

Thirty Truths to Wisdom (Part 3)

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Proverbs 23:17-35

A critical component of the Christian LIFE is SELF-CONTROL.

- Self-control is the capacity to restrain your passions. Self-control is the ability to tell yourself “no.” To restrain your impulses.
- The CHRISTIAN fights against them for a GREATER JOY. To be esteemed by God. To walk in communion with Him.
- 1 Corinthians 9:25 – [25] *Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. [26] So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. [27] But I discipline my body and keep it under control; lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.*
 - DISCIPLINE - *Hupopiazo* – Give myself a black eye
 - Athlete – competes – *Agonizomai* – Endure AGONY.
- The Christian exercises self-control it to win an imperishable wreath.

THIRTEENTH SAYING: 13) **Play the Long Game of Eternity**

Wisdom is playing the LONG GAME. The Self-Discipline to play the LONG GAME.

23:17 – [17] *Let not your heart envy sinners, but continue in the fear of the LORD all the day.*

- It looks like the SINNERS – those who are against God are having all the fun now.
- Solomon says do not envy.
- Psalm 73:17 – [17] *until I went into the sanctuary of God; then I discerned their end.*
 - [18] *Truly you set them in slippery places; you make them fall to ruin. [19] How they are destroyed in a moment, swept away utterly by terrors!*
- Ecclesiastes 8:13 - [13] *But it will not be well with the wicked, neither will he prolong his days..*

Solomon says CONTINUE (NASB – LIVE) in the Fear of the LORD. Do NOT DEPART.

- It means to stay in the PATH that reverences GOD.

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

The END. The FUTURE. The LONG-GAME. Your hope will not be CUT OFF.

- Psalm 37:9 – [9] *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.

Jesus said – [24] *For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it? [25] For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself?*

FOURTEENTH SAYING: 14) Do Not Live the Party Life

23:19 – [19] *Hear, my son, and be wise, and direct your heart in the way.*

23:20 – [20] *Be not among drunkards or among gluttonous eaters of meat,*

- God gives us food and drink on the one hand for our enjoyment.
 - Solomon says in Ecclesiastes 2:24 – [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 are to enjoy the gifts that GOD has given.
 - But PARTYING and INDULGENCE takes these to the EXTREME.
- DRUNKARDS – “WINE-BIBBERS” – *People who come together for the express purpose of drinking wine. And then they drink excessively.*
- GLUTTONOUS EATERS – The “flesh to themselves.” People who gather to eat to excess.
- Jesus called the PARTY LIFE - “RECKLESS LIVING” – the LIFE of OVER-INDULGENCE. And it leads to POVERTY.

23:21 – [21] *for the drunkard and the glutton will come to poverty, and slumber will clothe them with rags.*

FIFTEENTH SAYING: 15) Keep to the Old Paths

23:22 – [22] *Listen to your father who gave you life, and do not despise your mother when she is old.*

The JEWS understood that the parents were to stand in the place of GOD.

- Obviously this is an idiom... not everyone’s parents are God-fearers.
- *But the IDEA is to LISTEN to the WISE of the PAST.*

There is NOTHING new under the SUN. The PATH of WISDOM and GODLINESS has been ESTABLISHED.

- The WISE look for the OLD PATH.
- The PATH of RIGHTEOUSNESS.

When Isaac was in the land of Canaan, right after his encounter with the Philistine Abimelech, he and all his herds of cattle retreated to Gerar.

- Genesis 26:18 – [18] *And Isaac dug again the wells of water that they had dug in the days of Abraham his father, which the Philistines had stopped after the death of Abraham. He gave them the names that his father had given them.*
 - HE DUG the OLD WELLS. HE WENT BACK to the OLD PATHS.
 - HE called them what his father had called them.

23:23 – [23] *But truth, and no not sell it; buy wisdom, instruction, and understanding.*

- Do EVERYTHING you can to get the TRUTH. SPARE no EXPENSE. This is the number one PRIORITY. To get the TRUTH.
- Psalm 119:72 – [72] *The law of your mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver pieces.*
- Psalm 119:127 – [127] *I love your commandment above gold, above fine gold.*
- Therefore, the PATH of WISDOM is when you LOVE the TRUTH.
- You “BUY WISDOM, INSTRUCTION, and UNDERSTANDING.”

- WISDOM – Skill of knowledge
- INSTRUCTION – Sound Teaching
- UNDERSTANDING – The comprehension of knowledge
- Proverbs 2:4 – [4] *if you seek it like silver and search for it as hidden treasures,* [5] *then you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God.*

SIXTEENTH SAYING: 16) **Pursue Righteousness**

23:24 – [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.*

Earlier we saw that the WISE bring joy to their PARENTS. Here Solomon says almost the same thing, but slightly differently, the RIGHTEOUS bring joy to their parents.

- Righteousness is an attribute of GOD. It means Just.
- Someone who does just acts.
- *The RIGHTEOUS do JUST ACTS because they have been made RIGHTEOUS.*
 - Just like WISDOM, no one is born RIGHTEOUS.
 - *The RIGHTEOUS life begins with RECEIVING the RIGHTEOUSNESS of CHRIST.*
- 2 Corinthians 5:21 – [21] *He made Him, who knew no sin, to be sin on our behalf that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*
 - We receive Christ's righteousness.
 - And then we live a righteous LIFE.

SEVENTEENTH SAYING: 17) **Walk in Sexual Purity**

23:26 – [26] *My son, give me your heart, and let your eyes observe my ways.*

- Purity has to begin in the heart!
- So we must DEVELOP the LOVES and AFFECTIONS of the heart.
 - Matt 5:8 – [8] *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.*
 - What you LOVE is what you will WANT to LOOK AT.
- PURITY of HEART changes what we LOOK AT. It has to begin with the discipline of the eyes. "LET YOUR EYES OBSERVE MY WAYS."
 - Job 31:1 – [1] *I have made a covenant with my eyes that I will not gaze upon the virgins.*
 - "If your eye causes you to stumble pluck it out."
 - The CHRISTIAN maintains eye discipline.
- 23:27 – [27] *For a prostitute is a deep pit; an adulteress is a narrow well.*
 - A PROSTITUTE is a deep pit – PIT is an animal TRAP.
 - An ADULTERESS (a foreign woman) – a woman who is NOT your WIFE. – A NARROW WELL – a Well with a small opening.
- 23:28 – [28] *She lies in wait like a robber and increases the traitors among mankind.*
 - It used to be there would be a TOWN adulteress who would be known for the number of husbands she had corrupted.
 - *She desires to make a TRAITOR out of husbands. It's another TROPHY on her mantle.*
 - These WOMEN want men to abandon their COVENANTS both to GOD and to their WIVES.
 - They will do everything they can to SEDUCE.

- Proverbs 5:3 – [3] *For the lips of a forbidden woman drip honey, and her speech is smoother than oil, but in the end she is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword.*
- Proverbs 5:8 – [8] *Keep your way far from her, and do not go near the door or her house, lest you give your honor to others and your years to the merciless.*

EIGHTEENTH SAYING: 18) **Beware the Dangers of Alcohol**

Proverbs 23:29 – [29] *Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has strife? Who has complaining? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes?*

Solomon begins with a RIDDLE. He asks who – has this qualities. THE DRUNKARD.

Wine in the Bible goes back to the very earliest period of human history.

- When used in MODERATION, it is used to describe feasting and celebration... such as in Isaiah 25:6 – [6] *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 says. Ecclesiastes 9:7 – [7] *Go, eat your bread with joy, and drink your wine with a merry heart, for God has already approved what you do.*
- Jesus partook of wine. And turned the water into wine in John 2.
- WINE was poured out every day in the TEMPLE as a DRINK OFFERING.
- Paul tells Timothy to take a little wine for his stomach.
- 1 Corinthians 10:31 – [31] *Whether you eat or drink, do all for the glory of God.*

So it's not the drinking of wine that is necessarily sinful. But drunkenness.

- Ephesians 5:18 – [18] *Do not get drunk with wine for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit.*

That is who Solomon describes – Prov 23:30 – [30] *Those who tarry long over wine; those who go to try mixed wine.*

- Those who spend a LONG time for the PURPOSE of drinking WINE.

Prov 23:31 – [31] *Do not look at wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup and goes down smoothly.*

- Be careful if you LOVE alcohol. Have the SELF-CONTROL to walk away.

Prov 23:32 – [32] *In the end it bites like a serpent and stings like an adder.*

- The natural consequence of drunkenness is that it is like a snake bite. You are filled with its poison.

[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.*

[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?"*

- What alcohol does: the ETHENOL triggers the release of serotonin and dopamine – which make you feel relaxed.
 - But it also has a drastic effect on your GABA receptors in your CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM – *which prevents you from thinking properly.*
 - One physician - “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.”
- 1) *Alcohol can be used by some brothers and sisters in a responsible fashion in moderation* in accordance with Christian liberty.
 - 2) *Alcohol should not be flaunted.* The Weaker brother or sister must be considered. 1 Cor 8:9 – [9] *But take care that this right of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak.* See Rom 14:13.
 - 3) *Alcohol’s danger must be understood.* For some this will mean abstinence.