

Illuminating Our World: Absolutes From God in the Observations of Man

Getting focused

Perception is an individual's reality. Critical to living in the light of the wisdom of God is recognizing its comprehensive nature. The word of God is to be viewed as absolute and worthy of our trust. In order to receive the full benefit of God's wisdom we cannot wander beyond the confines of its enlightenment. "Every word of God is pure; He is a shield to those who put their trust in Him. Do not add to His word lest He rebuke you, and you be found a liar" (vs. 5-6).

Clear and concise principles of God may be established through observing events in nature. The verses which introduce the words of Agur, of whom we know little, establish a definitive contrast between the wisest of men when compared to the wisdom and the omniscience of God (vs. 2-4). Humility and removal of preconceived notions are essential in preparing the mind to be filled with the knowledge of God.

Two things to ask of God: truth and contentment

Read Proverbs 30:7-10

What do we want from God? What is our heart's desire and prayer? Foremost in our minds must be the desire for truth. Jesus said, seek and you will find, and those who hunger and thirst after righteousness shall be filled. Prayerful, honest acceptance of the word of God should be the primary focus of our lives, followed by satisfaction in abiding in that light of life.

A great hindrance to receiving blessings from God is having ulterior motives when making our request. "You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasure" (James 4:3). When our desires reach beyond the limitation of God's inspiration, discontent is the result.

"I neither learned **wisdom** nor have **knowledge** of the Holy One. Who has **ascended into heaven**, or descended? Who has **gathered the wind** in His fists? Who has **bound the waters** in a garment? Who has **established** all the ends of the earth? What is His name, and **what is His Son's name**, if you know?"

- Proverbs 30:3-4

“But exhort one another daily, while it is called ‘Today,’ lest any of you be **hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.**”

- Hebrews 3:13

Between two extremes is where we shall find happiness and contentment. Unfortunately, through an insatiable appetite for wealth, many have pierced themselves through with many sorrows (1 Timothy 6:10).

The two things requested are for conditions in life that will enable one to live faithfully. All have this assurance from God (1 Corinthians 10:13; Matthew 6).

Deception, disrespect, discontent: a generation lost in sin

Read Proverbs 30:11-20

Disrespect breeds discontent, anger, and greed. Greed breeds deception and betrayal. Through four illustrations we can gain insight into the nature of desire. Then, through four illustrations we learn the untraceable steps of a sinner’s self-delusion. How clearly these illustrations lead to the comprehension of the deceitfulness of sin (Hebrews 3:13).

The “four generations” is a depiction of every age and denote the consuming, progressive nature of wickedness (vs. 11-14).

- Disregard and disrespect for authority (v. 11)
- Pride (v. 12)
- Self-delusion (v. 13)
- Cruelty and mercilessness (v. 14)

Each step progresses toward a depraved heart that seeks no light. A generation consumed in iniquity will face certain ruin (v. 17).

“The eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing,” (Ecclesiastes 1:8). This verse provides insight in understanding the nature of human desire. Through observation of these four things, we can learn much about discontentment.

- The grave—Hell and destruction are never full (27:20; Habakkuk 2:5).
- The barren womb yearns for that which it cannot provide.
- The earth—though it receives rain, it will thirst for more.
- Fire continues to consume as long fuel is provided.

Likewise, indulgence in things of a sinful, temporal nature will not satisfy the yearning of one's soul.

Deceptively, sin committed in the flesh leaves no trace. Observations in nature provide a likeness of this phenomenon. This will enlighten our understanding to the fleeting nature of sin: "The eagle in the air, the serpent on the rock, the way of a ship in the midst of the sea, and the way of a man with a virgin" (v. 19). A solemn lesson must be learned. As eagles fly, snakes slither, and ships pass without a trace, purity can be secretly robbed from the innocent, but its ill effects are certain.

So deceptive is immorality that the blind sinner will justify his actions and say, "I have done no wickedness" (v. 20). The writer has identified a thing that is truly difficult to understand—the power of self-delusion.

Gaining wisdom from observation of things on the earth

Read Proverbs 30:21-33

Four things are listed relating to the actions of men that are troubling to behold (vs. 22-23). Then, the following observations of wisdom are of the least of earthly creatures. Though man has dominion over every living thing, he may turn and observe the activity of those creatures that he might better learn to order his own life.

As has been previously defined, wisdom is non-existent in the absence of practical application. One may know many things, but until one exercises that knowledge it is fruitless. Thus, we may observe wisdom in the least of God's creation.

- The ant methodically prepares for the future.
- The badger makes adequate provisions from the enemy.
- The locust, though left without government, works in unity and purpose with fellow laborers.
- The spider skillfully uses its ability to bring itself into desirable places.

We find in each of these small creatures characteristics which should be applied in our lives. Each one demonstrates a quality that enables one to reach that heavenly goal. Through application of these, we will find our walk through this life as one of confidence (vs. 29-31).

Memorize and meditate

"If you have been foolish in exalting yourself, or if you have devised evil, put your hand to your mouth."

- Proverbs 30:32

If, through observing these, you see your faults—whether it be exalting yourself or devising evil—put your hand to your mouth. Though we often seek words to excuse inadequacies, it is better to hold our peace and allow our conviction to produce a change of life. Certain actions produce undesirable results. So it is that the forcing of wrath produces strife. Therefore, whatever obstructs your assimilation of God’s wisdom—let it go!

Questions to consider

1. What state of mind is reflected in verses 2 through 4? _____

2. Will God grant the two things requested in verse 8? Prove your answer. _____

3. Relate the observations of the activities of the ant, badger, locust, and spider to wisdom in the life of man. _____
