



Proverbs - Chapter Twenty Two

III Proverbs 10:1-22:16 - Wise Sayings of Solomon (continues/concludes)

Summary of Chapter Twenty Two

A good name is better than riches. Train a child and he will not go astray. Incline your ear and apply your heart to my teaching.

Introduction to Proverbs 21:20-22:1 (continued)

This unit is held together by an *inclusio* or literary bookends consisting of three verses at 21:20-22 and three verses at 21:30-22:1. In v.20, wealth is achieved by wisdom and lost by folly, but v.21 speaks of pursuing righteousness and kindness; Proverbs 22:1 teaches that one should choose a good name, emblematic of being a righteous and kind person, over wealth. Thus, Proverbs 22:1 answers 21:20-21; wisdom can enable a person to achieve prosperity, but one should always pursue a good name through righteousness and kindness over riches.

Proverbs 21:22, which speaks of the importance of wisdom in a military action, i.e. besieging a city, is answered by Proverbs 21:30-31, which assert that no wisdom can avail against the Lord and that however carefully one may plan a military action, victory is in the hands of the Lord.

The whole unit teaches that success comes by wisdom, but that no amount of intelligence can stand against the Lord's sovereign will, and that in the end a good and kind heart is better than great wealth and power.

- ¹ A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches,
and favour is better than silver or gold.

Proverbs 22:1

A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches. Wealth comes in many forms. The wealth of respect and recognised excellence in character - a good name - is valuable beyond great riches. God's name reflects his character and therefore he regards his name and reputation to be accorded the highest possible recognition: <<*I am the Lord, that is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to idols*>> (Isaiah 42:8), <<*Therefore I am surely going to teach them, this time I am going to teach them my power and my might, and they shall know that my name is the Lord*>> (Jeremiah 16:21), <<*But I acted for the sake of my name, so that it should not be profaned in the sight of the nations, in whose sight I had brought them out*>> (Ezekiel 20:14), and: <<*For from the rising of the sun to its setting my name is great among the nations, and in every place incense is offered to my name, and a pure offering; for my name is great among the nations, says the Lord of hosts*>> (Malachi 1:11).

Favour is better than silver or gold. The man or woman who appreciates the value of a good name, of favour with God and man, recognises that it is worth more than silver and gold: <<*A good name is better than precious ointment, and the day of death, than the day of birth*>> (Ecclesiastes 7:1), and: <<*Yes, and I ask you also, my loyal companion, help these women, for they have struggled beside me in the work of the gospel, together with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are in the book of life*>> (Philippians 4:3). Derek Kidner commented, "Our Lord carries this teaching a step further in Luke 10:20, to show that at a still higher level, not the power we wield, but the love in which we are held, is our proper joy."

Introduction to Proverbs 22:2-16

This text is bounded by a frame consisting of vv.2-6 at the beginning and vv.15-16 at the end. Verses 2-5 are a tightly bound unit dealing with aspects of wealth, poverty, and the way to ruin, while v.6 asserts that one should train one's children. At the end of this collection, v.15 teaches that parents should discipline their children, and v.16 discusses the rich, the poor, and the road to ruin.

Introduction to Proverbs 22:2-5

These four verses are bound together by a parallel structure:

- A: The Lord is the Maker of rich and poor (v.2).
- B: The prudent are cautious but the simple are not (v.3).
- A': Fear of the Lord leads to riches and honour (v.4).
- B': The crooked wander off into thorns but the wise man guards his soul (v.5).

- ² The rich and the poor have this in common:
the Lord is the maker of them all.

Proverbs 22:2

The rich and the poor have this in common. The differences between rich and poor appear to be large in the present world. Jesus' story of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16:20-31 highlights these differences. Yet rich and poor do have some things in common.

The Lord is the maker of them all. Those who are rich and those who are poor share the same creator. Yahweh has made them all: <<*Did not he who made me in the womb make them? And did not one fashion us in the womb?*>> (Job 31:15), <<*The poor and the oppressor have this in common: the Lord gives light to the eyes of both*>> (Proverbs 29:13), <<*But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous*>> (Matthew 5:44-45). Both rich and poor tend to see each other through stereotypes and should remember this towards each other.

- ³ The clever see danger and hide;
but the simple go on, and suffer for it.

Proverbs 22:3

The clever see danger and hide. Wisdom does not always engage in a fight; it knows there are times when the best response to evil is to hide and let the danger go past: <<*The wise are cautious and turn away from evil, but the fool throws off restraint and is careless*>> (Proverbs 14:16), <<*For you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. When they say, 'There is peace and security', then sudden destruction will come upon them, as labour pains come upon a pregnant woman, and there will be no escape! But you, beloved, are not in darkness, for that day to surprise you like a thief; for you are all children of light and children of the day; we are not of the night or of darkness. So then, let us not fall asleep as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober*>> (1 Thessalonians 5:2-6), and: <<*In the same way, when God desired to show even more clearly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he guaranteed it by an oath, so that through two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible that God would prove false, we who have taken refuge might be strongly encouraged to seize the hope set before us*>> (Hebrews 6:17-18).

Clever is also translated as prudent.

The simple go on, and suffer for it. The foolish and simple man does not have the ability to perceive danger and respond correctly: <<*The clever see danger and hide; but the simple go on, and suffer for it*>> (Proverbs 27:12). The must endure more evil because of this, and it is something of a punishment.

- 4 The reward for humility and fear of the Lord
is riches and honour and life.

Proverbs 22:4

The reward for humility and fear of the Lord is riches and honour and life. Blessing will come to the wise man or woman who has humility and the fear of the Lord. The can certainly expect spiritual riches and honour and life, and often those same things materially in this world. These two qualities are connected. Humility is a proper view of self; fear of the Lord is a proper view of God: <<*The fear of the Lord prolongs life, but the years of the wicked will be short*>> (Proverbs 10:27), <<*The fear of the Lord is instruction in wisdom, and humility goes before honour*>> (Proverbs 15:33), and: <<*Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you*>> (James 4:10). The person who has these two qualities is well on their way on the path the wisdom.

- 5 Thorns and snares are in the way of the perverse;
the cautious will keep far from them.

Proverbs 22:5

Thorns and snares are in the way of the perverse. Proverbs 13:15 states that the way of the unfaithful is hard. Thorns and snares symbolically describe the hard way of the perverse.

The cautious will keep far from them. The wise man or woman, keeping watch over their life will stay far from the way of the perverse and the thorns and snares associated with that way: <<*The way of the lazy is overgrown with thorns, but the path of the upright is a level highway*>> (Proverbs 15:19).

- 6 Train children in the right way,
and when old, they will not stray.

Proverbs 22:6

Train children in the right way. This proverb, founded on the covenant with Abraham: <<*No, for I have chosen him, that he may charge his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice; so that the Lord may bring about for Abraham what he has promised him*>> (Genesis 18:19), encourages parents to 'train' (i.e. to 'dedicate' or

‘initiate’; this is the sense of the word in Deuteronomy 20:5 and Ezra 6:16) their children **in the right way**, i.e. the right moral orientation, by pointing to the kinds of conduct that please or displease the Lord, and to the normal outcome of each kind of conduct. The training will include love and instruction as well as <<**the rod of discipline**>> (v.15).

When old, they will not stray. This is a wonderful principle that the Holy Spirit may quicken to a promise for parents troubled over their adult children. When a child is trained in the proper way, although they may depart for a season (even a long season), in principle they will return and not stray from it.

Introduction to Proverbs 22:7-9

The rich lender who rules the poor borrower (v.7) is in contrast to the bountiful person who shares with the poor (v.9). Between these two, v.8 describes the powerful man who will come to ruin.

⁷ The rich rules over the poor,
and the borrower is the slave of the lender.

Proverbs 22:7

The rich rules over the poor. Verse 2 stated that there was one important respect in which rich and poor were the same; this proverb is a reminder of a way they are very different. Rich people have more authority and voice in the community than the poor do: <<**The poor use entreaties, but the rich answer roughly**>> (Proverbs 18:23).

The bible gives due warning to the wealthy who oppress or neglect the needs of the poor: <<**But you have dishonoured the poor. Is it not the rich who oppress you? Is it not they who drag you into court?**>> (James 2:6), <<**Come now, you rich people, weep and wail for the miseries that are coming to you**>> (James 5:1), and: <<**Listen! The wages of the labourers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out, and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts**>> (James 5:4).

The borrower is the slave of the lender. Those who borrow money are in a lower place than those who lend money. The obvious application of this proverb is that the wise men or woman will do all he or she can to walk in the path of godly prosperity; to be a lender and not a borrower.

⁸ Whoever sows injustice will reap calamity,
and the rod of anger will fail.

Proverbs 22:8

Whoever sows injustice will reap calamity. A person's sins are like seeds that are sown. In time they will bring a harvest and the sinner will reap calamity or sorrow: <<*As I have seen, those who plough iniquity and sow trouble reap the same*>> (Job 4:8), and: <<*Do not be deceived; God is not mocked, for you reap whatever you sow. If you sow to your own flesh, you will reap corruption from the flesh; but if you sow to the Spirit, you will reap eternal life from the Spirit*>> (Galatians 6:7-8). Adam Clarke observed, "The crop must be according to the seed. If a man sow thistle seed, is it likely he shall reap wheat? If he sow to the flesh, shall he not of the flesh reap destruction?"

The rod of anger will fail. This mixing of metaphors from the harvest to the shepherd's rod probably has the idea that in the season when the sinner reaps his harvest from the seeds of iniquity, he will have no defence against it: <<*For they sow the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind. The standing grain has no heads, it shall yield no meal; if it were to yield, foreigners would devour it*>> (Hosea 8:7).

- ⁹ Those who are generous are blessed,
for they share their bread with the poor.

Proverbs 22:9

Those who are generous are blessed. According to this principle God will bless the one who is generous to others: <<*Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and will be repaid in full*>> (Proverbs 19:17), and: <<*For God is not unjust; he will not overlook your work and the love that you showed for his sake in serving the saints, as you still do*>> (Hebrews 6:10). When people are generous to God and his work, God will not allow them to be more generous than he is.

For they share their bread with the poor. One important way to express generosity is to give to the poor and needy. This generosity is simple sharing, for the person gives their food away willingly: <<*In all this I have given you an example that by such work we must support the weak, remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, for he himself said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive"*>> (Acts 20:35), and: <<*We want you to know, brothers and sisters, about the grace of God that has been granted to the churches of Macedonia; for during a severe ordeal of affliction, their abundant joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part*>> (2 Corinthians 8:1-2).

Introduction to Proverbs 22:10-11

The scoffer, who will be driven out, is contrasted with the person of pure heart and gracious speech, who will be welcomed by the king.

- ¹⁰ Drive out a scoffer, and strife goes out;
quarrelling and abuse will cease.

Proverbs 22:10

Drive out a scoffer, and strife goes out. The scoffer who spreads cynical discord causes contention. When that scoffer is driven out, then contention also leaves. This was seen in the contention between Sarah and her servant Hagar: <<***But Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, playing with her son Isaac. So she said to Abraham, ‘Cast out this slave woman with her son; for the son of this slave woman shall not inherit along with my son Isaac’***>> (Genesis 21:9-10). The apostle Paul advised the church in Corinth: <<***God will judge those outside. ‘Drive out the wicked person from among you’***>> (1 Corinthians 5:13).

Quarrelling and abuse will cease. The atmosphere of strife and shameful insults stops when the divisive scoffer is gone: <<***For lack of wood the fire goes out, and where there is no whisperer, quarrelling ceases***>> (Proverbs 26:20). This is a reminder that an atmosphere of contention, strife, and reproach is caused by people rather than situations.

- ¹¹ Those who love a pure heart and are gracious in speech
will have the king as a friend.

Proverbs 22:11

Those who love a pure heart and are gracious in speech will have the king as a friend. Inner purity often shows itself through grace-filled words. These two are marks of godly, wise men and women. This true godliness and wisdom - both on the inside and in spoken words - will make friends in high places. It will certainly contribute to ongoing fellowship with God, for such a person walks in the light as God is in the light: <<***If we say that we have fellowship with him while we are walking in darkness, we lie and do not do what is true; but if we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin***>> (1 John 1:6-7).

- ¹² The eyes of the Lord keep watch over knowledge,
but he overthrows the words of the faithless.

Proverbs 22:12

The eyes of the Lord keep watch over knowledge. God's eyes watch over knowledge in the sense that he is the guarantor that the teachings of wisdom will be vindicated.

He overthrows the words of the faithless. For the faithless fool, they can expect that God would turn over their words. He will not stand with or support their faithless words: <<*As Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these people, of corrupt mind and counterfeit faith, also oppose the truth. But they will not make much progress, because, as in the case of those two men, their folly will become plain to everyone*>> (2 Timothy 3:8-9).

¹³ The lazy person says, 'There is a lion outside!
I shall be killed in the streets!'

Proverbs 22:13

The lazy person says, 'There is a lion outside! I shall be killed in the streets!' This proverb shows how far a lazy person will go to avoid work. However, what will actually devour him is not the imaginary lion of his excuses but the reality of poverty.

Charles Spurgeon spoke on v.13 and Proverbs 26:13: "In both texts the slothful man is represented as having something to say, and I think that there are no people that have so much to say as those that have little to do. Where nothing is done much is talked about." He also commented that "Laziness is a great lion-maker. He who does little dreams much. His imagination could create not only a lion but a whole menagerie of wild beasts; and if some mighty hunter could hunt down all the lions that his imagination has let loose, he would soon distribute herds more of the terrible animals, with wolves and bears and tigers to match."

¹⁴ The mouth of a loose woman is a deep pit;
he with whom the Lord is angry falls into it.

Proverbs 22:14

The mouth of a loose woman is a deep pit. The loose woman is a deep pit – something from which a man cannot escape by himself. She ruins him financially and in many other ways as well, relating to health, strength, relationships, and above all the man's relationship to God: <<*For the lips of a loose woman drip honey, and her speech is smoother than oil; but in the end she is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword. Her feet go down to death; her steps*>>

follow the path to Sheol>> (Proverbs 5:3-5). She is thus a means God uses to punish the wicked.

He with whom the Lord is angry falls into it. God's wise ones are discerning enough to stay clear of this deep pit. However, the fool - he who is abhorred by the Lord - is likely to fall there. Elsewhere, Solomon wrote: <<*I found more bitter than death the woman who is a trap, whose heart is snares and nets, whose hands are fetters; one who pleases God escapes her, but the sinner is taken by her*>> (Ecclesiastes 7:26).

Introduction to Proverbs 22:15-16

These verses form the end of the frame described in the comments on vv.2-16. On the rod of discipline, refer to the comments made on Proverbs 23:13-14.

¹⁵ Folly is bound up in the heart of a boy,
but the rod of discipline drives it far away.

Proverbs 22:15

Folly is bound up in the heart of a boy. Children will learn to do wrong on their own; parents are needed to train them to act rightly. Children are not born as morally neutral beings. There is a moral problem, which is described here as foolishness, bound up in the heart of a child, evidenced by the fact that children will naturally sin without being taught how to do it. This is human nature inherited from the ancient ancestors Adam and Eve.

The rod of discipline drives it far away. Physical discipline is one important way that a child can be morally trained. When wisely and properly applied, physical correction can help drive away a child's inborn foolishness. Failure to apply some form of correction is not a kindness: <<*Those who spare the rod hate their children, but those who love them are diligent to discipline them*>> (Proverbs 13:24), for it is: <<*Blows that wound cleanse away evil; beatings make clean the innermost parts*>> (Proverbs 20:30). Kidner titled v.15 as knocking the nonsense out.

¹⁶ Oppressing the poor in order to enrich oneself,
and giving to the rich, will lead only to loss.

Proverbs 22:16

Oppressing the poor in order to enrich oneself. There are always those who prey upon their unfortunate fellow man and will oppress the poor to increase their own wealth. Yet is the poor who will ultimately prosper, not the rich: <<*'Because the poor are despoiled, because the needy groan, I will now rise up,' says the Lord; 'I will place them in the safety for which they long'*>> (Psalm 12:5), and:

<<Thus says the Lord of hosts: Render true judgements, show kindness and mercy to one another; do not oppress the widow, the orphan, the alien, or the poor; and do not devise evil in your hearts against one another. But they refused to listen, and turned a stubborn shoulder, and stopped their ears in order not to hear. They made their hearts adamant in order not to hear the law and the words that the Lord of hosts had sent by his spirit through the former prophets. Therefore great wrath came from the Lord of hosts. Just as, when I called, they would not hear, so, when they called, I would not hear, says the Lord of hosts, and I scattered them with a whirlwind among all the nations that they had not known. Thus the land they left was desolate, so that no one went to and fro, and a pleasant land was made desolate>> (Zechariah 7:9-14).

Giving to the rich, will lead only to loss. The one who gives to the rich is like the one who oppresses the poor - he has no compassion for those in need. To such, the principle applies: he will surely come to poverty. God's blessing will not be on the life and wealth of such a man lacking in compassion.

IV Proverbs 22:17-24:22 - Sayings of the Wise

This section easily divides into thirty discrete teachings, as indicated in Proverbs 22:20, and these reflect an awareness of the Egyptian wisdom text, The Instruction of Amenemope, dated to about 1250 BC. Clearly this section did not slavishly copy Amenemope, but there are many affinities in content. The most significant difference between the two is the devotion to the Lord exhibited in Proverbs. The identity of 'the wise' in Proverbs 22:17 is unknown; perhaps they are the scholars who assembled these proverbs, possibly under Solomon's sponsorship.

- 17 The words of the wise:
Incline your ear and hear my words,
and apply your mind to my teaching;
- 18 for it will be pleasant if you keep them within you,
if all of them are ready on your lips.
- 19 So that your trust may be in the Lord,
I have made them known to you today – yes, to you.
- 20 Have I not written for you thirty sayings
of admonition and knowledge,
- 21 to show you what is right and true,
so that you may give a true answer to those who sent you?

Proverbs 22:17-21 - Saying One

Like the prologue in Proverbs 1:1-7, this text asserts that it can impart wisdom to the reader, give him practical skills for dealing with people, and encourage the fear of the Lord.

Incline your ear and hear my words, literally ‘Incline your ear, and hear the words of the wise’ in Hebrew, is another invitation to receive words of wisdom. Unless one’s heart and mind are ready to receive wisdom, it does little good to present it. There should be a conscious readying of mind and heart to receive.

It will be pleasant if you keep them within you. The value of gaining and keeping wisdom is pleasant. Sometimes one may feel the way of wisdom is a difficult path to walk, but it is much more pleasant than the way of the fool.

So that your trust may be in the Lord. True wisdom makes people more dependent on God, not less. Christians grow in their trust in the Lord, realising that the pursuit of wisdom begins and continues with a proper view of God.

To show you what is right and true. The pursuit of wisdom makes Christians more confident in the truth, not less: <<*The Teacher sought to find pleasing words, and he wrote words of truth plainly*>> (Ecclesiastes 12:10), and: <<*Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth*>> (John 17:17). Certainly wisdom discovers that some things are more complicated and doubtful, but in general it sees God and his truth with more clarity and certainty.

So that you may give a true answer to those who sent you? This brings to mind the response of the men sent to speak with John the Baptist: <<*This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, ‘Who are you?’ He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, ‘I am not the Messiah.’ And they asked him, ‘What then? Are you Elijah?’ He said, ‘I am not.’ ‘Are you the prophet?’ He answered, ‘No.’ Then they said to him, ‘Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?’ He said, ‘I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, “Make straight the way of the Lord”’, as the prophet Isaiah said. Now they had been sent from the Pharisees*>> (John 1:19-27).

- ²² Do not rob the poor because they are poor,
or crush the afflicted at the gate;
- ²³ for the Lord pleads their cause
and despoils of life those who despoil them.

Proverbs 22:22-23 - Saying Two

Do not rob the poor because they are poor. One should never rob the poor, because they are poor and therefore have little power to defend themselves. The poor deserve more protection and compassion. Even if one is poor because of their moral failings or foolish behaviour, they still should not be taken advantage of and robbed: <<*You shall not cheat one another, but you shall fear your God; for I am the Lord your God*>> (Leviticus 25:17), and: <<*So the poor have hope, and injustice shuts its mouth*>> (Job 5:16).

Or crush the afflicted at the gate. The gate was the place of legal transactions; i.e. one should not use the courts to deprive the poor of their property. Teachings that reflect concern for the wellbeing of the poor are common in the ancient Near East, but biblical wisdom is distinctive for its assertion that the Lord is the champion of the poor. The Lord cares particularly for the poor among his people, and will punish those who hurt them.

For the Lord pleads their cause. Even if the rich rob the poor, they still have a defender. God himself will plead their cause, and will plunder the soul of those who plunder the poor: <<*I know that the Lord maintains the cause of the needy, and executes justice for the poor*>> (Psalm 140:12). Understanding God's concern for and protection of the poor, wisdom leads believers to treat them honourably. The poor cannot defend themselves with great resources and influence. The rich man's treatment of the poor says a lot about the rich man's character. It shows how he treats those whom culture and the community may say are 'beneath' him. This reveals one's heart in many ways.

- ²⁴ Make no friends with those given to anger,
and do not associate with hotheads,
²⁵ or you may learn their ways
and entangle yourself in a snare.

Proverbs 22:24-25 - Saying Three

Make no friends with those given to anger. A person who often cannot control their anger displays a bad character and can be a dangerous companion: <<*Do not be deceived: 'Bad company ruins good morals'*>> (1 Corinthians 15:33). Wisdom chooses friends carefully, and should make no friendship with an angry person.

Or you may learn their ways. This is one of the important reasons why it is foolish to make a friendship with an angry man. His habits are a bad influence; the person befriending such a man will become more of an angry person and will set a snare for their own soul. People are influenced by the habits of their friends, so friends

should be chosen carefully. A bad attitude toward life and people is contagious and deadly; therefore the wise will choose their friends carefully.

Adam Clarke commented, “From those with whom we associate we acquire habits, and learn their ways, imbibe their spirit, show their tempers and walk in their steps. We cannot be too choice of our company, for we may soon learn ways that will be a snare to our soul.”

²⁶ Do not be one of those who give pledges,
who become surety for debts.

²⁷ If you have nothing with which to pay,
why should your bed be taken from under you?

Proverbs 22:26-27 - Saying Four

Do not be one of those who give pledges. As mentioned in other proverbs, it is a dangerous thing to become responsible for the debts of other people. Personal debt is to be avoided (v.7), so how much more becoming surety for debts of another person.

Why should your bed be taken from under you? Under the laws and customs regarding the failure to pay debts in the world of the Bible, property could be easily seized and even people being forced to become servants for the repayment of debts. Do not take on the debts of other people. The action under discussion here was actually forbidden in Mosaic Law in Deuteronomy 24:10-13, which specifies that a poor man’s cloak, the bed on which he slept, was not to be held in pledge overnight.

²⁸ Do not remove the ancient landmark
that your ancestors set up.

Proverbs 22:28 - Saying Five

Do not remove the ancient landmark. From the days when Joshua divided the Promised Land for the people of Israel, there were landmarks showing the boundaries of property. It was a great crime and scandal to remove these landmarks. The landmark was the boundary stone and to move it was to steal a man’s real property as well as his ancestral heritage: <<***You must not move your neighbour’s boundary marker, set up by former generations, on the property that will be allotted to you in the land that the Lord your God is giving you to possess***>> (Deuteronomy 19:14), and: <<***‘Cursed be anyone who moves a neighbour’s boundary marker.’ All the people shall say, ‘Amen!’***>> (Deuteronomy 27:17).

That your ancestors set up. This proverb is also understood in a spiritual sense. A landmark - a custom, a tradition, or a value - should not be removed lightly. People should never assume that their ancestors set such landmarks for no reason or bad reason. They should not defend tradition for the sake of tradition, but neither should they destroy tradition just for the sake of destroying it.

²⁹ Do you see those who are skilful in their work?

They will serve kings;

they will not serve common people.

Proverbs 22:29 - Saying Six

Do you see those who are skilful in their work? People of great skill, whatever their craft may be, win the respect even of kings. The implied exhortation is that one should never be careless about the quality of one's work. Wisdom pushes people toward excellence. God has given every man and woman work to do, and they should do that work with excellence as unto God and not only to other people. Kidner added, "Anyone who puts his workmanship before his prospects towers above the thrusters and climbers of the adjacent paragraphs."

They will serve kings. The excellence of a man or woman's work can give them great standing in the world. More importantly, it gives them standing before the King of kings, who promises to reward the one who works diligently unto him: <<*Whatever your task, put yourselves into it, as done for the Lord and not for your masters, since you know that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward; you serve the Lord Christ*>> (Colossians 3:23-24).