness.

So now when you stand before God, God doesn't see you as a sinful person, he sees you as a saint, as someone who is righteous in Christ. That's the moment the Christian life begins, and from that moment on we are called, then, to live righteous lives because we are righteous. You are called to live a saintly life because every Christian is a saint. That's what Paul's letters really are about. You go read Paul's letters, he says, "Don't you know who you are?" The Corinthians were some of the worst Christians in the New Testament. Chapter 1, what does he call them? He says, "You are saints. You are called by God to be saints, therefore live like it. Live righteous because God has declared you righteous." That's the imperative of the New Testament, so you can begin to live righteously only when you have come to Christ in faith, only when you have looked forward to Christ, then God declares you righteous and you can begin to live this righteous life. And what a joy it is when God does that work in the heart of a child and that child's professes faith in Christ, God declares them righteous, and they desire to do righteousness. Solomon says the father of that person of the righteous will greatly rejoice. You fathers of a wise son will be glad in him and let your father and mother be glad. It's a rejoicing thing. So some of you, I know you have children that aren't living righteous lives, they aren't living righteous lives. What do you do? Well, you pray for them and you bring the gospel to them because the only way for them to become righteous is in Christ. So bring the gospel, bring the good news and it's through Christ that they can be justified and be declared righteous

So that's 16. 17 is walk in sexual purity. Walk in purity. Look at verse 26.

26 My son, give me your heart, and let your eyes observe my ways.

Purity, purity begins in the heart. It begins here. It begins with God giving you a new heart. Jesus says it is out of the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaks, and so to be pure in heart, to be a pure person, you have to develop the affections of the heart. You

remember Jesus said, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart." You have to love God here. If you're battling purity here, know this, it starts here, what do you love? Where are your affections? What do you desire above all? Then if your affections are rightly ordered, then we can begin to fight what's happening with our eyes. Matthew 5:8 Jesus says, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Your eyes will desire to focus on what is pure, what is right.

Notice that Solomon says, "Observe my ways. Let your eyes observe my ways. Watch me. Put your eyes on me." He's almost saying, "Be careful with your eyes." Remember, Job said, "I have made a covenant with my eyes so that I will not gaze upon the virgins." Jesus says, "If your right eye causes you to stumble, to pluck it out." We have to be careful with our eyes that our eyes look at what is in accordance with our hearts. Christians maintain eye discipline especially in this world. We're in the habit of when we're with our kids, I can't tell you how often we turn off the commercial, we put our hands in front of the tablet. We're often maintaining that eye discipline. It's so important, and that's something that every Christian has to learn in our sexualized culture.

Then he says this, look, first you look at the heart, you watch the eyes, you be careful with your eyes. Then verse 27, he says,

27 For a prostitute is a deep pit; an adulteress is a narrow well.

If you don't check your heart, if you don't check your eyes, where you are going to be led as to act upon your lust, and he says a prostitute is a deep pit. A deep pit is a trap for an animal. He says if you go to a prostitute you are falling into this deep trap which you might not escape from. He says an adulteress, the word for an adulteress means a foreign woman. You could say foreign to you, not foreign as in from another culture, as in different from your wife. She's foreign to you, that's what this adulteress is. He said an adulteress is a narrow well. A narrow well is a well that has a very small opening at the top, where if you fall in you're probably not going to be able to make it up out of outside the grace of God.

So that's the danger of unbridled sexual passion and he describes the prostitute, the adulteress, look at verse 28.

28 She lies in wait like a robber and increases the traitors among mankind.

Oftentimes in the frontier days in early America, there would be a town adulteress who would be known for the number of men that she had corrupted. It's still true, it's just that the cities are bigger. But her desire is to make a traitor out of husbands, to put trophies on her mantle. She wants men to be traitors of God and traitors of their wives, and that's her pleasure. She gets her kicks from seducing men. It vindicates her to be a home-wrecker. And so this type of woman and, by the way, it's not just true of a woman, it's also true of some men as well, some men as well want to do this with women. But what's true of them is that they want to seduce you not because they love you, not because they like you, but because they want another trophy on the mantle. Solomon says in Proverbs 5, he

says, "For the lips of a forbidden woman drip honey, and her speech is smoother than oil." She's going to do everything she can to get you to forget your vows, but Solomon says, but in the end, "she is as bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword."

So this is a deep evil that we constantly need to be aware of. We need to be vigilant. We need to be ready. Once Howard Hendricks did a study of over 500 ministers of the gospel who fell into sexual sin, and one of the commonalities amongst all of them is they all said quote, "I didn't think it could happen to me." I don't think it could happen to me. Solomon is writing this so we will be on guard, so that we will be vigilant. He says, this is Proverbs 5:8, "Keep your way far from her, and do not go near the door of her house, lest you give your honor to others and your years to the merciless." So he's saying be like Joseph. Be like Joseph. Run. Run, don't stop, run. Run away from sexual temptation. He goes on to say, "to rejoice in the wife of your youth." Let her satisfy you. Let her satisfy you.

Adultery, it tarnishes your legacy. It nearly most often destroys a marriage. It's a deep betrayal against the Lord and against your spouse. Now, is there a way back? Is there a way back? If you're here this morning and you've committed adultery, there is a way back. There is hope. But the hope means repentance. Repentance. There's always hope in Christ. Hear me say that, there's always hope in Christ. There's always hope of forgiveness but it means repenting, turning from your sin, and it means forgiveness on the part of the spouse. And I've seen the Lord do incredible things with couples where adultery has been committed. I've seen the Lord bring reconciliation but it's only through the blood of Christ that that can take place, and only through forgiveness. So there is hope. There is hope.

18, and finally this morning: beware the dangers of alcohol. Beware the dangers of alcohol. Look at verse 29. He begins here with a riddle. He asks a question in the form of a riddle.

29 Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has strife? Who has complaining? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes?

Answer: the drunkard, the person who is inebriated by alcohol. Obviously, wine in the Bible goes back to the very earliest period of human history. You read about wine going all the way back to Genesis 9. The Bible doesn't forbid the drinking of alcohol. In fact, it's sometimes used in feasting and celebration. Isaiah 25:6 God says this, "On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine, of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined." Solomon who wrote what we are reading right now said this in Ecclesiastes 9:7, he said, "Go, eat your bread with joy, and drink your wine with a merry heart, for God has already approved what you do." Obviously, we know Jesus turned the water into wine. Jesus was accused of being with drunkards. Jesus was called a drunk because he drank wine. Obviously, Jesus never got drunk. Paul tells Timothy to take a little wine for his stomach. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 10:31, he says, "whether you eat or drink, do all to the glory of God."

The prohibition in Scripture regarding alcohol is drunkenness. Paul says Ephesians 5:18, "do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit." Do not get drunk with wine. This is how Solomon describes it, look at verse 30. He says,

30 Those who tarry long over wine; those who go to try mixed wine.

He says the drunk person, they spend a long time gathered together for the purpose of drinking wine. He says they get together and they go to try mix wine. They go on a pub crawl, so to speak. You know what a pub crawl is where you get together with your friends and say, "We're going to go to every single bar and we're going to get drinks from every single bar. We're going to do this for the sole purpose of drinking alcohol." Rich people do it too, they just go to Napa and it's called a wine tasting tour. Same thing. Same thing. It's a pub crawl.

When I was in the Marine Corps., I would often get, you know, this would go around and this duty would go around, but you would be assigned what's called Shore Patrol. Shore Patrol and what that meant is that on a Friday and Saturday night you put on your uniform and you went off base into the bars to make sure that the Marines weren't getting into trouble, and what you didn't want to draw is Shore Patrol on after the second week or the fourth week because that's when the Marines got paid. You didn't want to draw Shore Patrol on those weekends, and I remember going into the bars. I'm talking bar fights. People getting unwanted tattoos. People getting swindled from their money. I've had to take Marines, literally pull them, carry them back to base, or if we were in another country, carry them back to the ship. So I've seen what Solomon's talking about here where people come together for the purpose of drinking alcohol and it is not a pretty thing. It is a bad thing and I saw Marines destroy their careers because of it. I saw an officer steal stuff when we were in Japan, went and climbed over somebody's fence, stole all this stuff, went back to base and he was prosecuted. He was a pilot kicked out of the Marine Corps, court-martialed. I saw these things.

So here's here's the antidote to that. Look at verse 31. Here's the antidote. He says,

31 Do not look at wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup and goes down smoothly.

Solomon's saying, "Be careful if you love alcohol." Be careful if you love alcohol. If you're in a place where you've had a drink of alcohol and you're like, "Man, that looks so good. I just want more. I want more." He says have the self-control to say no. He says do not even look at it.

I once was having a conversation with my grandfather, this is Preston Abbott, his father, Frank Abbott Sr., and I asked him if he drank alcohol and he said, "No because I tried it once and I loved it." And my family had a history of alcoholism. He said, "I had a sip and I said, man, that's good." And he said, "It scared me and so I haven't touched it since." So that's if you love it and you love drinking it and you find yourself looking forward to,

"Man, I can't wait to drink and drink again," that is a very dangerous place to be and Solomon says, "Do not look at wine when it is red."

Verse 32. He says,

32 In the end it bites like a serpent and stings like an adder.

When you get bit by a snake, that snake injects its poison into you, and literally when you drink too much, when you drink too much, if you have too much alcohol in your body, your liver cannot decompose the toxins that you've put in and those toxins, just like poison, multiply in your body. So if you have more than one drink in an hour, you've got too much toxins in your body. And by the way, those toxins cause cancer. They cause all sorts of things. But that's what leads somebody to be drunk is that you have more toxins in your body than your liver can filter out. It bites like a serpent. It stings like an adder.

Verse 33. He says,

33 Your eyes will see strange things, and your heart utter perverse things.

34 You will be like one who lies down in the midst of the sea, like one who lies on the top of a mast.

In other words, like a drunk person, their senses are dulled, often they fall asleep and they don't know where they are. It's like somebody that's just up on the top of a mast of a ship, they're just being tossed to and fro and you're like there's no way a person could sleep through that. Well, a drunk person can because their senses are dulled.

Verse 35. He says,

35 "They struck me," you will say, "but I was not hurt; they beat me, but I did not feel it. When shall I awake? I must have another drink."

The drunk person doesn't even feel things, and there's a reason for that. There's a reason for that. It's because within alcohol is a chemical called ethanol. Now, ethanol is what triggers the release of serotonin and dopamine, that's what makes people who drink alcohol feel good is that it releases those chemicals in your body, but it also affects what's called your GABA receptors and those are what's in your central nervous system, and what those prevent you from doing is thinking. Those prevent you when those receptors aren't firing, they prevent you from thinking clearly.

I read one doctor this week, he said when one is drunk, the brain struggles to produce long term memories which accounts for blackouts. Alcohol also affects the temporal cortex, which is the area of the brain that makes new memories. So I find this remarkable, Solomon wrote this 3,000 years ago thereabouts and he's saying, "When you're drunk, you can't think. You don't think clearly. Your mind doesn't work properly." And what have we found out with science 3,000 years later? Yeah, it's because the neurons in your

brain aren't firing right. So this just confirms Scripture is just over and over and over confirmed by medicine, science, everything else.

What Solomon is saying here and what we need to understand is that alcohol is a loaded gun. When I was in the Marine Corps, they taught us with a weapon, they said, "Keep your weapon on safe. Keep your finger off the trigger and straight until you are ready to fire." All these things. Why? Because you treat every gun as if it were loaded. You're saying alcohol is a loaded gun. Alcohol can cause severe devastation in people's lives. Just like that alcohol can mess up your life and so you better treat it carefully. You'd better watch it.

When I was at the basic school up in Quantico, this is where the Marine Corps sends all the Second Lieutenants to basically learn how to read a map, basic things before they send us out into the Marine Corps. So it's all these young 23-24 year olds. And I was up at Quantico and on October 21, 2007, this was a Sunday night, there were two guys in my company, one was named Seth Pierce, the other Tom Hill, and after that morning they went up to Georgetown and they said, "Let's you know, go up to Georgetown, go to the bars, watch the football games," and they both became intoxicated that night and they decided to drive down from Georgetown all the way back to Quantico and somehow there's a guard post, you know, before you come on base, and this is after 911, so people are very strict about who's let on base, and somehow the guard post let them through and they came on base there at Quantico, the FBI Academy is on the right, they drove past the FBI Academy and then they took the left and it's just a straight 3-mile road. that goes back to our barracks. And Tom Hill, who was a JAG officer, driving just a straight road, just drove right off the road into the ditch. Just right off the road. Seth Pierce, who was in the passenger seat, killed instantly. Killed instantly. He was a JAG officer, an attorney court-martialed from the Marine Corps and debarred, de-licensed from ever practicing law again all because they drove back from Georgetown drunk. Just like that. And I'd be willing to bet they would trade everything to go back to that Sunday, October 21st, and say, "Uh, uh, we're going to be careful. We're not going to drink. We're not going to drive. We're not going to do those things." That's what Solomon is saying here. He's saying, "You be careful with this This is a fire."

So let me give you three quick principles here. 1. God gives Christian liberty in this area and so some Christians have the liberty to drink alcohol but they need to drink it carefully and in moderation, and never to the point of drunkenness. Secondly, we need to be very cognizant of what Paul calls the weaker brother. What Paul calls the weaker brother. 1 Corinthians 8, he says you should be willing to give up freedom on account of the weaker brother. Same thing in Romans 14. And so sometimes I talk to a couple and the wife is struggling with drunkenness. She drinking all the time. I ask the husband, "What are you doing with alcohol?" He says, "Oh well, I still drink every night." I say, "Uh, uh. You're causing your wife to stumble now." So we need to be very careful about who we're drinking alcohol in front of if God has giving you the liberty to drink. If you're posting things on social media, that is probably going to lead people into temptation. So it's something to be very, very careful about in terms of our weaker brother. And then third, we need to remember the dangers here. Always, always remember the dangers. It's like a

pool when you have toddlers. It's like a pool when you have toddlers. It's like a loaded gun in the house. You don't forget that it's dangerous. You keep vigilant watch over things.

And all of this goes back to self-control, doesn't it? Self-control. The Christian exercises by the power of the Holy Spirit self-control. This is something that the Spirit works in our lives. It defines the Christian and we live this out as a witness, as a witness to those that are around us, and all these things that we've covered, adultery, alcohol, purity, walking in righteousness, not going with the crowd, playing the long game, not living the party life, they all involve exercising self-control. And remember at the very beginning I said this is what Christian maturity looks like, this is what Christian maturity looks like is that you begin to exercise self-control in these things, that you can say no. I can say no. And the purpose of saying no is not to be a legalist but to say no because I want to honor God. I want to honor God and I want the greater joy that God has before me in the end. That's why we exercise self-control.

Heavenly Father, Lord, we come to the throne of grace, and we know, Lord, that we have all sinned and stumbled in many ways and so, Lord, we confess our sin knowing that you are faithful and just to forgive us of our sin. And we pray, Lord, that we would live righteous lives, that we would pursue the old paths, that we would exercise self-control in all things, that we would live a life of purity, that we would live a life of moderation or abstinence when it comes to alcohol, that we would be pure, pure in heart, that we would guard our eyes, that we would be wise people, mature Christians all for your name, your honor and your glory. And we say all this in Christ's name. Amen.

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