

Dr. August Konkel, Proverbs, Session 14, Sayings of the Wise, Proverbs 22:17-24:22 Podcast Audio Overview

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All right, let's dive in. We're tackling the sayings of the wise today, specifically Proverbs chapters 22.17 through 24.22. Lots to unpack there. We've got your notes, of course, and Dr. Conkle's lecture.

Oh, excellent. Should be fun, like a treasure hunt for timeless wisdom, right? Absolutely. And you know, we might even find some surprising connections along the way.

This section, it's got 30 distinct sayings. 30? Yeah. Scholars have been fascinated by them for centuries.

Some even think, and it's a fascinating idea, that they're rooted in this ancient Egyptian text, the Instruction of Amenemope. Wow. Possibly even, get this, from the time of Pharaoh Ramses II.

Wait, Ramses II, as in the Pharaoh from the Exodus story? That's a pretty big historical link. It is. So does that mean like the Israelites were just copying wisdom from the Egyptians? Not quite, no.

Think of it more like, well, it shows how certain truths, just human truths, resonate across cultures. Okay, yeah. Both texts, even though they're separated by time and geography, they both touch on, well, you know, things like respecting the poor, not letting your anger get out of control, the dangers of financial guarantees.

So we're not just talking about, like, dusty old sayings. No, no. It's more like fundamental principles of human interaction, the kind that were relevant then, and maybe they still apply now.

Exactly, and that's what makes these Proverbs so interesting, so intriguing. They're like a window into the human experience shared across cultures and across time. I like that.

A window into the past, but with reflections for us today. Let's get specific. Dr. Konkel, in his lecture, talked about the skill of scribes in ancient times.

Oh, yes. He used the Scroll of Isaiah as an example. Their dedication to their craft was incredible.

Absolutely. That scroll, think about it, over 26 feet long, all filled with meticulous Hebrew script. It's hard to imagine.

It speaks volumes about their commitment to their work and their precision. Imagine the patience they needed to create something like that with, well, pretty basic tools. It really, you know, brings that proverb to life.

Exercise skills in your work. It really does, and I think that resonates so powerfully today. You could be a surgeon, a programmer, a musician, or even, well, a podcast host.

Right. It's that dedication to honing your craft. It's what takes good work and makes it excellent.

I completely agree. It shows a level of, well, intentionality and mastery that goes beyond any one profession. Now, Dr. Conkel also shared a pretty funny anecdote about nearly getting etiquette lessons before he visited a friend in England.

It seems that proverb, be careful with etiquette, still holds true. It does, and, you know, the specific customs might be different between cultures or even eras, but the principle behind it- respecting social norms- remains relevant. You need to understand those norms to really have successful interactions with people.

Good point. Etiquette, it's not just about stuffy rules. It's about navigating social situations gracefully, thinking about others.

Yes. And maybe those considerations are even more important now. With digital communication and online etiquette, it's a whole new world.

Absolutely. Maybe we need some new proverbs for that. Maybe we do.

I think you've hit on something very insightful. The challenge is, well, how do we identify those timeless principles that are underneath the specific customs? And then how do we apply them in our world, which is always changing? Now, some of these proverbs, they get into pretty heavy topics. Dr. Conkel told a story about a man who took his own life, tragically, after he lost all his money.

Oh, that's right. It's a tough story, but it really brings home that proverb: wealth is fleeting. It takes wings and flies away.

Powerful image. What do you think? How does that resonate today? Well, that anecdote is heartbreaking, but it reminds us that material wealth doesn't last. The proverb doesn't say wealth is bad.

It's more like a warning against putting all your security, all your happiness, on things you can lose. And today we're surrounded by financial anxiety. I think that message might be more relevant than ever.

It really makes you think about what matters, you know, what really makes a life good. Yes. Things come and go, but these proverbs, they seem to point us towards something, well, something more.

I think so too. They're guiding us toward a definition of success that's not just about what we have. It's about who we are.

Yeah. How we interact with the world. Speaking of things that can get us into trouble, Dr. Conkel mentioned this.

It's kind of a funny story about someone asking for hangover advice. Oh, I remember that. Which is a perfect lead-in to Proverbs 23, that really vivid picture of drunkenness.

Oh, yes. The imagery there, it's striking. Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has strife? Who has complaints? Who has needless bruises? Who has bloodshot eyes? Those who linger over wine, who go to sample bowls of mixed wine.

Wow. Well, it's pretty visceral, wouldn't you say? It is. And, you know, wine was a common drink back then, but even so, the warnings against excess, they're hard-hitting.

And the consequences laid out so clearly. Right. It's a timeless warning, isn't it? The context might change, but the message- the need for moderation and self-control- goes beyond any one culture.

It's human nature. We all struggle with overindulgence. And Dr. Conkel mentioned a teacher he knew had a really strong reaction to the Bible's stance on wine.

Yes. It shows you how complex it can be to interpret these ancient texts for the modern world. It does.

What might have been totally normal back then, we might see it completely differently now. So we have to be careful. We do.

We have to consider the context, but we also have to engage with the text, you know, thoughtfully, try to find those timeless principles that still speak to us. It's a balancing act. It is.

Respecting history while finding relevance for our own lives. Let's keep digging into that with some more of these sayings. I'm all for it.

There's so much here to unpack. We're just getting started. It's interesting, you know, these proverbs; it's not just about avoiding trouble.

It's almost like a guide to building character. I see that. Like that one, about not moving the ancient boundary stones.

It's more than just property lines, isn't it? It is. It's about, well, honesty, fairness, respecting the established order. Right.

It makes you think: what are the boundary stones, so to speak, in our world- the lines we shouldn't cross? That's a good question. Things like, well, intellectual property, data privacy, even the way we treat people online- those lines can get pretty blurry. Excellent examples.

The principle that we should respect boundaries, whether they're physical or digital. It's still so important. It speaks to, well, integrity.

It's about more than just following the rules. Right. It's like some of these proverbs; they're not so much about specific rules.

It's about like a mindset, a way of approaching life with wisdom, with integrity. Exactly. They're encouraging us to think long-term, to see the consequences of our actions, even in small things.

It's about principle, but not just what's easy in the moment. That makes me think about those proverbs about wealth and success. Today, it's all about hustle culture, making it big.

Right. But those ancient warnings about how riches can disappear so quickly- how do those fit in? I think those warnings might be even more important now. It's like a counterbalance to all the pressure to acquire more, to measure your worth by your stuff.

They make a stop and ask, "What's true wealth anyway? So it's not about rejecting ambition or achievement. No, not at all. It's more about finding a balance.

Yes. Between striving for excellence and recognizing that true fulfillment, well, it might come from somewhere else entirely. Maybe it's in relationships or contributing to something bigger than yourself or just being content right now.

Like those proverbs are telling us, you can define success on your own terms. Don't get caught up in the flash and the bling. There's more to life than that.

I think so, too. They're pointing us toward a richer definition of a good life. Let's talk about relationships.

This section of proverbs has a lot to say about how we interact with each other. It does. There's one about being wary of misers, for example.

Yes, that one's fascinating. It shows you how well people understood human nature even back then. The miser might seem generous, but inside they're clinging to everything they have.

Right. It's a warning to, well, to look past the surface. Think about the motivations behind people's actions.

Like, trust your gut feeling. Yes. Pay attention to those little things that might tell you about someone's true character.

We need to learn to read between the lines. Exactly. The proverbs are encouraging us to develop discernment and healthy skepticism- not to be cynical, but to be aware and remember that not everyone has your best interests at heart.

That's good advice for any time, right? It is. But maybe even more so now with social media, everyone's presenting this perfect image of themselves online. It's hard to tell who's being real.

That's true. Learning to recognize authenticity, to separate genuine kindness from self-interest disguised as kindness, is more important than ever. And these proverbs, they give us timeless guidance for that.

You know, it strikes me that we're not just talking about deciphering ancient wisdom here. No. It's about developing a wiser way of engaging with the world.

Yeah. No matter what time you live in, it's about how to navigate relationships, how to judge character, how to approach success and wealth. You've put it beautifully.

These sayings, they're not just relics from the past. They're living guides for cultivating a wiser, more discerning mind, a mind that can handle the complexity of being human in any age. It's amazing, isn't it? How these proverbs were written so long ago, but they still feel so relevant.

I think so too. There's something universal about them. Right.

Like they're tapping into something fundamental about what it means to be human. And you know, that connection, it was probably intentional. A lot of scholars believe that these proverbs weren't meant to be like solitary reflections.

Okay. They were tools for discussion, for growth, for the whole community. So it's not just personal wisdom.

It's about cultivating wisdom together. Exactly. Imagine people gathered around a fire, talking about these sayings, debating them, challenging each other's ideas.

Passing them down to the next generation. Yes. It was about shaping society as a whole, not just individual enlightenment.

That makes a lot of sense. The wisdom in these proverbs is meant to be shared. Right.

Not kept hidden away. It reminds us that we can learn from each other, from each other's experiences, even across thousands of years. And you know, in a world that feels more and more divided, I think that's such an important message.

Yeah. These proverbs, they're like a bridge connecting us across time, across cultures. We're all part of this shared human experience.

And the search for wisdom. It's something we all have in common. Exactly.

We're all on that journey together. It's like we're joining a conversation that's been going on for centuries, adding our own voices to it. It reminds me of that question Dr. Conkle asked.

Which one? If we were writing these proverbs for today's world, what would we add? Oh, right. What wisdom have we gained or lost over time? Right. It's a challenge to go beyond just learning from the past.

Yeah. To become, well, creators of wisdom ourselves. What do we have to offer based on our own lives, our own experiences? Exactly.

What have we learned? What do we want to pass on to the next generation? It's like we're all part of this ongoing dialogue about wisdom. We are. And that dialogue, it's always changing, always evolving.

Who knows? Maybe someday our own ideas, they'll inspire people too. Maybe so. So as we wrap up this deep dive into the sayings of the wise, I'm feeling, well, kind of grounded.

Grounded. Yeah. Like these proverbs, they show us these timeless truths about human nature, but I'm also feeling inspired.

Inspired to? Inspired to keep searching for wisdom in the past, in the present. And to add our own voices to the mix. I think that's a perfect way to put it.

We've explored these ancient words, uncovered these timeless principles, and hopefully we've all had some new thoughts along the way. I know I have. Good.

As we go back out into the world, let's take these voices with us. Let them guide us, challenge us, and remind us that the search for wisdom is a lifelong journey, and it's a journey worth taking.