

## Proverbs – Wisdom That Works - Part 9

### Wisdom at Work – Proverbs 6:1-19

Crosspoint – Dave Spooner – Aug. 8<sup>th</sup>, 2021

#### Intro

- Chapter six of Proverbs provides God’s wisdom for our work. His advice is sound, it is proven, and it will work for you. The prayer, as always, is that God would give us ears to hear and that we would give ourselves to the wisdom of God so that we would listen and live. So may God speak to us today by His Spirit through His Word, and may we be faithful and wise to put these things into practice.
- The good news is that God has provided for us through giving us work that provides. In chapter six of Proverbs, He shows us what we are to do and who we are to be when it comes to our work as well as what it provides. His first instruction is to avoid financial risk. Let’s read together from Proverbs chapter six, starting with verse one.

#### Avoid financial traps

##### Proverbs 6:1-2 NIV

**My son, if you have put up security for your neighbor, if you have shaken hands in pledge for a stranger, 2 you have been trapped by what you said, ensnared by the words of your mouth.**

- God highlights for us two financial traps to avoid. The first trap is providing your wealth as collateral for a friend’s debt, like cosigning a loan for a friend. Why is this a trap? Because it risks your wealth on someone else’s behavior. It changes the nature of the relationship. It can have a detrimental effect on your finances. (Illustration of co-signing for a college education)
- The second trap is giving your money to someone you know nothing about as in an investment. The trap here is risking your deposit and putting your financial future into someone’s hands who is a stranger to you. (Illustration of bad investments – internet fund, local company, Bernie Madoff)
- The best thing to do is to see these things for the traps they are and don’t walk into them. However, if you have fallen into these traps, this is what God tells you to do.

##### Proverbs 6:3-5 NIV

**So do this, my son, to free yourself, since you have fallen into your neighbor’s hands: Go, humble yourself, and plead with your neighbor. 4 Allow no sleep to your eyes, no slumber to your eyelids. 5 Free yourself, like a gazelle from the hand of the hunter, like a bird from the snare of the fowler.**

- The wisdom God gives is to work to free yourself from these traps as if your life depended upon it! Which requires humility (owning your mistake), persistence (pleading with them), and urgency (before more damage is done).
- Also, if you are the one who has a cosigner on your loan, or someone loaned you money, work hard to pay them back as quickly as possible. Be a person of honor and honor your agreement.
- If you want to help someone, use wisdom, do your homework, and treat it as a gift instead of a loan (first make sure you can give it). In your investments, make sure you do your homework

and invest with caution and wisdom, perhaps just with money you will be “okay” with if you lost, not critical funds for survival.

- God’s next wisdom at work is to be a person who works proactively.

### **Work proactively**

- “Actions that are proactive are initiated not in reaction to a situation but instead out of a desire to make a positive change, prepare for a situation, or prevent something from happening” (<https://www.dictionary.com/browse/proactive>). Being a proactive worker is thinking about the future and doing something about it now. Here is God’s command from Proverbs six, verse six through eleven.

#### **Proverbs 6:6-11 NIV**

**Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise! 7 It has no commander, no overseer or ruler, 8 yet it stores its provisions in summer and gathers its food at harvest. 9 How long will you lie there, you slacker? When will you get up from your sleep? 10 A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest— 11 and poverty will come on you like a thief and scarcity like an armed man.**

- The ant is given as “exhibit A,” as an example of a proactive worker. He does not have a military commander, or a boss or supervisor, or a government mandate to force it to work. Instead, ants are internally motivated to work because of their God-given wisdom. They understand what is coming and work hard now in preparation. The ant is set in contrast to the sluggard, one who is a slacker who continually hits the “snooze” button and loses big because of a string of small surrenders.
- Proverbs profiles the slugger a lot, and one of those places is chapter 26 verses 13 – 16.

#### **Prov 26:13-16 ESV**

**The sluggard says, “There is a lion in the road! There is a lion in the streets!” 14 As a door turns on its hinges, so does a sluggard on his bed. 15 The sluggard buries his hand in the dish; it wears him out to bring it back to his mouth. 16 The sluggard is wiser in his own eyes than seven men who can answer sensibly.**

- The sluggard makes up excuses and reasons why he can’t work. The sluggard’s main expenditure of effort and energy is to roll back over in bed, to find another position to be not working. The sluggard does not finish what he started, even when it is to his benefit. The sluggard thinks he knows better and is smarter than all those people who are working. We all know people like this, and they drive us crazy. They harm themselves and become a burden on others. And if this is you, consider your life, repent, and change your ways. If you are a person who is enabling people like this, repent, change your ways.
- The third valuable piece of wisdom when it comes to our work, is to be a valuable team player.

### **Be a valuable team player**

### Proverbs 6:12-14 NIV

**A worthless person a troublemaker, who goes about speaking dishonestly, 13 who winks maliciously with his eye, signals with his feet and motions with his fingers, 14 who plots evil with deceit in his heart— he always stirs up conflict.**

- Someone who is “worthless” to a team, to the workplace, to an organization, to a family, is always stirring up conflict, continually causing problems, and creating conflict. They are not a valuable asset but a draining liability. They are a part of the “team” not because of what they can give, but because of what they can get out of it and take advantage of. They don’t tell the whole truth, either hiding or spinning or withholding information. They create alliances with other problem people to get their way. They communicate one thing with you and other things with their “allies,” and they are only out to get what they want and what they can get for themselves.

### Proverbs 6:15 NIV

**Therefore disaster will overtake him in an instant; he will suddenly be destroyed—beyond recovery.**

- God himself will take these people to task, and in a moment, in a sudden revealing of the truth, they will be seen for what they are and what they have been doing and will be removed, not being able to recover. We have seen this in sports, work, politics, and ministry. God hates these things because they undermine unity, dash dreams, warp the world, and create chaos.
- God then lists the things He hates that are the cause of conflict.

### Avoid the things God hates

### Proverbs 6:16-19 NIV

**There are six things the LORD hates, seven that are detestable to him: 17 arrogant eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, 18 a heart that plots wicked schemes, feet that are quick to rush into evil, 19 a false witness who pours out lies and a person who stirs up conflict among brothers.**

- Six things and seven—it is written this way that all point to the seventh thing—which encapsulates them all. Arrogant eyes - someone who thinks they are “better” and “above” all the others. Lying tongue - twisting words, concealing truth, and fabricating fiction. Innocent blood - looking to injure and hurt others who are innocent. Plotting wicked schemes - making plans to take down others and exalt themselves, eager for the opportunity to use evil to their own advantage. False witness - misrepresenting what has taken place. This is a person who stirs up conflict among brothers, churches, workplaces, organizations, and families.
- Be a valuable team player by avoiding the things God hates (notice these are *characteristics* God hates, not *people* he hates). Why does He hate them? Because all of these are opposite of what He is and what He does. God became a servant. God tells the truth. God protects the innocent. God’s plans are for good. God is quick to do good. God is a true witness. God brings unity, community, and connectedness. All of these other things bring disunity, disagreements, and disasters. They are a “dis” on God, and they destroy and distort God’s good design for unity, satisfaction, and life.

## **Conclusion**

- I know this sermon is three sermons in one, but they are all connected through God's wisdom at work. So again, like always, pay attention to what the Holy Spirit may have highlighted to you this morning. Perhaps you need to get out of a financial trap, or quickly pay someone back. Perhaps you need to stop being a slacker and give yourself to productive work. Perhaps you need to repent of being self-consumed and self-centered and start being a valuable team player in all of your relationships. Perhaps you just need encouragement to continue to do what you have been doing. Whatever it is, take time to consider these things, and have the courage and conviction to change.
- Pray