

TEXT — 6:1-11

1. My son, if thou art become surety for thy neighbor,
If thou hast striken thy hands for a stranger;
2. Thou art snared with the words of thy mouth,
Thou art taken with the words of thy mouth.
3. Do this now, my son, and deliver thyself,
Seeing thou art come into the hand of thy neighbor:
Go, humble thyself, and importune thy neighbor;
4. Give not sleep to thine eyes,
Nor slumber to thine eyelids;
5. Deliver thyself as a roe from the hand of the hunter,
And as a bird from the hand of the fowler.
6. Go to the ant, thou sluggard;
Consider her ways, and be wise:
7. Which having no chief,
Overseer, or ruler,
8. Provideth her bread in the summer,
And gathereth her food in the harvest.
9. How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard?
When wilt thou arise out of thy sleep?
10. Yet a little sleep, a little slumber,
A little folding of the hands to sleep:
11. So shall thy poverty come as a robber,
And thy want as an armed man.

STUDY QUESTIONS OVER 6:1-11

1. What does it mean to "strike thy hands" (v. 1)?
2. What is the figure of being "snared" (v. 2)?
3. How does one "deliver" himself in this setting (v. 3)?
4. What does "importune" mean (v. 3)?
5. Give "no sleep" or give "not excessive sleep" to thy eyelids (v. 4)?
6. Who is a "fowler" (v. 5)?
7. For what is ant especially known (v. 6)?
8. Do ants have no leader (v. 7)?
9. Comment on the strange habits of ants (v. 8).
10. Is late-sleeping for healthy people encouraged in the Bible (v. 9)?
11. What word in v. 10 is emphatic?
12. Comment on the possessions of an armed man and a robber in the Bible days (v. 11).

PARAPHRASE OF 6:1-11

- 1-5. Son, if you endorse a note for someone you hardly know, guaranteeing his debt, you are in serious trouble. You may have trapped yourself by your agreement. Quick! Get out of it if you possibly can! Swallow your pride; don't let embarrassment stand in the way. Go and beg to have your name erased. Don't put it off. Do it now. Don't rest until you do. If you can get out of this trap you have saved yourself like a deer that escapes from a hunter, or a bird from the net.
- 6-11. Take a lesson from the ants, you lazy fellow. Learn from their ways and be wise! For though they have no king to make them work, yet they labor hard all summer, gathering food for the winter. But you--all you do is sleep. When will you wake up? "Let me sleep a little longer!" Sure, just a little more! And as you sleep, poverty creeps upon you like a robber and destroys you; want attacks you in full armor.

COMMENTS ON 6:1-11

V. 1. "Pulpit Commentary": "The sixth chapter embraces four distinct discourses, each of which is a warning. The subjects treated of are: (1) suretyship--vs. 1-5; (2) sloth--vs. 6-11; (3) malice--vs. 12-19; and (4) adultery--vs. 20 to the end." Our judgment would make "perverseness" the subject of vs. 12-19 instead of "malice". At first it would appear that the subject being treated in Chapter 5 and to which the author returns to in the last part of this chapter has been abruptly interrupted by these three non-related subjects. But "Pulpit Commentary" says, "The subject treated of in the preceding chapter is the happiness of the married life, and this is imperilled by incautious undertaking of suretyship, and suretyship, it is maintained induces sloth, while sloth leads to maliciousness. After treating of suretyship, sloth, and malice in succession, the teacher recurs to the former subject of his discourse, viz. impurity of life." "Clarke": "If thou pledge thyself in behalf of another, thou takest the burden off him, and placest it on thine own shoulders; and when he knows he has got one to stand between him and the demands of law and justice, he will feel little responsibility; his spirit of exertion will become crippled, and listlessness as to the event will be the consequences. His own character will suffer

little; his property nothing, for his friend bears all the burden." Other passages on suretyship: Prov. 11:15; 17:18; 20:16; 22:26; 27:13. From studying all of these verses "Clarke" comes to this conclusion on "suretyship": "Give what thou canst; but, except in extreme cases, be surety for no man."

V. 2. "Striking hands" then was like signing a contract now. Sometimes one later sees his mistake of going surety for a party.

V. 3. "My son" here shows the earnestness of the father's entreaty. He was to go to the creditor and agree to some kind of settlement that would release him from any further or future obligation. "Do it now!" says the father, and v. 4 continues the urgency of doing it immediately--do it before you have to stand good for your friend's debt.

V. 4. Don't spend any time sleeping--not even one night--until you have cleared yourself in the matter. This expression for doing something immediately is also used in Psa. 132:4,5: "I will not give sleep to mine eyes, Or slumber to mine eyelids; Until I find out a place for Jehovah."

V. 5. Continuing the figure of a "snare" raised in v. 2, he urges the son to take a lesson from the hunted roe or bird: they sense danger, they seek safety; they lose no time in doing so.

V. 6. Ants are well distributed and are everywhere known for ambitious activity. To speak of his sleep-loving son as a "sluggard" was not complementary (it means "lazy one"), but it was fitting. Solomon's use of animals ("roe" and "bird" in v. 5 and "ant" in this verse) is in keeping with Job 12:7: "Ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; And the birds of the heavens, and they shall tell thee."

V. 7. The ant is a fitting representative of true ambition, for an ant does not have to have a boss to make her work. And when did you ever see one that wasn't working? Remember Aesop's fable about the ant and the grasshopper?

V. 8. While some who live in cold climates where ants become dormant during winter have argued that Proverbs is in error here in its representation of the habit of the ant, "Tristram" in "Pulpit Commentary" says, "Contrary to its habits in colder climates, the ant is not there dormant through the winter; and among the tamarisks of the Dead Sea it may be seen in January actively engaged in collecting the aphides and saccharine exudations...Two of the most common species of the Holy Land...are strictly seed-feeders and in summer lay up

large stores of grain for winter use.”

V. 9. The same words as v. 9,10 are found in Prov. 24:33,34. Again he refers to his son as a sleeping “sluggard”. He is such a contrast to the industrious ant. “Early to bed, early to rise Makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise” is an old saying not too well practiced by many modern youth who neither want to go to bed at night nor get up in the morning! Our verse is not arguing against a proper amount of sleep but against that over-sleeping that youth is sometimes guilty of (sleeping all morning if not called and made to get up). This is a good way to waste one’s life and have little to show by way of accomplishment.

V. 10. The emphasis is on “little”. Have you ever known an ambitionless young person to say, “Let me sleep a little longer;” or, “I’ll get up in a little while”? But if left to him/her, the “little” becomes a “lot”.

V. 11. A sluggard’s poverty is also referred to in other passages: “He becometh poor that worketh with a slack hand” (Prov. 10:4); “The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing” (Prov. 13:4); “The sluggard will not plow by reason of the winter; Therefore he shall beg in harvest, and have nothing” (Prov. 20:4). A “robber” was always in need, and an armed man was a poorly-paid man (compare Luke 3:14). In other words, a little sleep, a little slumber, and a little folding of the hands lead to a lot of poverty! “The expression, ‘thy poverty’ and ‘thy want’, represent the destitution of the sluggard as flowing directly from his own habit of self-indulgence” (“Pulpit Commentary”).

TEST QUESTIONS OVER 6:1-11

1. Is there really a change of subjects beginning in v. 1?
2. Striking hands then was like now (v. 2).
3. What does “my son” in v. 3 indicate?
4. How soon was the son to go to the creditor (v. 4)?
5. What 3 things do the roe and bird do when the hunter comes around (v. 5)?
6. What uncomplimentary name did the father call his sleeping son (v. 6)?
7. What fable of Aesop does v. 7 recall to one’s mind?
8. What discussion has arisen over what v. 8 says about the habit of the ant?

9. What about many modern youth and late-morning sleeping (v. 9)?
10. Give a modern statement or 2 of modern-day sleepers using "little" (v. 10).
11. Does the Bible represent a sluggard as one likely to become rich or to have to live in poverty (v. 11)?

TEXT — 6:12-22

12. A worthless person, a man of iniquity,
Is he that walketh with a perverse mouth;
13. That winketh with his eyes, that speaketh with his feet,
That maketh signs with his fingers;
14. In whose heart is perverseness,
Who deviseth evil continually,
Who soweth discord.
15. Therefore shall his calamity come suddenly;
On a sudden shall he be broken, and that without
remedy.
16. There are six things which Jehovah hateth;
Yea, seven are which are an abomination unto him:
17. Haughty eyes, a lying tongue,
And hands that shed innocent blood;
18. A heart that deviseth wicked purposes,
Feet that are swift in running to mischief,
19. A false witness that uttereth lies,
And he that soweth discord among brethren.
20. My son, keep the commandment of thy father,
And forsake not the law of thy mother:
21. Bind them continually upon thy heart;
Tie them about thy neck.
22. When thou walkest, it shall lead thee;
When thou sleepest, it shall watch over thee;
And when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee.

STUDY QUESTIONS OVER 6:12-22

1. "Worthless" is what sense (v. 12)?
2. Does v. 13 make winking a sin?
3. What is "discord" (v. 14)?
4. Where is the emphasis in v. 15?
5. Why not say "seven things" to begin with instead of the way v. 16 words it?

6. Comment on each item in v. 17.
7. Comment on each item in v. 18.
8. Comment on each item on v. 19.
9. What does "keep" mean in v. 20?
10. Comment on "bind" and "tie" as used in v. 21.
11. What within a person will do the 3 things mentioned in v. 22?

PARAPHRASE OF 6:12-22

- 12-15. Let me describe for you a worthless and a wicked man; first, he is a constant liar; he signals his true intentions to his friends with eyes and feet and finger. Next, his heart is full of rebellion. And he spends his time thinking of all the evil he can do, and stirring up discontent. But he will be destroyed suddenly, broken beyond hope of healing.
- 16-19. For there are six things which the Lord hates--no, seven: haughtiness, lying, murdering, plotting evil, eagerness to do wrong, a false witness, and sowing discord among brothers.
- 20-22. Young man, obey our father and your mother. Tie their instructions around your finger so you won't forget. Take to heart all of their advice. Every day and all night long their counsel will lead you and save you from harm; when you wake up in the morning, let their instructions guide you into the new day.

COMMENTS ON 6:12-22

V. 12. One with a perverse mouth is doubly described as a "man of iniquity" and a "worthless person". He is the former in that perverse speech is sinful; he is the latter in that he does neither God nor man good with his speech.

V. 13. One who gives you signals with his eyes, feet, and fingers to "speak" to some but to conceal what he is saying from others is a character to be on guard against. He too is described as being a "man of iniquity" and a "worthless person". Other references to this type of "winking": Psa. 35:19; Prov. 10:10.

V. 14. Such a "worthless", "iniquitous" man is further described as having a perverse heart, a heart that is continually devising some kind of evil (in this verse, "discord"). On Pentecost the apostles were all together with "one accord" (Acts

2:1)--unity, harmony. "Discord" is just the opposite. It can be "sown" among very dear friends by subtle-hearted person. Such takes time to grow, but in time it will produce such a crop. V. 19 also refers to sowing discord among brethren.

V. 15. He has plotted the downfall of others; he himself will meet his own destruction. The destruction is described in two ways: "suddenly" and "without remedy". Other passages on being ruined without any hope of remedy: II Chron. 36:16; Prov. 29:1; Jer. 19:11.

V. 16. God may love the world--the people (John 3:16), but there are things that He "hates". In fact, His hatred can run to holding things in "abomination" (detestable). Why the unusual construction here? Evidently not only to give emphatic position to sowing discord among brethren but to call particular attention to it.

V. 17. This verse shows that eyes, tongue, and hands can and do sin, and that God hates and holds in abomination sinful things done by them. "Haughty eyes" are also condemned in Psa. 18:27 and Psa. 101:5. A "lying tongue" is called a "deceitful tongue" in Psa. 120:2,3. "Pulpit Commentary" aptly observes, "Lying is the wilful perversion of truth, not only by speech but by any means whatever whereby a false impression is conveyed to the mind."

V. 18. Two more ways that one can displease God to the fullest: to have a heart that thinks up evil (evil intentions, evil plots against people, etc.) and to have feet that are quick to carry the above out. With so much evil in the world (I John 5:19)--all stemming, of course, from the devil--there are many such wicked hearts through which the devil works to cause it. Jer. 17:9 speaks of the heart being "corrupt". Prior to the Flood (and bringing it on) was the fact that "every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen. 6:5). The implication of John 2:23-25 is that what is "in man" is not good. On the last part of our verse Isa. 59:7 and Rom 3:15 say the same: "Their feet run to evil" and "Their feet are swift to shed blood".

V. 19. These two are "twins": bearing false witness and sowing discord among brethren. What an act (to utter lies about a person)! What an achievement (to divide good friends)! Jesus pronounces a blessing upon the "peacemaker" (Matt. 5:9), and this section shows the utter contempt that God has for the opposite of the peacemaker--the discord-sower. The 9th

Commandment (Exo. 20:16) forbade bearing false witness against one's neighbor, and yet it has often been done.

V. 20. The important instructions in v. 24-35 are introduced by vs. 20-23. Our verse is reminiscent of Prov. 1:8 ("My son, hear the instruction of thy father, And forsake not the law of thy mother") and parallel in instruction with Eph. 6:1 ("Children, obey your parents").

V. 21. "Bind" them and "tie" them would be to secure them in your heart and mind; don't let them get away. The "continually" would assure him of always having them to bless his life. Similarly does Prov. 3:3 say, "Bind them about thy neck; Write them upon the tablet of thy heart," and Prov. 7:3 says, "Bind them upon thy fingers; Write them upon the tablet of thy heart."

V. 22. Such binding and tying would cause the understanding imparted to him to do three things for him: (1) lead him when he walked; (2) watch over him when he slept; and (3) talk with him when he awoke. In other words one's childhood teachings should accompany him at all times to instruct him constantly as to what to do (compare Prov. 3:23,24; Prov. 2:11). Even when one is older in life, memory and conscience will combine to say to him, "Dad always told me such-and-such;" and, "I can still hear Mother say such-and-such."

TEST QUESTIONS OVER 6:12-22

1. Comment on the person with a perverse mouth (v. 12).
2. What kind of person is v. 13 describing?
3. What kind of heart sows discord (v. 14)?
4. How is such a person's downfall described in v. 15?
5. What does God not love (v. 16)?
6. What all does "lying" include (v. 17)?
7. What other verses of Scripture go along with what is said in v. 18?
8. What commandment would be violated by bearing false witness (v. 19)?
9. What previous verse in Proverbs is v. 20 like?
10. What is the significance of "bind" and "tie" in v. 21?
11. How long will some childhood teachings remain with a person (v. 22)?

TEXT — 6:23-35

23. For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light;
And reproofs of instruction are the way of life:
24. To keep thee from the evil woman,
From the flattery of the foreigner's tongue.
25. Lust not after her beauty in thy heart;
Neither let her take thee with her eyelids.
26. For on account of a harlot a man is brought to a piece of
bread;
And the adulteress hunteth for the precious life.
27. Can a man take fire in his bosom,
And his clothes be not burned?
28. Or can one walk upon hot coals,
And his feet not be scorched?
29. So he that goeth in to his neighbor's wife;
Whosoever toucheth her shall not be unpunished.
30. Men do not despise a thief, if he steal
To satisfy himself when he is hungry:
31. But if he be found, he shall restore sevenfold;
He shall give all the substance of his house.
32. He that committeth adultery with a woman is void of
understanding:
He doeth it who would destroy his own soul.
33. Wounds and dishonor shall he get;
And his reproach shall not be wiped away.
34. For jealousy is the rage of a man;
And he will not spare in the day of vengeance.
35. He will not regard any ransom;
Neither will he rest content, though thou givest many
gifts.

TEST QUESTION OVER 6:23-35

1. What is there about parental teachings that are like a lamp or light (v. 23)?
2. How many times (different sections) in Proverbs does the author warn of wicked women (v. 24)?
3. What is "lust" (v. 25)?
4. What does "precious life" in v. 26 mean?
5. What does v. 27 mean?
6. Does v. 28 teach the same as v. 27?

7. Has society been right in thinking that adultery is a terrible sin (v. 28)?
8. Does v. 30 condone stealing?
9. What did the law of Moses teach about restitution (v. 31)?
10. What reflects such a man's lack of understanding (v. 32)?
11. What about an adulterer's reputation (v. 33)?
12. Who is the angry man of v. 34?
13. Whose gifts will such a man refuse (v. 35)?

PARAPHRASE OF 6:23-35

- 23,24. For their advice is a beam of light directed into the dark corners of your mind to warn you of danger and to give you a good life. Their counsel will keep you far away from prostitutes with all their flatteries.
- 25-31. Don't lust for her beauty. Don't let her coyness seduce you. For a prostitute will bring a man to poverty, and an adulteress may cost him his very life. Can a man hold fire against his chest and not be burned? Can he walk on hot coals and not blister his feet? So it is with the man who commits adultery with another man's wife. He shall not go unpunished for this sin. Excuses might even be found for a thief, if he steals when he is starving! But even so, he is fined seven times as much as he stole, though it may mean selling everything in his house to pay it back.
- 32-35. But the man who commits adultery is an utter fool, for he destroys his own soul. Wounds and constant disgrace are his lot, for the woman's husband will be furious in his jealousy, and he will have no mercy on you in his day of vengeance. You won't be able to buy him off no matter what you offer.

COMMENTS ON 6:23-35

V. 23. The three statements of the verse are progressive: the commandment is a "lamp"; the law is "light"; and reproofs of instruction are the "way of life". The truth is always enlightening and shows the way to go: "The commandment of Jehovah is pure, enlightening the eyes" (Psa. 19:8); "The opening of thy words giveth light" (Psa. 119:130); "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, And light unto my path" (Psa. 119:105); Jesus said, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me

shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12).

V. 24. Oh, the importance of the young man growing up and not being taken in by the "evil woman" and her flattering tongue! Her "flattery" is warned against several times: "To deliver thee from the strange woman, Even from the foreigner that flattereth with her words" (Prov. 2:16); "The lips of a strange woman drop honey, And her mouth is smoother than oil" (Prov. 5:3); "That they may keep thee from the strange woman, From the foreigner that flattereth with her words" (Prov. 7:5).

V. 25. "Lust" in this passage is that burning desire for intimacies with her. It is that which gets into the "heart", and it reminds us of Jas. 1:14,15, which says that "a man is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own lust, and enticed. Then the lust, when it hath conceived, beareth sin." It was "lust" in Amnon's heart for his half-sister Tamar that caused him to do what he did (II Sam. 13:1-14). Because of this Job made a covenant with his "eyes" so that he would not think on a maid (Job 31:1). "Pulpit Commentary" says, "The admonition is a warning to repress the very first inclination to unchaste desires." To harbor such lustful, unchaste thoughts and feelings in one's heart is to be guilty of adultery-in-the-heart before God (Matt. 5:28). To create this lust in men's hearts there are women who both subtly and openly go out of their way to attract the attention of men. The wicked Jezebel "painted her eyes" in an attempt to buy Jehu off from his military designs about her and her family (II Kings 9:30).

V. 26. "From this verse onward to the end of the chapter the discourse consists of a series of arguments...exhibiting the evil consequences of such indulgence" ("Pulpit Commentary"). Many sinful habits have cost men a lot of money over the years (prostitution, gambling, drunkenness, smoking, etc.). Bible passages showing the financial outlay of immoral living: Prov. 29:3; Luke 15:13,30; Gen. 38:13-17. The evil consequences brought to mankind by a money-making harlot are of no concern to her (she "hunteth for the precious life").

V. 27. The answer is "no". Just as getting too close to a fire is inviting destruction by blaze, so getting involved with an immoral woman is a sure way to absolute ruin! This is a sin that no person can get away with. See v. 29 where the word "so" leads to the application of this question's answer.

V. 28. The answer again is "no", and v. 29 applies to this

verse just as it does to v. 27.

V. 29. One can no more commit adultery with his neighbor's wife and get away with it unpunished than one can take fire into his bosom and his clothes not be burned or walk upon hot coals and his feet not be scorched. Who will punish him? (1) her husband: "Jealousy is the rage of a man; and he will not spare in the day of vengeance. He will not regard any ransom; neither will he rest content, though thou givest many gifts" (Prov. 6:34,35); (2) society: "Wounds and dishonor shall he get; And his reproach shall not be wiped away" (Prov. 6:33); and (3) God: "They which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (Ga. 5:19-21).

V. 30. Even though a thief will be punished upon being caught (v. 31), yet men are somewhat understanding if he stole out of extreme hunger.

V. 31. But even then he will still be punished. The law of Moses required a fourfold restitution of stolen sheep and a fivefold restitution for stolen oxen (Exo. 22:1). Zacchaeus spoke of restoring fourfold (Luke 19:8). Possibly in Solomon's day they had increased the penalty to a sevenfold restitution. Actually one might lose everything he had making the restitution ("he shall give all the substance of his house"). V. 35 shows that the injured husband of the woman will not take any form of restitution for a man having taken her.

V. 32. Adultery is "an unwarrantable invasion of his neighbor's rights" ("Pulpit Commentary"). Other passages connect such action with a lack of understanding: Prov. 7:7; Prov. 9:4; Prov. 9:16. "Lust has displaced right reason" ("Pulpit Commentary"). God's displeasure with adultery is seen in His commanding the guilty parties to be put to death under the Old Testament (Lev. 20:10; Deut. 22:22) and in His condemning the same to everlasting destruction today (I Cor. 6:9-10; Rev. 22:15).

V. 33. "Wounds" may be those inflicted by the enraged husband as mentioned in v. 34; they may be referring to the wounds received by being stoned to death according to the law of Moses; or they may be associated with "dishonor" with which it is joined by "and". People will "talk" about such a person, and the guilty may deplore that fact, but it is right here in the Bible that those guilty of adultery get themselves a reproach, and that reproach will not cease. Even after a person is dead or has settled down to a proper behavior, people will still remember

him as "the man who stole So-and-so's wife". God Himself was still talking about David's sin with Bathsheba in Matt. 1:6.

V. 34. The worst feelings of anger are kindled in the man whose wife has been taken by someone else. Because of this there have been vicious fist fights, knife-stabbings, and shootings.

V. 35. Nothing that the guilty man can do to try to make amends or to appease the man whose wife he took will work. We must face the fact that there is something about adultery that is different from any other sin that man can commit, and it's that way whether people like it or not!

TEST QUESTIONS OVER 6:23-35

1. Comment upon v. 23.
2. What does v. 24 warn the young man about?
3. What 2 things does v. 25 warn him about?
4. What does v. 26 warn him about?
5. What is the answer to vs. 27,28?
6. From what 3 sources can a man expect punishment for his adultery (v. 29)?
7. From vs. 30-35 show that society looks upon adultery as worse than stealing.
8. What 2 things does v. 32 affirm about the man who commits adultery?
9. Comment upon the truthfulness of v. 33.
10. Comment upon the truthfulness of vs. 34,35.

PONDERING THE PROVERBS

CHILDREN RECEIVE INSTRUCTION

"Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father, and attend to know understanding. For I give you good doctrine, forsake ye not my law" (4:1,2). A good father gives good doctrine—good teaching. His ways are right, and he is not going to misguide his child. 3:1 says "My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments." Remembering what they are told is just as important in the home as remembering what God has commanded us. People forget what God says and disobey; children forget what parents say and disobey. "I forgot," they say so often. They need to be taught to remember what they are told, and parents whose regulations are regularly kicked around with this "I forgot" business are weak parents, who are in the process of failing already with their children.

How important are parental instructions? Listen to 6:21: "Bind them continually upon thine heart, and tie them about thy neck." Listen again: "Bind them upon thy fingers, write them upon the table of thine heart" (7:3). "Bind" is a strong word. Children should "bind" their parents' teachings upon their hearts, fingers, and all to remind them of what they are to do.

But, there are some children who will not listen. "A fool despiseth his father's instruction: but he that regardeth reproof is prudent" (15:5). Children who will not listen usually shows them to be such. While a wise son maketh "a glad father, a foolish man despiseth his mother" (15:20). 13:1 tells of the way that a wise son will listen to his father's instruction, and that there are sons who scorn every rebuke given. Yes, there will be outside forces, outside influences, that will seek to tear down our children. That is why the Proverb writer said, "Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge" (19:27). What a text! Such sons and daughters come to no good end.