

Christian student ministry workers in Sweden developed a series of questions to ask when reading a Bible passage. Called the “Swedish Method” because of its origins, these questions can be used when reading the Bible by yourself or with others.

The daily readings in this family worship guide have a few questions. However, we encourage you, as appropriate for your family, to ask the following general questions of the text each day.



Is there something that ‘shines’ from the passage—whatever impacts most, or draws attention?



Is there something you don’t understand, or a question the passage raises in your mind?



Is there a personal application to your life?



Is there something you plan to share with someone else – and who will you share it with?



How do ideas in the passage interrelate? Or with other passages in this book – or in the whole Bible?

*Worshipping Together* is part of the vision and is a ministry of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Frankston, Victoria, Australia. [frankstonrp.org.au](http://frankstonrp.org.au) [bit.ly/WTrpcaf](http://bit.ly/WTrpcaf)

The concept and layout draws heavily from *Let’s Worship God*, a ministry of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Airdrie, Scotland. [airdrierpcs.org](http://airdrierpcs.org)

The readings are from Tim Chester’s 3-year weekly reading plan. [bit.ly/WkBbl](http://bit.ly/WkBbl) or [bit.ly/3yrBbl](http://bit.ly/3yrBbl)

The quote on the cover is from the article *What Shampoo and Family Worship Have in Common*, Written by Randy Greenwald, (Quoted from *Tabletalk* magazine, Nov 1997.)

Notes this week are drawn in part from commentaries on commentaries on Proverbs by Matthew Henry, Jim Newheiser, James Smith, Derek Kidner, and notes from the HCSB Study Bible, and the Reformation Study Bible

# Worshipping Together



We love God because He first loved us.

And we love to tell God that we love Him.

Joyful and faithful worship together twice each Lord’s Day is the highlight of our week. We are glad that they said, “Let us go to the House of the Lord.” Corporate worship prepares us for the week and prepares us for Heaven.

In addition, we regularly worship God as families and as individuals.

One father put it this way:

*The back of my shampoo bottle says, “Lather, rinse, repeat.” Simple enough that even I can do it. Though family worship may be a bit more complicated than shampooing hair, it ought not to be rated with “home dentistry” in the scale of difficulty.*



*If you could buy family worship in the store, it would come in the form of a Bible, and the directions would simply say, “Read, pray, repeat.” Men\* should gather their families at least once daily. They should read a portion of the Scriptures to them. And they should pray with them. There need be no fireworks or pizzazz to keep the kids interested. There needs to be only a father\* with a heart-love for God – who desires to see that love appropriated by his children.*

*Read, pray, repeat.*

\* Fathers leading their family in worship is always the goal. When, in the Lord’s providence, the father is absent or uninterested, a godly mother will lead her children

**Reading** Proverbs 30:1-6 Finding God

**Notes**  
(See back page for authors)  
The end of the book of Proverbs is an assortment: Proverbs collected by Hezekiah’s scribes (25-29), then words of Agur (this chapter), and those taught King Lemuel by his mother (31).

Agur reflects the wise humility taught in so much of the book. He claims no self-worth or even self-perception. (v2) He can’t even know God on his own ability or terms. (V3). But he does know God – as evidenced by his series of 5 rhetorical questions – the answer of each which is understood to be, “God”.

As Smith comments, *to fully understand God one would have to ascend into heaven... None had descended from heaven at this time save God himself (Gen 11:7; Exod 19:18). Second: Obviously man cannot gather up the invisible wind so as to restrain it or to release it at his pleasure. That is an act of God (Amos 4:13; Ps 135:7). Third: God stores up waters to provide the rain without which existence on earth is impossible. Obviously man cannot do this. Fourth: The reference is to the fixing of the boundaries of the earth as the habitation of the human race... Obviously man had nothing to do with this. Fifth: If such a person existed at any time in the past, then what is the name of his son or descendant?*

How has Agur learned these things about God? The same way we can learn about God. From His word. V5-6

- Questions**  
(see back page for explanation of symbols)
1. What does Agur know about God?
  2. How does he know these things?
  3. What claims does he make about God’s word?

4.     

- Praise Pray**
- Psalm 117b<sup>2</sup>
1. Commit you and your family in prayer to learn from God’s word
  2. Pray for a member of your church
  3. Pray for your family
  4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

<sup>1</sup> You will notice we only have a printed guide for 6 days. We recommend each Lord’s Day you review the previous week’s readings and/or the previous or current week’s sermons and pray together

<sup>2</sup> Psalm selections are taken from the *Book of Psalms for Worship*. We encourage our congregation to sing the same selection each day for a week to gain familiarity with the selection

**Reading** Proverbs 30:32-33 Churning makes butter or strife

**Notes**  
(See back page for authors)  
After examining God’s word and God’s world, Agur ends his oracle with a call to self-examination.

As Smith notes, *Agur advises his students to exercise restraint. A student should put his hand to his mouth, i.e., check himself, if he contemplates acting in a foolish manner. Churning milk makes butter, and wringing a nose causes a flow of blood. So strife is often deliberately created. A quarrel need not happen and can be averted. “Wrath” is “wrung out” of a person just as blood is “wrung out” of the nose.*

In v33 the repetition is clearest in the ESV as the Hebrew word is the same with regard to milk, the nose, and anger. As the RSB notes, *pressing ... pressing ... pressing. The repetition emphasizes the parallel in each situation. In this proverb we have a warning that provocation leads to strife.*

- Questions**  
(see back page for explanation of symbols)
1. What would be even better than putting your hand over your mouth *after* foolish, sinful talk?
  2. What does pressing, pressing, pressing produce?
  3. How can we pursue peace rather than strife?

4.     

- Praise Pray**
- Psalm 117b
1. Pray that you and your family will ..., with God’s help
  2. Pray for your family
  3. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member
  4. Pray for the reading and preaching of God’s word tomorrow

**Reading**

Proverbs 30:21-31 Three more lists of three, even four

**Notes**

(See back page for authors)

Agur continues with three more lists of three, even four things. The first four are things unbearable. Kidner notes that *the Bible delights in fruitful reversals of fortune (17:2), but has no use for upstarts (19:10) who become too big for their boots.*

The second four are small things that are very wise. The HCSB notes that *a perceptive person can learn from observing God's creation (6:6-8; cp. 24:32). Each of these small animals overcomes potentially fatal limitations. Ants and hyraxes are metaphorically called people as if they were a nationality. Ants show forethought. A hyrax ( Procavia syriacus) is a herbivore the size of a rabbit that lives in herds in cavities among the rocks. Wise men also rely on the Lord as their rock of protection. Locusts have unity of purpose, maintaining ranks without infighting. The lizard (or spider) is vulnerable, yet it can be found in unexpected places.*

The final four are observations of stately creatures in God's world. Smith comments that first, he mentions the lion...Because of his might the lion does not turn away in fear from any other animal as it goes its way. Second, the zarzir motnayim—...has been identified as a strutting "rooster" ...[but] it is impossible to decide with certainty. Third, the...stately march of the he-goat before the herd. The animal has an arrogant bearing; he scrutinizes strangers with a dauntless stare. Fourth, Agur names "a king with his army around him" as an illustration of stateliness.

**Questions**

(see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. What are the unbearable things? Can you think of others?
2. What are the small/wise things? Can you think of others?
3. What are the stately things? Can you think of others?

4.     

**Praise Pray**

- Psalm 117b
1. Confess, with your family, the wonder of God's creation
  2. Pray for a member of your church
  3. Pray for your family
  4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

**Reading**

Proverbs 30:7-9 Two things to ask of God

**Notes**

(See back page for authors)

Now Agur asks God for 2 things – the first of several numbered lists in his oracle. The RSB suggests that *this prayer reflects a desire to learn from the kind of wisdom that is in Proverbs.*

Henry comments *the two things he requires are grace sufficient and food convenient. 1. Grace sufficient for his soul: "Remove from me vanity and lies; deliver me from sin, from all corrupt principles, practices, and affections, from error and mistake, which are at the bottom of all sin, from the love of the world and the things of it, which are all vanity and a lie...Nothing is more mischievous to us than sin, and therefore there is nothing which we should more earnestly pray against than that we may do no evil.*

*2. Food convenient for his body. Having prayed for the operations of divine grace, he here begs the favours of the divine Providence... He prays that of God's free gift he might receive a competent portion of the good things of this life: "Feed me with the bread of my allowance, such bread as you think fit to allow me."...Our Saviour seems to refer to this when he teaches us to pray, Give us this day our daily bread...Food convenient for us is what we ought to be content with... and it is what we may in faith pray for and depend upon God for.*

Agur gives reasons for his requests. He wants to be dependent on and supplied by God Himself. This is a prayer of wisdom.

**Questions**

(see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. What is the first thing Agur asks God for?
2. What is the second things Agur asks God for?
3. Why does he ask these things?

4.     

**Praise Pray**

- Psalm 117b
1. Seek from God in prayer enough grace and enough food
  2. Pray for a member of your church
  3. Pray for your family
  4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

**Reading** Proverbs 30:10-14 Four wicked types – and one more first

**Notes**  
(See back page for authors)

Agur notes 5 wicked types to avoid – 1, then 4 in parallel introduced by “a generation” (a group or class of people). Though these are not numbered, they are tied together.

The fairness for the underprivileged, Kidner notes, *stands appropriately enough between the prayer of 7-9 and the portraits of 11-14, for arrogance (11) breeds oppression (14), while the fear of God (7-9) engenders respect for the weak.*

Smith comments on the 4: *First, some people are so wicked that they curse their father and do not bless their mother...Cursing parents was a capital crime under the law of Moses (30:11; Exod 21:17).*

*Second, some are “pure in their own eyes” because they observe certain conventional or ritual proprieties. The sin here is hypocrisy and Pharisaical self-righteousness...*

*Third, some are proud, even haughty. Their “eyelids are lifted up” in contempt upon their fellows (30:13).*

*Fourth, some have teeth like swords and knives which they use to devour the poor and needy (Amos 8:4). They use their power mercilessly to destroy the helpless (30:14).*

It is likely easy enough to see how we are not like these wicked ones. It is harder to be honest enough before God to identify flaws in our own character and behaviour and repent.

**Questions**  
(see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. What servants do we see in our world? What must we avoid?
2. What are the 4 types of wicked ones in this “generation”?
3. How can we avoid their wicked behaviour?

4.     

**Praise Pray**

- Psalm 117b
1. Commit yourself and your family in prayer to wise, humble, righteousness, with God’s help.
  2. Pray for a member of your church
  3. Pray for your family
  4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

**Reading** Proverbs 30:15-20 Three, even four – and another

**Notes**  
(See back page for authors)

Now Agur begins a series of three, even four things. These are things he observes in the world that God has made. Some of them are to be imitated. Some are to be avoided. Some are merely observations.

The first are greedy things that, like a blood sucking leech, never get enough. The four are – death and the barren womb, desert lands (the barren land) and fire. We see and feel the weight of these greedy realities and can only seek God’s favour to keep us from, or protect us in, their grasp. The HCSB notes that *until God restores paradise (Rm 8:19-22; Rev 21:1), Sheol and fire will always try to destroy, and the womb and the soil will always strive to produce (Gen 3:16-17).*

Added to these 4 is a flashback to the cursing child that will continually be destroyed.

The second list are things of wonders followed by, as Kidner notes, *a jarring fifth. [The] common denominator is...that of the easy mastery, by the appropriate agent, of elements as difficult to negotiate as air, rock, sea – and a young woman. The fifth, and unnatural, marvel (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.*

**Questions**  
(see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. What are the greedy unsatisfied things?
2. What are the wonderful things?
3. What things do you observe in God’s world in these categories?

4.     

**Praise Pray**

- Psalm 117b
1. Commit yourselves in prayer to learn from observing God’s world
  2. Pray for a member of your church
  3. Pray for your family
  4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member