

**THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION**  
**Proverbs: Topical Applications of Proverbs**  
**III. The Proverbs Themselves, Proverbs 10:1-31:31**  
**A. Proverbs On The Family**  
**4. God's Wisdom For Marriage**

Introduction: (To show the need . . . )

(1) Even secular experts are becoming aware of the value of marriage in America, and they are concerned over its decline: Veronique de Rugy's piece, "Marriage: The inequality we should be talking about" (Republican-American, May 1, 2026, p. A6) claimed, "I'm a libertarian. I don't care whom, or if, you marry. Yet I'm reminded that there is a problem by a new report from the American Enterprise Institute. Edited by Kevin Corinth and Scott Winship, 'Land of Opportunity: Advancing the American Dream' covers a broad range of challenges facing the country . . . The authors are not culture warriors. They are empirical economists. But among their most important findings are those dealing with the collapse of the American family . . . From economist Robert VerBruggen's chapter on the erosion of married parenthood, I learned that in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, only one in 20 children were born out of wedlock. Now it's two in five. I also learned that America has the world's highest rate of children living in single-parent households: 23% in the U. S. against an international norm of 7% . . . VerBruggen shows that 40% of millennials from intact, two-parent families graduated from college and 77% achieved middle-class incomes or higher. Among those who didn't grow up in intact families, only 17% graduated from college and just 57% reached middle-class incomes. The latter are also roughly twice as likely to be incarcerated, even after controlling for other socioeconomic factors." Veronique de Rugy summed, "The marriage gap is wreaking havoc." (Ibid.)

(2) This problem is apparent at the local level: A letter by "Hopeless in Ohio" to the "Dear Annie" column (Ibid., p. B12) reflected this problem as it reported: "My husband and I married 31 years ago, when my son was 7. After graduating from high school, my son joined the Air Force . . . then married and had a child. He and his wife divorced when our grandchild was 2. Two years later, her mother was diagnosed with Munchausen syndrome by proxy, and the court granted our son full custody. He wanted help raising his daughter, so they moved in with us . . . I'm retired now, and my husband is thinking about retiring, too. . . . We'd like to . . . sell our house and move to Florida or Texas, but our son says he can't raise our grandchild on his own . . . Please help . . ."

(3) If people do not find fulfillment in marriage, they may seek it in criminal ways. Newspaper reports often tell of emotional or sexual abuse by troublesome people. Such criminals can even be allegedly responsible parties: The May 2, 2026, Republican-American, p. A3 told of a "former teacher and band director at Waterbury Public Schools" who has been charged with sending "inappropriate messages" to several school children.

Need: *So we ask, "If marriage is good, but if so many people are troubled with it, does God's wisdom offer help?"*

- I. **God put Adam and Eve in a perfect marriage, but their fall into sin so corrupted their offspring that one man, Lamech, married two women and boasted to them about murdering a young man, Gen. 2:18-4:24.**
- II. **Lamech's boast was a threat to his wives and anyone else not to harm him lest he kill them in revenge!**
- III. **As a result, the world became filled with violent men who took many wives, dominated them by threats and sired many evil offspring so that God had to destroy the world by the Genesis Flood (Gen. 2:20-6:7).**
- IV. **Thankfully, God's "wisdom," His *hokmah*, or fixed eternal moral order for success and blessing applies to marriage by way of a few key, important proverbs in the Book of Proverbs (as follows):**
  - A. Proverbs 18:22 (as translated from the Hebrew text) states, "He who finds a wife finds a wholesome thing, and obtains favor from the Lord," a statement that recalls God's creation of the first marriage of Adam and Eve:
    1. The Hebrew word for "wife" is *'ishshah*, the word Adam called Eve in Genesis 2:23 whom the Lord made for Adam from his rib. (Kittel, Biblia Hebraica, p. 3; B. D. B., A Heb. and Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 61)
    2. The Hebrew word for "wholesome thing" is *tov*, the same word for "good" in Genesis 2:18 where God said it was "not good" for Adam to be alone, that He would make a helper for him, Ibid., p. 373-375.
    3. Thus, where Proverbs 18:22 claims that a man who finds a wife finds a wholesome thing, and obtains favor from the Lord, such a man aligns with the divine order that God initially established back in Genesis 2 when He clarified that a man needed a suitable helper in a wife! Such a man quite obviously obtains God's favor because he aligns with God's initial pattern for human marriage.
  - B. However, due to sin in the human race, both a man and a woman must deal with the issue of sin in themselves for their marriage to be securely blessed, what Proverbs 30:18-19 with other Scripture passages reveal:

1. Proverbs 30:18-19 (rendered from the Hebrew text) states, “There are three things that are too amazing for me, four that I do not understand: the way of an eagle in the sky, the way of a serpent on a rock, the way of a ship in the midst of the sea, and the way of a man with a maiden.” (Kittel, op. cit. p. 1192-1193)
2. This is a numerical proverb where the formula  $x$  plus ( $x + 1$ ) exists, the final item being “the culmination or product of its preceding items” (*Bible Know. Com., O. T.*, p. 917).
3. Applied to Proverbs 30:18-19 in the English versions, these verses would claim that the way of an eagle in the sky, the way of a serpent on a rock and the way of a ship in the midst of the sea culminate in the way of a man with a maiden. It thus teaches that a man has mastery over a maiden at the level of eye contact (eagle in the sky with its sharp eyesight), at the level of touch (a serpent moving upon a rock) and at the level of physical intimacy (part of the ship being in the water as it moves along the sea).
4. However, if a man is violently domineering, a sensible maiden will not respond positively to his courting efforts, so this proverb as it appears in the English versions must be clarified by a full comprehension of the Hebrew text for us properly to know and apply it. We thus view the Hebrew text (as follows):
  - a. The word for “maiden” is ***‘almah***, meaning “a young woman, one of whose characteristics is virginity.” (Kittel, op. cit., p. 1193; H. A. W., *Theol. Wrdbk. of the O. T.*, 1980, vol. II, p. 672)
  - b. Also, the word for “man” is ***geber***, what *often* means “a male (man) at the height of his powers” (Kittel, loc. cit.; H. A. W., op. cit., vol. I, p. 148-149). Actually, a ***geber*** was more than just a mighty warrior, for this word was initially used as a technical term for a man of a noble class who was privileged to bear arms for his king (Ibid.), a concept that shows up in Scripture usage: For example, (i) Psalm 40:4 teaches that a man attains ***geber*** status by a life of faith in God and (ii) Psalm 128:1-6 reveals a ***geber*** who reveres the Lord so that he orders his life in God’s ways sees his wife, his children, his community, his nation and the nations around his nation blessed as a result of his reverence for and resulting alignment with God’s ways.
  - c. Thus, as a man reveres the Lord so as to live by faith in Him and order his life in God’s ways, he is a ***geber*** “noble” in God’s view, so God gives him great and blessed influence on everyone around him, including the ***‘almah*** he seeks to win as his wife by courting her.
  - d. The godly ***geber*** would clearly seek to gain an ***‘almah*** to be his wife who shared his commitment to the Lord, so the ***‘almah*** he would seek for marriage would likewise revere the Lord so as to live by faith in Him and thus order her life in God’s ways (like the Proverbs 31:10-31 virtuous, noble woman).
  - e. In summary, God grants a godly ***geber*** who seeks to win a godly ***‘almah*** as his wife mastery over her at the level of eye contact in courting, and at the levels of touch and physical intimacy after they marry.

***Lesson:*** *Marriage is good, for God designed it to be fulfilling for a male man and a female woman. However, due to the destructiveness of sin that invaded the original, perfect marriage, both a man and a woman who desire to be SECURELY happily married MUST revere God, live by faith in Him and order their lives in His Biblical ways.*

***Application:*** *(1) May we trust in Christ Who died as our Atoning Sacrifice for sin that we might receive God's gift of eternal life, John 3:16; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11. (2) If we desire to be married or if we are already married, may we rely on the indwelling Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:16) to revere the Lord, to live by faith in Him and to order our lives in God's Biblical ways for secured marital blessing. [(3) In the Church era, some people have the gift of celibacy, and they are better off remaining single if they have that gift (cf. 1 Corinthians 7:1-2, 6-7).]*

***Conclusion:*** (To illustrate the message and/or provide additional guidance . . .)

Decades ago, a married couple called to ask that I come to their home for an emergency counseling session. They planned to call divorce lawyers the next day but thought they might seek my help in a last effort to save their marriage. Both were professing Christians and both attended a Gospel preaching, Bible teaching church.

When I arrived at their home, they invited me to sit on the couch in the living room while they sat across from the couch in separate chairs. The air was thick with tension! They described the details of their conflict, and I replied that from a human perspective, there was no hope for their marriage. However, I claimed that God had a solution, and it was found in Galatians 5:16-23 that contrasts the works of the sin nature with the fruit of the Holy Spirit! I read the passage out loud to them, and they confessed that they were living by their sin natures. They repented, and I suggested that any time they had a marital conflict in the future, they should read that passage together out loud.

They never got divorced! In fact, they stayed married until they were parted by the death of one of them.

**May we trust in Christ Who died as our Atoning Sacrifice for sin that we might receive God’s gift of eternal life. May we rely on the Holy Spirit first to marry and then to stay married with God’s blessing.**