

PV 23.34 ~ *You will be like one who lies down in the midst of the sea, like one who lies on the top of a mast.*

EX: The imagery is of a person foolishly walking deeper and deeper, and finally, just letting themselves slip under the water—of a person laying down on the mast of a ship (naturally what will happen: they'll tumble into the water)! In both cases, they will make progressively more and more foolish choices: drinking more and more, taking harder and harder substances, and drifting further and further from home.

AP: **And when confronted with the destructive error of their choices?** *"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."* (**PV 23.34-35**) Eventually, the addiction defines them: everything comes down to the next drink, the next hit, the next bed, the next business conference. The end of the addicted is that they become their addiction.

CONCLUSION

Solomon worried that his son would give over the control of his life to the wineskin—to the tempting appeal of wine and harder drink. So, he provided him a **description of the addicted and called for him to resist**. But to double-down on his message, he provided a clear description of the **end of the addicted**—that there are no **"small addictions"** with minimal impact. Left to their own devices, **addictions will end us**. The person who wakes on the other end of an addiction, whether alcohol, drug, sex, or otherwise, will be different than who they were to begin with. The man or woman they were may as well be dead, on the surface of the ocean.

But brethren, it doesn't need to be that way. It begins, though, by making a commitment: to not allowing the sin to take the wheel. And understanding that God is ready to restore—God is ready to renew. But it begins with a decision.

EH 4.17-24 ~ *Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. ¹⁸ They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. ¹⁹ They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to every kind of impurity. ²⁰ But that is not the way you learned Christ! — ²¹ assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, ²² to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, ²³ and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, ²⁴ and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.*

Put off your old self...be renewed in the spirit of your minds! What an encouraging idea: that despite our fall to sin and debasement, we can be made whole. We can take the wheel again—and we can then change course, and set our course back to Christ.

EH 4.25-32 ~ *Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. ²⁶ Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, ²⁷ and give no opportunity to the devil. ²⁸ Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need. ²⁹ Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. ³⁰ And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹ Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. ³² Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.*

INVITATION

#644 [Exp-OTW]
06/28/2025

From a Father to His Son, Pt 4
PC Pchd

PV 23.29-35

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

TRN TO PV 23

INTRODUCTION

ILL—Self-Driving Car (started seeing more of them around town; eventually, they're going to start becoming more common; goal is to have them eventually replace traditional cars, entirely) From a pure **"pie in the sky"** view, I get it. I would love to have a robotic chauffeur taking me everywhere. After a 15 hour drive, it'd have been nice if all four of us could have relaxed on the trip!

But Erin has no interest in it—simply put, she doesn't trust it. She doesn't want to give up control of the wheel. And I get that, too. The only reason I'm okay with letting her do most of the driving in the family is she's a better driver than I am, and I trust her behind the wheel. But there are no doubt people I wouldn't (sorry, Seth: gonna be a few more years).

BACKGROUND

As Solomon was preparing his list of 30 sayings for his son in **PV 22-24**, he had a goal for him: for him to make good and godly choices. To take the wheel of his own life. For the majority of the first 18 sayings, he advised him on things to avoid and things to prioritize. But as he gets halfway through his list, he begins to turn his attention to who would be **"behind the wheel"** in his son's life.

The first 18 sayings were mostly contained in a single verse or couplet. But when he gets to number 19, suddenly, additional attention seems to be demanded. This wasn't a topic that he could simply breeze over. This seemed to matter in a different way than the others before it. The average Hebrew word count of the other sayings is around 20-25 words in the Masoretic text, while the 19th saying has approximately 66 Hebrew words: nearly three times the other sayings!

While word-count doesn't necessarily imply importance, it does clearly show that Solomon had a lot to say about the topic. For that reason, it seemed right to me that we would look at this one saying independently of the others and see just what advice was so important that Solomon would spend nearly three times the word-count to share it with him.

BD1: A Description of the Addicted (PV 23.29-30)

PV 23.29-30 ~ *Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has strife? Who has complaining? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes? ³⁰ Those who tarry long over wine; those who go to try mixed wine.*

EX: Solomon, here, gives a **description** of a group of people. And this wasn't exactly a happy lot! Their primary attribute was woe, sorrow, strife, complaint, unexplained wounds and red eyes. If you've ever walked through downtown Nashville or Murfreesboro in the early hours of the day, this description is familiar.

ALCOHOL/Alcoholism/Duane Garrett

But while Solomon, here, speaks specifically of those men and women lost to the ravages of alcohol, he does so primarily because it was the primary form of **addiction** available at the time. While there were other drugs around in the ancient

middle east, the fact that most people had to drink some level of “**fruit of the vine**” in order to remain hydrated made it all the more tempting and easier for a person to move from a non-alcoholic version to something with a bit more “**bite**” to it. Today, it still survives as a common and persistent addiction.

ALCOHOL/Alcoholism/Statistics in 2025

I’m sure most if not everyone here has been touched by alcoholism—among family, friends, co-workers, and ourselves. **How can this devastating habit be so widespread?** Well, to be blunt, because the picture Solomon paints isn’t exactly the one they put on the tin. We advertise fun, laughter, and sex at the end of an evening of alcohol abuse. But in reality, much like the fruit in the garden might have, indeed “*made one wise*”, the true **description of the addicted**, Solomon warns, is the same: woe, sorrow, strife, sickness, and ultimately death.

AP: “Phew, it’s a good thing I’m not addicted to alcohol.” Is that what you’re thinking? Well, while the addicted to alcohol were the direct people that Solomon was describing here, his description extends out and applies just as easy to any other addiction. And Brethren, if you’re not tempted by alcohol, don’t you worry: there are so many other addictions out there to grab you!

ADDICTION/Description/Definition

ADDICTION/Drugs/Other Addictions in America in 2025

ADDICTION/Behavioral/Addictions in America in 2025

By even the most conservative of counts (discounting most behavioral addictions and focusing largely on substance addictions), between 10-15% of Americans are struggling with one form of addiction or another. That’s 1-5 for every average small business. 2-10 for every average small church. 1 for every extended family. You might feel like addiction is outside of your life. In fact, it’s likely either knocking on your door, or hiding in your closet. And when you include behavioral addictions, that number balloons up by triple—or more!

B.ILL—RM 1 (the Pagan world that rejected God) (Paul writes of the danger of the Gentile world’s rejection of God; we often point to the homosexuality on practice here or on atheism; interestingly, the word for “debased” was a smithing term that meant to “contain contaminants”) *And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done.* ²⁹ *They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips,* ³⁰ *slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents,* ³¹ *foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless.* ³² *Though they know God’s righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them.* (RM 1.28-32) Notice the symptoms bearing out from their impure mind: evil, covetousness, malice, envy, murder, and strife. Like the warning Solomon gave to his son, these Gentiles had been given over to an infected mind—for Solomon’s son, the warning was alcohol. For the Gentile world, it was every kind of evil: sexual, violence, and otherwise. Regardless: we see in both passages the **description of the addicted**: pained and pitiful—a ruined and wrecked life.

BD2: A Call to Resist (PV 23.31-32)

Whether speaking of addiction to alcohol, drugs, sex, or any other thing: the life of the addicted is described as a life of woe, sorrow, strife, complaint, wound, and redness of eye. And for that reason, it’s not surprising that, in the next verse,

Solomon made a **call to resist** its temptation! *Do not look at wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup and goes down smoothly.* (PV 23.31)

EX: The description Solomon provides here of the allure of alcohol seems to me to be the words of a man who knows it well. He speaks like a man burned—a man familiar with the allure and siren call of the cup. It looks smooth, appealing, and, to use a term, “**sexy**” and alluring. Here he points out one of the most devastating truth of addict: it starts out tasty, fun, and filling.

ILL—Wineries and Brunches (we see pictures and videos of the young and attractive; sloshing the drink in the cup, laughing uproariously; seems relaxing and open) And in truth, to begin with, it is. And worse: there are some who are able to keep it there. There are some who can have a drink here, a smoke there—who can dabble seemingly unaffected in dangerous waters. But Solomon knew his son—and he feared the result that could come from him “**dipping**” in the shallows: *In the end it bites like a serpent and stings like an adder.* (PV 23.32)

It’s interesting that, just a couple verses before, Solomon had given the example of the prostitute: *For a prostitute is a deep pit; an adulteress is a narrow well.* ²⁸ *She lies in wait like a robber and increases the traitors among mankind.* (PV 23.27-28) That’s because, in both cases, you had a foreign substance and influence that could poison—pull away his little boy from the man he needed to be. And in both cases, the **call** was the same: **resist!**

AP: There’s a reason why people spent millions on alcohol, cigarettes, vaping, drugs, and sex: it starts out nice—it feels good. It gives those temporary and powerful highs. But as Solomon would go on to remind his son: those highs don’t last. It’s for that reason our Lord advised similarly that we **resist**: *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.* (MT 5.29-30)

BD3: The End of the Addicted (PV 23.33-35)

Why would someone ever allow themselves to give over control of themselves to some outside addiction or influence? Mainly, because they don’t really think it’ll do that to them. They assume it’ll stay the way it was at first. But Solomon explains to his son **the end of addiction**—that ultimately, it always ends the same way.

PV 23.33 ~ *Your eyes will see strange things, and your heart utter perverse things.*

ILL—Beer Goggles (people joke about it; when at the museum, they had us put on special glasses that would disrupt our vision and have us walk a line; I about ended flat on my butt) The fact is, alcohol changes how you see things. As does other drugs and other influences. Our work, fame, and fantasies have their own sorts of goggles. Addictions change the way we live and the way we think and the way we treat others. They bring us to say and do things we’d never think we’d do, otherwise. And ultimately, they destroy.

ILL—Why I Hate taking the Kids Swimming in the Ocean (starts out slow and pleasant; things seem under control; then, step off the bank/hit a current) Suddenly, your stomach drops and you find yourself struggling to stay above water. In just a few seconds, a child can go from swimming safely, to disappearing under the water. From reading this section, I think Solomon knew this experience, too.