

BD4: Be Just, for He Will Uphold the Defenseless (23.10-11)

Interestingly, as we come to the 11th saying, Solomon comes back, again, to the ancient boundary stones. Last time, it likely emphasized the importance of **respecting the past** and not changing these markers. Here, however, the point is clearly something a bit more practical: *Do not move an ancient boundary stone or encroach on the fields of the fatherless, (PV 23.10)*

EX: The imagery was of someone noticing that their neighbor had undergone a tragedy—in this case, the loss of the father. As a reminder, in our culture, losing a father is devastating. In the ancient near-east, it could be deadly. For the fatherless were the powerless—and from a political perspective, they had no one to argue, to protect, and to defend them. But Solomon revealed that, in fact, they did have a defender: *for their Defender is strong; he will take up their case against you. (PV 23.11)*

JM 1.26-27 ~ *If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless. ²⁷ Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.*

AP: It might be tempting to do whatever it takes to get ahead. And the thing about the powerless is that it's easy for the powerful to take advantage of them. But our God is the God of the defenseless and the powerless. And he calls for us to **be just—for He will uphold the defenseless.**

MT 18.10-14 ~ *"See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that in heaven their angels always see the face of my Father who is in heaven. ¹² What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go in search of the one that went astray? ¹³ And if he finds it, truly, I say to you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine that never went astray. ¹⁴ So it is not the will of my Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.*

CONCLUSION

PV 16.16 ~ *How much better to get wisdom than gold! To get understanding is to be chosen rather than silver.*

Godly parents will do anything to help their children to get ahead. But only one has gotten the opportunity to write a book in the Bible about it! In Solomon's 30 sayings, we see timeless pieces of advice that we can all of us learn from, as well: **be diligent, and you will stand before kings. Be self-controlled, and you will find true riches. Be discerning, and you will avoid deceitful people. Be just, for He will uphold the defenseless.** And as his advice continues in the rest of the chapter, we'll see that it still proves to be as valuable as gold. As is all of Scripture!

PS 119.103-106 ~ *How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth! ¹⁰⁴ Through your precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way. ¹⁰⁵ Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. ¹⁰⁶ I have sworn an oath and confirmed it, to keep your righteous rules.*

INVITATION

#642 [EXP-OTW]
06/21/2025

From a Father to His Son: Part 2

PV 22.29-23.11

PC X Pchd **BL- 06/22/2025**

QUESTION: What can we learn from the 30 sayings of Solomon to his son?

TRN TO PV 22

INTRODUCTION

ILL—Growing as a Parent (part of the joy of being a parent is seeing your kids, their decisions, their actions, and finally understanding why your parents did what they did) When you're young, you think your parents don't have a clue: they don't understand what you're going through, they don't understand what you're interested in. But then, when you have your own kids, and they start looking at you the same way as you did your parents, you suddenly realize, **"Maybe my parents knew what they were talking about after all!"**

BACKGROUND

Two weeks ago, we began looking at an interesting section of **PV**. This book is considered by most to either be largely written by or inspired by Solomon—the wisest man who ever was. But despite his wisdom, he had his own failings. And as he looked at his son, he desperately wanted him to learn from his mistakes and wisdom—more than anything, he wanted him to be a better man than he was.

PV 22.17-21 ~ *Incline your ear, and hear the words of the wise, and apply your heart to my knowledge, ¹⁸ for it will be pleasant if you keep them within you, if all of them are ready on your lips. ¹⁹ That your trust may be in the Lord, I have made them known to you today, even to you. ²⁰ Have I not written for you thirty sayings of counsel and knowledge, ²¹ to make you know what is right and true, that you may give a true answer to those who sent you?*

The **"thirty sayings of Solomon"** are not an exhaustive list. They cover some topics while completely avoid others. They speak on justice, relationships, personal conduct, and the pursuit of wisdom, itself. Previously, we considered the first 5 sayings: considering **wisdom, justice, associations, spending, and respect** for the past. Today, we'll look at the next 6 sayings, that cover 4 key topics.

As a father, I want nothing more than to see my children become better people, servants, and Christians than I am. And whatever your relationship may be with your earthly father and mother, I promise you, your Heavenly Father desires the same. So this morning, let's consider these next 6 statements—and just who Solomon calls for us to be.

BD1: Be Diligent, and You Will Stand Before Kings (22.29)

How can I get ahead? It's a common question. I hear it asked at work, I hear it asked on the radio and from self-help gurus. And there are countless people who argue for short-cuts—tips and tricks that you can use that you may succeed at life.

HONESTY/Cheating/AI Use in College

Let's focus on that last bit: **"everyone else is doing it". Why shouldn't they do it, too?** Of course, what allows for success in college doesn't naturally track to the real world. But it does create an expectation: just take the easy way. That's how you become successful!

PV 22.29 ~ *Do you see a man skillful in his work? He will stand before kings; he will not stand before obscure men.*

EX: Solomon's answer to his child is that the key to success is skill—or, as the KJV puts it, **being diligent**. Contrary to the belief of some, the truly successful are those who are diligent in their work: those who do their best and are continually working their hardest.

PV 12.24 ~ *The hand of the diligent will rule, while the slothful will be put to forced labor.*

AP: I'll tell you, as a person who interviews and manages, it's astounding how many people don't agree with this idea today. Instead, they believe that we can just **"phone it in"**—put in a minimal effort, and get the same reward. I tell you, that doesn't work in the office, and it honestly doesn't work with our salvation, either. The successful are those who are **diligent**—and the **diligent will stand before kings**: a truth we often can see born out in life, and one that absolutely is borne out in eternity.

ITM 4.13-16 ~ *Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching. ¹⁴ Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophecy when the council of elders laid their hands on you. ¹⁵ Practice these things, immerse yourself in them, so that all may see your progress. ¹⁶ Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers.*

BD2: Be Self-Controlled, and You Will Find True Riches (23.1-5)

PATIENCE/Delayed Gratification/Stanford Experiment

I have to be honest, depending on whether I was on a diet at the time, I can't say how well I'd have done on that experiment, myself. Solomon seemed aware of the temptations that would come to his children, for he warned them of the importance of **self-control**. That it will help them to **avoid a snare**.

PV 23.1-3 ~ *When you sit to dine with a ruler, note well what is before you, ² and put a knife to your throat if you are given to gluttony. ³ Do not crave his delicacies, for that food is deceptive.*

EX: He knows how tempting a feast can be—and how easy it can be for mankind to give in to jealousy and gluttony. He says, in a shocking phrase that it would be better for him to *put a knife to your throat*. It's similar to what Jesus said in His sermon on the mount.

MT 5.29-30 ~ *If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. ³⁰ And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell.*

AP: **Self-control** is one of the most important and rare traits in humankind. And learning how to practice it is one of the best pieces of advice a father can give his son. Whether shown in being able to sit, patiently, through a difficult assignment at school or being able to come in to work no matter how badly you don't want to, learning to **be self-controlled** is immensely valuable—as it will allow **you to avoid a snare**. And it's even more powerful when it's paired with a virtue described in the next verses:

PV 23.4-5 ~ *Do not wear yourself out to get rich; do not trust your own cleverness. ⁵ Cast but a glance at riches, and they are gone, for they will surely sprout wings and fly off to the sky like an eagle.*

EX: Solomon points out the danger that comes from giving in to jealousy and envy and deciding to make the goal of your life gaining wealth, status, and power. He reminds his son of a powerful truth: wealth fades, so it's better to be content.

MT 6.19-21 ~ *"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, ²⁰ but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

That also continues in our spiritual life—for we often find ourselves focused on all the wrong things: tempted by our desires and temporal blessings. But by showing **self-control and contentment**, we can similarly **avoid a snare and find true riches!**

ITM 6.6-10 ~ *But godliness with contentment is great gain, ⁷ for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. ⁸ But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content. ⁹ But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. ¹⁰ For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.*

BD3: Be Discerning, and You Will Avoid Deceitful People (23.6-9)

In Jewish culture, there was little more important than hospitality—providing care, respect, and protection to the people who stayed in your home. But for every good host, there were a hundred bad ones.

PV 23.6-8 ~ *Do not eat the food of a begrudging host, do not crave his delicacies; ⁷ for he is the kind of person who is always thinking about the cost. "Eat and drink," he says to you, but his heart is not with you. ⁸ You will vomit up the little you have eaten and will have wasted your compliments.*

EX: The advice here seems rather strange. But in truth, it's quite practical. The point was to be **discerning** the kind of people you spend time with. For you can easily waste your life trying to win over someone who doesn't want to give you the time of day. This advice was so important to Solomon that he restates it with the next verse: *Do not speak to fools, for they will scorn your prudent words. (PV 23.9)* And Jesus echoes this in His sermon on the mount: *"Do not give dogs what is holy, and do not throw your pearls before pigs, lest they trample them underfoot and turn to attack you. (MT 7.6)*

AP: Life is short. And sadly, some people are more than happy to waste the few precious hours you have in it. This applies to personal relationships and spiritual ones. It hurts to realize, but some people's hearts are so hard and their ears and eyes so dark, that there is no amount of words or effort you can do to reach them.

MT 13.14-15 ~ *Indeed, in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled that says: "'You will indeed hear but never understand, and you will indeed see but never perceive.'" ¹⁵ For this people's heart has grown dull, and with their ears they can barely hear, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and turn, and I would heal them.'*