



## Proverbs - Chapter Thirty

### Summary of Chapter Thirty

Every word of God is pure. Give me neither poverty nor riches. Four things are never satisfied: Sheol, a barren womb, earth and fire.

### VII Proverbs 30:1-33 - Sayings of Agur

The identity of Agur, son of Jakeh, is unknown and the name occurs nowhere else in the Bible. One traditional Jewish interpretation argued that Agur is a nickname for Solomon, although the argument is based on fanciful interpretations of the names Agur and Jakeh. Some suggest he was a court counsellor to Solomon, which is possible, but evidence for this is lacking. Another interpretation claims that the word translated as oracle, Hebrew *massa*, actually should be rendered as the proper name Massa, giving for v.1, Agur son of Jakeh, the man of Massa. If so, then it might refer to a tribe in northwest Arabia since the name appears in some Akkadian sources, and Agur could have been a Gentile. One motivation for this interpretation is the view that an oracle is unsuited to Proverbs, since it is common in the Prophets; but the word declares, translated in the NRSVA as 'thus says' (v.1), is also common in the Prophets; refer to the comment made on Proverbs 29:15-18.

<sup>1</sup> The words of Agur son of Jakeh. An oracle.

Thus says the man: I am weary, O God,  
I am weary, O God. How can I prevail?

### Proverbs 30:1

The words of Agur son of Jakeh. Against those who argue that Agur was another name for Solomon Adam Clarke commented, "From this introduction, from the names here used, and from the style of the book, it appears evident that Solomon was not the author of this chapter; and that it was designed to be distinguished

from his work by this very preface, which specifically distinguishes it from the preceding work I believe Agur, Jakeh, Ithiel, and Ucal, to be the names of persons who did exist, but of whom we know nothing but what is here mentioned. Agur seems to have been a public teacher, and Ithiel and Ucal to have been his scholars.” Solomon was not the only man of wisdom in his day or afterwards. For example, other men of wisdom beside Solomon are described in 1 Kings 4:30-31.

**An oracle.** This has the sense of a prophetic word, inspired by God. Like Solomon earlier in the book: <<*For the Lord gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding*>> (Proverbs 2:6), Agur understood that his words here came from God. The wisdom of Agur in Chapter 30 is filled with observations on life and the natural world. Agur is one “inviting us to look again at our world with the eye of a man of faith who is an artist and an observer of character. Confirm the words of the Psalmist: ‘I muse on the work of thy hands’ (Psalm 143:5 AV)” according to Derek Kidner

**I am weary, O God, I am weary, O God. How can I prevail?** The translation here is achieved by means of a widely accepted pair of minor emendations to a difficult Hebrew text, slightly revising the division of two words and adjusting two vowels (on the assumption that a small copyist’s error led to the current Hebrew text). The ESV footnote renders the Masoretic text, which would suggest that Agur is addressing his words to Ithiel and Ucal (his sons?). However, there is no other historic record to identify these two men.

- <sup>2</sup> Surely I am too stupid to be human;  
I do not have human understanding.
- <sup>3</sup> I have not learned wisdom,  
nor have I knowledge of the holy ones.

### **Proverbs 30:2-3**

**Surely I am too stupid to be human.** Wisdom texts often begin with a kind of advertisement in which the teacher proclaims that he is wise and therefore that his words ought to be heeded. Here, Agur does just the opposite: he confesses that he is not learned in wisdom (vv.2-3). Agur then asks a series of rhetorical questions meant to indicate the limitations on human perception and achievement (v.4). Like the questions of God in Job Chapters 38-39, these questions point to things that only God can do; silent reverence is the only proper human response.

**Charles Spurgeon commented, “Philosophy had failed him, and revelation was his sole confidence.”**

**Nor have I knowledge of the holy ones.** Agur was also careful not to boast of his spiritual knowledge. He brings his lesson to his reader with great humility, not

from a position of superiority. Many translations have translated this final part as ‘the Holy One’ referring to the Lord, whereas ‘the holy ones’ is more likely a reference to angelic beings, as in: <<*It was also about these that Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied, saying, ‘See, the Lord is coming with tens of thousands of his holy ones, to execute judgement on all, and to convict everyone of all the deeds of ungodliness that they have committed in such an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things that ungodly sinners have spoken against him’*>> (Jude 14-15).

- 4 Who has ascended to heaven and come down?  
Who has gathered the wind in the hollow of the hand?  
Who has wrapped up the waters in a garment?  
Who has established all the ends of the earth?  
What is the person’s name?  
And what is the name of the person’s child?  
Surely you know!

#### Proverbs 30:4

Who has ascended to heaven and come down? In a section that sounds much like Job Chapters 38-39, Agur called men and women to understand their limitations in understanding God and his creation. The wise and humble answer to each of these questions is God, and not man.

The rhetorical question, ‘What is the person’s name?’ and ‘what is the name of the person’s child?’ is remarkable since the obvious answer is that God is the only one who moves between heaven and earth and who controls the wind and the waters. After challenging his readers regarding the natural world, Agur finished with a challenge regarding man’s limitations in spiritual knowledge. One can only know what is his name (God’s nature, character) and his Son’s name by God’s own revelation. In all these things, humankind humbly depends on God’s revelation for all knowledge.

What, then, does the text mean by asking about his son? The Christian reader naturally thinks of the Son of God, but the purpose of the words here is simply to say that no mere human being (whether father or son) has done these things, and that God is ‘the Holy One’ (v.3) whose ways are high and exalted, infinitely greater than human understanding (v.2). Agur knew there was something special about the Son of God. It cannot be known to what extent he prophetically anticipated the Messiah, God the Son, Jesus Christ - but Agur seemed to know that God had a Son, and the Son had a name.

There are those who draw a natural link with this passage and the words of Jesus: <<*No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man*>> (John 3:13). Yet, as explained above, this may only be a passage differentiating between God and humankind, or it may have been written under the guidance of the Holy Spirit in reference to the coming Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth.

- <sup>5</sup> Every word of God proves true;  
he is a shield to those who take refuge in him.
- <sup>6</sup> Do not add to his words,  
or else he will rebuke you, and you will be found a liar.

### Proverbs 30:5-6

Every word of God proves true, a truth clearly understood by David: <<*This God – his way is perfect; the promise of the Lord proves true; he is a shield for all who take refuge in him*>> (2 Samuel 22:31) and (Psalm 18:30). Proves true can also mean ‘refined’ (Psalm 12:6) or ‘well tried’ (Psalm 119:140); the implication is that God’s words are a proven foundation for one’s life. The proverb’s emphasis on every ‘word’ (Hebrew *’imrah*) underscores the truthfulness, trustworthiness, and reliability of the Bible, not just in its overall message but also of every detail. This verse supplies support for the doctrine of the plenary, i.e. the full and complete inspiration of Scripture, extending even to every word: <<*All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work*>> (2 Timothy 3:16-17). Thus v.6 warns against adding to God’s words. The whole of vv.2-6 thus teaches that human wisdom is limited, that the wisest people recognise their ignorance, that truth resides in the word of God, and that no one should think they are able to enhance the wisdom that God has given.

Clarke commented, “A metaphor taken from the purifying of metals. Every thing that God has pronounced, every inspiration which the prophets have received, is pure, without mixture of error, without dross. Whatever trials it may be exposed to, it is always like gold: it bears the fire, and comes out with the same lustre, the same purity, and the same weight.”

He is a shield to those who take refuge in him. In the context of writing about God’s word, Agur explained that God is a shield. The sense is that God gives his pure word to protect his people, if they will use the wisdom and encouragement of his word to put their trust in him. Additionally, a shield is something in which people trust, and if people wisely trust God and his revelation of himself in his word, he will protect them. It is not enough to know every word of God is pure if a person does not take the next step and trust him as their shield: <<*The Lord is my*

*strength and my shield; in him my heart trusts; so I am helped, and my heart exults, and with my song I give thanks to him>> (Psalm 28:7), and: <<O Israel, trust in the Lord! He is their help and their shield. O house of Aaron, trust in the Lord! He is their help and their shield. You who fear the Lord, trust in the Lord! He is their help and their shield>> (Psalm 115:9-11). Kidner observed, “Notice (5b) that the aim of revelation is to promote trust, not bare knowledge, and trust that goes behind the words to the Speaker.”*

Do not add to his words. God’s word needs no addition or improvement from anyone. No one needs to take away from his words or add to his words, something specifically stated in the final NT book but which some hold to be true of the entire Bible: *<<I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to that person the plagues described in this book; if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away that person’s share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book>> (Revelation 22:18-19).* Anyone who does may become targets of God’s rebuke and will be exposed as liars. If someone says something different than God’s word, then he is right and they are wrong. He tells the truth and those who contradict him or disbelieve his word will be found a liar.

7 Two things I ask of you;  
do not deny them to me before I die:  
8 Remove far from me falsehood and lying;  
give me neither poverty nor riches;  
feed me with the food that I need,  
9 or I shall be full, and deny you,  
and say, ‘Who is the Lord?’  
or I shall be poor, and steal,  
and profane the name of my God.

### Proverbs 30:7-9

This is the only prayer in Proverbs. Agur asks for two things. It seems most likely that the first request is remove far from me falsehood and lying and that the second is give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the food that I need, the petition for ‘daily bread’ in Matthew 6:11. The first request probably implies both that he does not want to become a liar and that he does not want to have people lie to him and deceive him. The second request reflects the caution that Proverbs instils in the wise about trusting in material wealth.

Agur wanted neither poverty nor riches out of concern that either extreme might lead him to profane the name of God. He did not want to arrogantly deny God because he felt he was so rich he did not need God. He did not want to be so poor that he would use poverty as an excuse to sin, i.e. or I shall be poor, and steal. Either path would profane the name of God.

- <sup>10</sup> Do not slander a servant to a master,  
or the servant will curse you, and you will be held guilty.

### Proverbs 30:10

This proverb warns against someone speaking lies through slander, specifically against a servant to the servant's master, which could damage the servant's position and livelihood. However, in such a case the slanderer is warned against committing such an injustice because the servant is likely to utter a curse against the slanderer; that is, he would express a wish that judgement would fall on the slanderer. The fact that the slanderer would then be found guilty indicates that God hears and judges rightly.

Kidner noted, "If the servant is innocent, his curse will count (Proverbs 26:2), for there is a Judge." And Clarke commented, "Do not bring a false accusation against a servant, lest thou be found guilty of the falsehood, and he curse thee for having traduced his character, and in his turn traduce thine. In general, do not meddle with other people's servants."

- <sup>11</sup> There are those who curse their fathers  
and do not bless their mothers.
- <sup>12</sup> There are those who are pure in their own eyes  
yet are not cleansed of their filthiness.
- <sup>13</sup> There are those – how lofty are their eyes,  
how high their eyelids lift! –
- <sup>14</sup> there are those whose teeth are swords,  
whose teeth are knives,  
to devour the poor from off the earth,  
the needy from among mortals.

### Proverbs 30:11-14

Here are four types of loathsome people: those who show no respect to parents:  
<<*If you curse father or mother, your lamp will go out in utter darkness*>>

(Proverbs 20:20), those who are atrociously immoral but who refuse to admit it, those who are arrogant (v.13), and those who plunder or devour the poor (v.14). All four proverbs begin with the same Hebrew word *dor*, which is usually as translated generation, but here it is there are those.

There are those who curse their fathers. The generation that disobeys God's command to honour father and mother as required by Scripture: <<*Honour your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you*>> (Exodus 20:12), and: <<'Honour your father and mother' – *this is the first commandment with a promise*>> (Ephesians 6:2), puts its folly on full display. That generation sows seeds of conflict that will grow into a bitter harvest of personal and community strife.

There are those who are pure in their own eyes. The generation that is blind to their own sinful need will never be cleansed of their filthiness. When people ignore or cover their sin, it never gets resolved.

There are those – how lofty are their eyes, how high their eyelids lift! The generation that walks in pride and arrogance will experience God's resistance, because God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble, as stated in both James 4:6 and 1 Peter 5:5.

There are those whose teeth are swords. The generation filled with greed devours everything as if their teeth were swords and like knives. They devour the poor from off the earth and, like the leech, can never be satisfied, i.e. give and give (v.15).

<sup>15</sup> The leech has two daughters;  
'Give, give,' they cry.  
Three things are never satisfied;  
four never say, 'Enough':

<sup>16</sup> Sheol, the barren womb,  
the earth ever thirsty for water,  
and the fire that never says, 'Enough.'

### Proverbs 30:15-16

This text contains two sayings involving numbers. Both concern insatiable things, and together they give the number sequence 2, 3, 4. The first (v.15a) indicates that the leech has two daughters named give. The saying probably alludes to the two suckers on a leech's body, and it may have been a common byword used to describe a selfish or demanding person. A frustrated mother may have said this

when her children were clamouring for something. It is easy to see in what sense the four things of vv.15b-16 are insatiable, but it is harder to guess at the point of the list. It may be that this was simply a byword used of any situation or task that has no end, and that it is here simply to say that life is full of such situations and tasks; in that case, Ecclesiastes 1:3-7 is comparable: <<*What do people gain from all the toil at which they toil under the sun? A generation goes, and a generation comes, but the earth remains for ever. The sun rises and the sun goes down, and hurries to the place where it rises. The wind blows to the south, and goes round to the north; round and round goes the wind, and on its circuits the wind returns. All streams run to the sea, but the sea is not full; to the place where the streams flow, there they continue to flow*>>.

<sup>17</sup> The eye that mocks a father  
and scorns to obey a mother  
will be pecked out by the ravens of the valley  
and eaten by the vultures.

#### Proverbs 30:17

This verse is actually a curse rather than a simple proverb. Agur obviously regards respect for parents as supremely important (v.11).

The eye that mocks a father. This eye belongs to the fool, the one who mocks and disobeys their father and mother. Two good examples of this are, Esau (Genesis 28:6-9) and Samson (Judges 14:1-3) who both deliberately married foreign women against the wishes of his parents. This upsets the social order and sets the generations in conflict. However, it should be noted that it was the Lord's will that Samson married a Philistine woman although no one knew this.

Scorns to obey a mother will be pecked out by the ravens of the valley. Agur used a vivid poetic description to tell of the ruin waiting for the child who mocks and scorns their parents. The poetic image is doubled, sending multiple ravens and vultures, literally young eagles, to do the terrible but fitting work. This fool was blind in his mocking and disobedience; this poetic image tells of a fit penalty for someone so morally and spiritually blind.

On the vultures or young eagles Clarke noted, "The mother eagle shall scoop out such an eye, and carry it to the nest to feed her young. Many of the disobedient to parents have come to an untimely end, and, in the field of battle, where many a profligate has fallen, and upon gibbets, have actually become the prey of ravenous birds." This will also be the fate of those who oppose Christ at the Second Advent: <<*And the rest were killed by the sword of the rider on the horse, the sword that came from his mouth; and all the birds were gorged with their flesh*>> (Revelation 19:21).

18 Three things are too wonderful for me;  
four I do not understand:  
19 the way of an eagle in the sky,  
the way of a snake on a rock,  
the way of a ship on the high seas,  
and the way of a man with a girl.  
20 This is the way of an adulteress:  
she eats, and wipes her mouth,  
and says, 'I have done no wrong.'

### Proverbs 30:18-20

Three things are too wonderful for me; four I do not understand. Agur gave no advice in the proverb, but reminded his readers that there are things that are too wonderful for their complete understanding, things people should simply be amazed at and a bit humbled in the presence of: <<*But, as it is written, 'What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him'*>> (1 Corinthians 2:9). Agur gave his list of four amazing things. The numerical saying of vv.18-19 is a riddle. What do these four things have in common, and why is the teacher amazed by them? Verse 20 is a clue to the meaning of the riddle; it is linked to v.19 by the catchword way, Hebrew *derek*.

It is not entirely clear what these four things have in common. There are many suggestions, and they can collectively be true:

- All four things are visible for a while, then hidden.
- All four things progress without leaving a trace.
- All four things have a mysterious means of progress or motivation.
- All four things move in the domain of something else.

Kidner observed, "It would be better sought in that of the easy mastery, by the appropriate agent, of elements as difficult to negotiate as air, rock, sea – and young woman."

The way of an eagle in the sky. The flight of a majestic eagle amazes onlookers with its power, height, and grace.

The way of a snake on a rock. The snake suns itself on the rock, yet is ready to flee at the slightest disturbance - and can slither itself over hard and sharp rock without injury!

The way of a ship on the high seas. A ship is so small in the midst of the sea, yet it virtually conquers the sea by using it as a road for travel and trade.

The eagle, the snake, and the ship leave no lasting trail behind them for the snake is on a large rock and not on sand, and the ship is a slow-moving sailboat whose wake is soon lost in the waves.

The relationship of a man and a girl, literally a virgin, if it is chaste, likewise leaves no lasting observable change in either of them, although they marry and make a productive life together. An alternative interpretation of what the items in v.19 have in common is that they all make apparently effortless, almost instinctive, progress towards a goal. These things happen, but the speaker finds them amazing and does not understand quite how they happen.

The adulteress eats, and wipes her mouth, and says, 'I have done no wrong.'

Taking the words literally, what she says is true; eating is no sin. However, eating here is symbolic of her life of adultery – wiping the mouth after eating suggests cleansing herself after illicit sex. She is of the opinion that after she has washed up, nothing remains of the sexual encounter and there are no moral ramifications to her behaviour. Like Solomon, Agur presented his wisdom in proverbs to his son or a young man. Surely this proverb also applies to the adulterous man, but because of his audience he has first in view the way of the adulterous woman.

Kidner commented, “The fifth, and unnatural, marvel (v.20) is that of a person utterly at ease and in her element in sin; an act of adultery is as unremarkable to her as a meal.”

- <sup>21</sup> Under three things the earth trembles;  
under four it cannot bear up:
- <sup>22</sup> a slave when he becomes king,  
and a fool when gluttoned with food;
- <sup>23</sup> an unloved woman when she gets a husband,  
and a maid when she succeeds her mistress.

### Proverbs 30:21-23

The four persons described here are insufferable because they have been granted things they have no capacity to enjoy or handle wisely. A modern example would be a person who is promoted above their level of competence.

Under three things the earth trembles. Using the three-and-four phrasing once again (previously in v.15 and v.18), Agur spoke of four things that trouble the

earth, that are fundamentally not right. Agur gave his list of four unbearable things.

**A slave when he becomes king.** Agur did not mean a man with a servant's heart like Jesus would later perfectly display. He meant a man with a servile, debased mind, who thought and lived as a slave instead of as a free man. It is unbearable when such a man reigns: *<<It is not fitting for a fool to live in luxury, much less for a slave to rule over princes>>* (Proverbs 19:10).

**A fool when gluttoned with food.** When a fool is satisfied, it only rewards his folly and gives him the energy and the resources to be even more foolish. This, Agur reveals, is unbearable.

**An unloved woman when she gets a husband.** This is unbearable because the unloved, literally hateful, woman should never be able to find a husband, and there seems to be a fundamental injustice when she does. It is also unbearable for her husband and her family, to live with a hateful woman, she would certainly remain unloved. Kidner noted, "The implication may be that she is naturally unpleasant (AV, RV), or that she is merely old-maidish, and her success has gone to her head."

**A maid when she succeeds her mistress.** This case is similar to the previously described servant when he reigns. When the social order is upset and unworthy ones dominate the culture, it becomes unbearable.

24 Four things on earth are small,  
yet they are exceedingly wise:  
25 the ants are a people without strength,  
yet they provide their food in the summer;  
26 the badgers are a people without power,  
yet they make their homes in the rocks;  
27 the locusts have no king,  
yet all of them march in rank;  
28 the lizard can be grasped in the hand,  
yet it is found in kings' palaces.

#### **Proverbs 30:24-28**

**Four things on earth are small, yet they are exceedingly wise.** Agur looked to the world of animals and noted four small animals, yet they are exceedingly wise. No human trained them in their wisdom; they are truly taught by God - and so

humankind may also be. Size does not determine wisdom. There are big fools and those who are small and not just wise, but exceedingly so. Agur listed these four examples which each teach a principle of wisdom.

**The ants are a people without strength.** Ants are small and do not have much strength compared to a person or a large animal, although for their size they can move relatively large objects. Their wisdom is shown in that they prepare or **provide their food in the summer.** They work extremely hard and diligently in the time when work can be done, and are not lazy or procrastinators: <<***Go to the ant, you lazybones; consider its ways, and be wise. Without having any chief or officer or ruler, it prepares its food in summer, and gathers its sustenance in harvest***>> (Proverbs 6:6-8). Hard work can overcome individual weakness especially as part of a team.

**The badgers are a people without power.** The hyrax or rock badgers, also known as marmots or coneys, do not have the speed or strength to stand against a large predator, especially one with sharp teeth. Therefore they wisely **make their homes in the rocks,** and make the strength of the rock their own strength: <<***The high mountains are for the wild goats; the rocks are a refuge for the coneys***>> (Psalm 104:18). They find refuge among the strong.

**The locusts have no king.** The locusts do not seem to have any kind of appointed leadership or structure. Yet they have the wisdom to **march in ranks,** overwhelming anything that is in their way. If the locusts fought against themselves, they would get nowhere. They fight against the vegetation that they consume. Once again, teamwork can win the day.

**The lizard can be grasped in the hand** is often translated as '**The spider skilfully grasps with its hands.**' If this is the correct translation then the spider is not a creature that is loved by many, but it wisely uses its skill and unique abilities to go anywhere it wants to, even into king's palaces. The use of God-given gifts and unique skills can take a person anywhere.

These creatures are weak and **small** but give important lessons. The lesson of **the ants** is in making provision for the future; the lesson of the rock **badgers** (the hyrax, an unclean herbivore listed in Leviticus 11:5, that lives in crevices in the cliffs or **rocks**) is in taking care to have a place of refuge; the lesson of **the locusts** is cooperation; and the lesson of **the lizard** (an unknown species, perhaps a kind of gecko) is that even the humblest creature can attain to the highest circles of society.

<sup>29</sup> Three things are stately in their stride;

four are stately in their gait:

<sup>30</sup> the lion, which is mightiest among wild animals

and does not turn back before any;  
31 the strutting rooster, the he-goat,  
and a king striding before his people.

### Proverbs 30:29-31

Three things are stately in their stride. The king is the main point here; the animals serve as comparisons. The lesson is that a king's majesty is not in himself (in contrast to the animals) but in his subjects: <<*A large population is a king's glory, but without subjects a prince is ruined*>> (Proverbs 14:28).

The lion, which is mightiest among wild animals. The first example is given a brief explanation. A lion has respect from all other animals, moves swiftly, and never retreats, i.e. does not turn back before any. Courage displays majesty.

The strutting rooster is the best guess on the meaning of the obscure Hebrew. Some translations have this as a greyhound, which led Clarke to observe, "It is most likely that this was the greyhound, which in the East are remarkably fine, and very fleet. Scarcely any thing can be conceived to go with greater fleetness, in full chase, than a greyhound with its prey in view: it seems to swim over the earth."

On the he goat Clarke commented, "How he walks, and what state he assumes, in the presence of his part of the flock, every one knows, who has at all noticed this animal."

32 If you have been foolish, exalting yourself,  
or if you have been devising evil,  
put your hand on your mouth.

33 For as pressing milk produces curds,  
and pressing the nose produces blood,  
so pressing anger produces strife.

### Proverbs 30:32-33

If you have been foolish, exalting yourself. Agur personally expressed his own humility in the beginning of this chapter in vv.1-4. Here he advises his readers to not be foolish in exalting themselves. Instead, follow what James wisely teaches Christians to do: <<*Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you*>> (James 4:10). If a person starts to exalt them self they should put your hand on your mouth: <<*the nobles refrained from talking, and laid their hands on their mouths*>> (Job 29:9).

**If you have been devising evil.** If a person uses the power and resources of their mind to devise evil, they should stop. It is better to **put your hand on your mouth** and not say another word. Those given to obnoxious and conniving behaviour would do well to become quiet and still, or they will soon be embroiled in conflict.

**So pressing anger produces strife.** This is the result of self-exaltation and the plotting of evil. As surely as **pressing milk produces curds** and as surely as **pressing the nose produces blood**, so the expressions of wrath will make for conflict and strife. The wise man or woman knows a better way.