



# Agur's Epistemology

—Life Hacks II, Week 1—

*Proverbs 30:1-6 (NIV)*

I. One Thing \_\_\_\_\_: that I \_\_\_\_\_

*(The failure of Modernism's naïve realism)*

<sup>1</sup> The sayings of Agur son of Jakeh—an inspired utterance.

This man's utterance to Ithiel:

"I am weary, God,  
but I can prevail.

<sup>2</sup> Surely I am only a brute, not a man;

I do not have human understanding.

<sup>3</sup> I have not learned wisdom,

nor have I attained to the knowledge of the Holy One.

II. Is There \_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_?

*(The despair of Postmodernism's radical non-realism)*

<sup>4</sup> Who has gone up to heaven and come down?

Whose hands have gathered up the wind?

Who has wrapped up the waters in a cloak?

Who has established all the ends of the earth?

What is his name, and what is the name of his son?

Surely you know!

III. Yes, \_\_\_\_\_—but \_\_\_\_\_ Still Get \_\_\_\_\_

*(The humble confidence of a Christian critical realism)*

<sup>5</sup> "Every word of God is flawless;

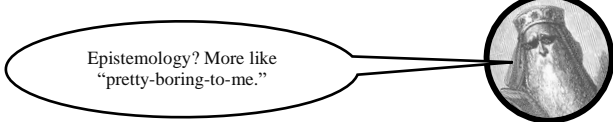
he is a shield to those who take refuge in him.

<sup>6</sup> Do not add to his words,

or he will rebuke you and prove you a liar.

## The Bottom Line

\_\_\_\_\_ God's \_\_\_\_\_ with \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_, because \_\_\_\_\_ has \_\_\_\_\_;  
\_\_\_\_\_, because it's easy for us to \_\_\_\_\_.



# Agur's Epistemology

—Life Hacks II, Week 1—

*Proverbs 30:1-6 (NIV)*

I. One Thing \_\_\_\_\_: that I \_\_\_\_\_

*(The failure of Modernism's naïve realism)*

<sup>1</sup> The sayings of Agur son of Jakeh—an inspired utterance.

This man's utterance to Ithiel:

"I am weary, God,  
but I can prevail.

<sup>2</sup> Surely I am only a brute, not a man;

I do not have human understanding.

<sup>3</sup> I have not learned wisdom,

nor have I attained to the knowledge of the Holy One.

II. Is There \_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_?

*(The despair of Postmodernism's radical non-realism)*

<sup>4</sup> Who has gone up to heaven and come down?

Whose hands have gathered up the wind?

Who has wrapped up the waters in a cloak?

Who has established all the ends of the earth?

What is his name, and what is the name of his son?

Surely you know!

III. Yes, \_\_\_\_\_—but \_\_\_\_\_ Still Get \_\_\_\_\_

*(The humble confidence of a Christian critical realism)*

<sup>5</sup> "Every word of God is flawless;

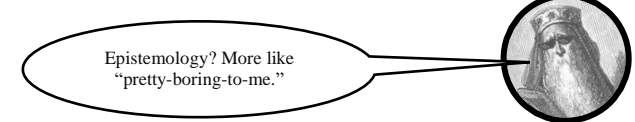
he is a shield to those who take refuge in him.

<sup>6</sup> Do not add to his words,

or he will rebuke you and prove you a liar.

## The Bottom Line

\_\_\_\_\_ God's \_\_\_\_\_ with \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_, because \_\_\_\_\_ has \_\_\_\_\_;  
\_\_\_\_\_, because it's easy for us to \_\_\_\_\_.



## The Genre of Proverbs

- Wisdom Literature in the Bible: Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes
- While this wisdom ultimately comes from God (2:6), the generation of this material also involved learning from day-to-day life itself by observation and experience in the community (24:30-32).
- A proverb is “A short sentence of wisdom” (W. Mieder, *Proverbs*, 18-40); “short sentences drawn from long experience” (M. Cervantes, *Don Quixote*).
  - Proverbs proper are typically found in Proverbs chapters 10–31. Chapters 1–9 consist of longer lectures.
  - A proverb typically has: Shortness, Imagery, and Parallelism (Waltke, *Proverbs*, 38)
- Proverbs are principles designed to motivate positive behaviors, not promises, and thus are not always true in every circumstance (see 26:4-5). Rather, they “are true only if stated at the right time and in the right circumstance” (Longman, *Proverbs*, 31).

## The Concept of Wisdom in Proverbs

- Usage outside Proverbs suggests a meaning of “masterful understanding,” “skill,” or “expertise” (Exod 7:11; 28:3; 31:6; Isa 3:3; 10:13; Ecc 4:13; Jer 50:35; 1 Kings 5:7 [Waltke, “Fundamentals” 3.260]).
- Yet in Proverbs usage suggests more specifically “social skill” or “masterful understanding of social relationships” (e.g., 12:18). This involves “the skill of relating to God and to all kinds of people in order to enjoy an abundant life and to avoid death” (Waltke, 3.260).
- While the term “wisdom” is itself neutral about right and wrong (Exod 7:11), this is not so in Proverbs, where the term takes on a strong ethical sense (see 1:3). The usage of words like “righteousness,” “justice,” and “equity,” in Proverbs makes this clear (Waltke, 3.261).
- Our working definition of wisdom: **Being Good at Life (Especially in Relationships and Right Choices).**

## The Audience of Proverbs (implicit audiences in parentheses)

- |                    |                       |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
| • The Young        | • The Simple          |
| • Young Men        | • The Wise            |
| • (Rich Young Men) | • <del>The Fool</del> |
| • (Young Women)    | • (All God’s People)  |

## Summer Suggestion for Proverbs

- Either read one chapter a day (with chapter corresponding to each day of the month: tomorrow on July 1 read chapter 1) or memorize one verse a week and reflect on it daily that week (this week’s verse: Prov 30:5).

## The Genre of Proverbs

- Wisdom Literature in the Bible: Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes
- While this wisdom ultimately comes from God (2:6), the generation of this material also involved learning from day-to-day life itself by observation and experience in the community (24:30-32).
- A proverb is “A short sentence of wisdom” (W. Mieder, *Proverbs*, 18-40); “short sentences drawn from long experience” (M. Cervantes, *Don Quixote*).
  - Proverbs proper are typically found in Proverbs chapters 10–31. Chapters 1–9 consist of longer lectures.
  - A proverb typically has: Shortness, Imagery, and Parallelism (Waltke, *Proverbs*, 38)
- Proverbs are principles designed to motivate positive behaviors, not promises, and thus are not always true in every circumstance (see 26:4-5). Rather, they “are true only if stated at the right time and in the right circumstance” (Longman, *Proverbs*, 31).

## The Concept of Wisdom in Proverbs

- Usage outside Proverbs suggests a meaning of “masterful understanding,” “skill,” or “expertise” (Exod 7:11; 28:3; 31:6; Isa 3:3; 10:13; Ecc 4:13; Jer 50:35; 1 Kings 5:7 [Waltke, “Fundamentals” 3.260]).
- Yet in Proverbs usage suggests more specifically “social skill” or “masterful understanding of social relationships” (e.g., 12:18). This involves “the skill of relating to God and to all kinds of people in order to enjoy an abundant life and to avoid death” (Waltke, 3.260).
- While the term “wisdom” is itself neutral about right and wrong (Exod 7:11), this is not so in Proverbs, where the term takes on a strong ethical sense (see 1:3). The usage of words like “righteousness,” “justice,” and “equity,” in Proverbs makes this clear (Waltke, 3.261).
- Our working definition of wisdom: **Being Good at Life (Especially in Relationships and Right Choices).**

## The Audience of Proverbs (implicit audiences in parentheses)

- |                    |                       |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
| • The Young        | • The Simple          |
| • Young Men        | • The Wise            |
| • (Rich Young Men) | • <del>The Fool</del> |
| • (Young Women)    | • (All God’s People)  |

## Summer Suggestion for Proverbs

- Either read one chapter a day (with chapter corresponding to each day of the month: tomorrow on July 1 read chapter 1) or memorize one verse a week and reflect on it daily that week (this week’s verse: Prov 30:5).