

The Pathway to Eternal Wisdom

[Part 9]

Proverbs 6:1-5 [NIV] *“My son, if you have put up security for your neighbour, if you have struck hands in pledge for another, if you have been trapped by what you said, ensnared by the words of your mouth, then do this, my son, to free yourself, since you have fallen into your neighbour’s hands: Go and humble yourself; press your plea with your neighbour! Allow no sleep to your eyes, no slumber to your eyelids. Free yourself, like a gazelle from the hand of the hunter, like a bird from the snare of the fowler.*

In early days Israel’s commercial law was straightforward. Borrowing was necessary only for particular emergencies and so the taking of interest from a fellow Israelite was strictly forbidden. [**Leviticus 25:36**]

Also, if a cloak was taken as security for a loan, it was to be returned by nightfall as it served as a blanket. [**Exodus 22:25-27**]

With the growth of foreign trade relationships, the practice of suretyship seems to have been introduced. A person accepting responsibility for the debts of another.

[The action of the play ‘*Merchant of Venice*’ revolves around this custom]

It is worth noticing that Proverbs is especially concerned with surety transactions involving strangers, that is, foreign traders. [**Proverbs 11:15; Proverbs 20:16; Proverbs 27:13**]

The pledge refers to the act of ratifying the transaction.

Giving this surety is like the action of the wicked man in **Proverbs 5:22**, trapped by his own folly.

These verses impress on any person who has made such a pledge of surety to rethink fast and seek to be freed from that pledge.

These verses do **not** banish generosity, but is nearer to banishing gambling.

A person’s giving should be fully voluntary, the amount determined by the person who is making the loan or gift, **not** a blank cheque as surety involves.

Only then can the effectiveness of the use of the gift or loan be judged.

Even for the recipient, an unconditional pledge may be an unintended disservice by exposing them to temptation and to the subsequent grief of having brought a friend to ruin.

There is a link between this Old Testament physical insolvency and spiritual insolvency.

Job 17:3 [NIV] *“Give me, O God, the pledge you demand. Who else will put up security for me?”*

Job was declared to be too bad a risk for anyone but God.

Psalms 119:122 [NIV] *“Ensure your servant’s well-being; let not the arrogant oppress me.”*

The writer of the Psalm is seeking God to pledge for his spiritual safety.

Even with the total self-sacrifice and total self-spending mind of our Saviour Jesus Christ, we remain in need of the lesson these verses bring to us.

Nothing in the New Testament assures us that God will underwrite every spiritual escapade we care to embark on.

We cannot indulge in sin with expectance that God will always forgive, whatever our attitude or lack of seeking to resist sin.

Jeremiah 15:6 [NIV] *“You have rejected me,’ declares the LORD. ‘You keep on backsliding. So I will lay hands on you and destroy you; I can no longer show compassion.’”*

There comes a time when our rejection of God and our continuing to sin will force God to say “no more.”

Galatians 6:7 [NIV] *“Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.”*

Eventually we will reap what we have sown in our physical life. [**Romans 6:23; 1 John 1:8**]

Philemon 18-19 [NIV] *“If he has done you any wrong or owes you anything, charge it to me. I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand. I will pay it back, not to mention that you owe me your very self.”*

Paul accepted Onesimus’ past liabilities, but **not** his future ones.

To extract ourselves from a foolish pledge of assurity will involve our humbling ourselves. [**v3**]

The same applies to our spiritual life. [**Romans 12:3; 1 Peter 5:6-7**]

Proverbs 6:6-8 [NIV] *“Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise! It has no commander, no overseer or ruler, yet it stores its provisions in summer and gathers its food at harvest.”*

I will **not** expand on these verses as they are fully covered in our article ‘Go To The Ant’ listed under general heading ‘Successful Living.’

Proverbs 6:9-11 [NIV] *“How long will you lie there, you sluggard? When will you get up from your sleep? A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest, and poverty will come on you like a bandit and scarcity like an armed man.”*

The good example of successful living is of **no** use unless we personally act on it, **not** letting procrastination slow up our action.

Please download our articles ‘Procrastination’ and ‘Laziness’ listed under the main heading ‘Successful Living.’

Proverbs 6:12-15 [NIV] *“A scoundrel and villain, who goes about with a corrupt mouth, who winks with his eye, signals with his feet and motions with his fingers, who plots evil with deceit in his heart, he always stirs up dissension. Therefore disaster will overtake him in an instant; he will suddenly be destroyed, without remedy.”*

The word “scoundrel” is translated from Hebrew word “belîyaal” meaning without profit, destructive, ungodly.

All the signs in v13 point to insincerity a person who cannot be trusted in promises or any action.

Eventually the Hebrew word used to describe this person was given to the Devil [**2 Corinthians 6:15**], who is the father of all such qualities.

The end of such a person, if they don’t repent, and Satan, who will not repent, will be sudden and final.

Proverbs 6:16-19 [NIV] *“There are six things the LORD hates, seven that are detestable to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that are quick to rush into evil, a false witness who pours out lies and a man who stirs up dissension among brothers.”*

With its appeal to God, this list clinches the indictment of the “*scoundrel and villain*” of **verses 12-15**.

The term “*six... seven*” is showing that the list, though specific, is **not** exhaustive.

Additional things that God hates are listed in Proverbs.

Violent people [**Proverbs 3:31**]

Those who are untruthful [**Proverbs 12:22**]

The sacrifice of the wicked [**Proverbs 15:8**]

The way the wicked live [**Proverbs 15:9**]

The thoughts of the wicked [**Proverbs 15:26**]

Those who are proud [**Proverbs 16:5**]

Those who judge unjustly [**Proverbs 17:15**]

If we classify these things that God hates listed in **verses 16-19** we see the following characteristics, all personal.

Attitudes [**17a**]

Thoughts [**18a**]

Speech [**17b** and **19a**]

Action [**17c** and **18b**]

Influence [**19b**]

Proverbs 6:20-23 [NIV] *“My son, keep your father’s commands and do not forsake your mother’s teaching. Bind them upon your heart for ever; fasten them around your neck. When you walk, they will guide you; when you sleep, they will watch over you; when you awake, they will speak to you. For these commands are a lamp, this teaching is a light, and the corrections of discipline are the way to life,”*

These verses directed to a young man are aimed to give him protection from the immoral woman.

The Hebrew word translated “*immoral*” is “*ra*” indicating the source of affliction, distress, grief and wretchedness.

It is natural and good for children, as they grow towards adulthood, to become increasingly independent of their parents.

Young adults, however, should take care **not** to turn a deaf ear to their parents, to reject their advice just when it is needed most.

A young person struggling with a decision or looking for insight, should approach their parents or other older adults who know them well. The extra years of experience may have given such people the wisdom the young person needs. [**v23**]

Another source of wisdom that must never be overlooked and that must be included in every decision is God's Word, the Christian Bible, and especially the wisdom books of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Psalms.

Proverbs 6:24-35 [NIV] *“keeping you from the immoral woman, from the smooth tongue of the wayward wife. Do not lust in your heart after her beauty or let her captivate you with her eyes, for the prostitute reduces you to a loaf of bread, and the adulteress preys upon your very life. Can a man scoop fire into his lap without his clothes being burned? Can a man walk on hot coals without his feet being scorched? So is he who sleeps with another man's wife; no-one who touches her will go unpunished. Men do not despise a thief if he steals to satisfy his hunger when he is starving. Yet if he is caught, he must pay sevenfold, though it costs him all the wealth of his house. But a man who commits adultery lacks judgment; whoever does so destroys himself. Blows and disgrace are his lot, and his shame will never be wiped away; for jealousy arouses a husband's fury, and he will show no mercy when he takes revenge. He will not accept any compensation; he will refuse the bribe, however great it is.”*

If we experience a feeling of lust towards another human being, we should regard it as a big red warning sign of danger ahead.

When we notice that we are attracted to a person of the opposite sex or become preoccupied with thoughts of him or her, such desires may lead to sin. Ask God to help us to change our desires before we are drawn into sin.

James 1:13-15 [King James] *“Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.”*

We cannot blame God for lustful thoughts, these are conceived in our mind with the help of Satan whose one desire is to destroy us eternally.

Some people will argue that it is alright to break God's law against sex outside the marriage if nobody gets hurt.

The truth is someone always gets hurt.

Spouses are devastated.

Children are scarred.

Partners themselves, even if they escape disease and unwanted pregnancy, lose their trust to have an entirely open relationship with their partner or any other person.

Adultery will lead to loss of wealth and is social suicide and blackmail, eventually if not repented of eternal death.

Hebrews 13:4 [NIV] *“Marriage should be honoured by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral.”*

All immoral sex will come under the judgement of God.

James 4:4 [NIV] *“You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred towards God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.”*

Friendship with the world and its immoral sex shows hatred towards our Creator God and makes us an enemy of God.

God expresses certain acts in rebellion against Him as acts of spiritual sexual immorality.

Ezekiel 6:9 [King James] *“And they that escape of you shall remember me among the nations whither they shall be carried captives, because I am broken with their whorish heart, which hath departed from me, and with their eyes, which go a whoring after their idols: and they shall lothe themselves for the evils which they have committed in all their abominations.”*

Anything we place in our lives before loyalty to our Creator God is whoring after an idol.

Psalms 50:17-18 [King James] *“Seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee. When thou sawest a thief, then thou consentedst with him, and hast been partaker with adulterers.”*

To ignore or reject God’s Words, the Christian Bible, is likened by God to adultery.

Jeremiah 23:10-11 [NIV] *“The land is full of adulterers; because of the curse the land lies parched and the pastures in the desert are withered. The [prophets] follow an evil course and use their power unjustly. ‘Both prophet and priest are godless; even in my temple I find their wickedness,’ declares the LORD.”*

How did the nation become so corrupt?

A major factor is false prophecy by spiritual and secular leaders.

These false leaders had a large, enthusiastic audience and were very popular because they made the people, who were spiritually adulterers, worshipping physical things, as idols, rather than the Creator God, believe that all is well.

Jeremiah 23:14 [NIV] *“And among the prophets of Jerusalem I have seen something horrible: They commit adultery and live a lie. They strengthen the hands of evildoers, so that no-one turns from his wickedness. They are all like Sodom to me; the people of Jerusalem are like Gomorrah.”*

Even the nation’s spiritual and secular leaders committed spiritual and physical adultery and God looked on the whole situation in the same way as He did Sodom and Gomorrah. [**Genesis 18:20-21; Genesis 19:24**]

I will leave you to consider these words in the light of what we see in nations at this time in human history.