



Text: Proverbs 30:1-9¹
Title: Make God Your “Life Coach”
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In recent years I’ve seen an increasing number of ads for a new kind of people-helping venture called “life coaching.” In fact, there is a new TV sitcom starring two Canadian comedians that is based on the idea of life coaching. Essentially a life coach is someone who comes alongside someone to help them achieve the life goals they have set for themselves.

Now, there are many life coaches who do not operate from a faith base, but not surprisingly, there are a growing number of Christian life coaches, as well. According to the *Professional Christian Coaching and Counseling Academy*, a life coach’s purpose is to “help your clients find their purpose and God-given vision, then partner with them to achieve their goals.”² One Christian woman who offers her services as a life coach stated that her mission was “to coach women who are in a season of life in which they are seeking new direction, a fresh start, challenging opportunities, spiritual growth, a new vision for using their giftedness and passions, and that by God’s power will help them become more of who they are meant to be, living life in all its fullness.” Those are great, godly objectives! And she is very careful to define life’s purpose as God’s purpose for our lives. She says that “a Christian Life Coach knows that passions, life purposes, inner strengths, and visions for the future are God-given and that we must live in accordance with God’s plans in order to find ultimate fulfillment.”³

I think the Book of Proverbs supports the idea of “life coaching,” especially coaching that has the kind of God-oriented purpose that this woman has. Proverbs tells us that...

**“Without counsel plans fail, but with many advisers they succeed.”
Proverbs 15:22**

**“Oil and perfume make the heart glad, and the sweetness of a friend comes
from his earnest counsel.” Proverbs 27:9**

If you can find someone who will give you wise counsel and “coach” you toward achieving Godly goals in your life you are blessed. We all need Godly friends and counsellors who will help us toward God’s purposes for our lives. But what I want to encourage you to do today, above all things, is to **consider making God**

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² <http://www.pccca.org/index.html>

³ <http://www.abundant-living.ca/index.html>



himself your “life coach.” You see, I think the Bible is his coaching manual and in the pages of this book are contained his counsel and instruction on “living life in all its fullness.”

This morning I want to introduce you to a man who needed a life coach and who turned to God for the counsel he needed to achieve the changes he wanted to make in his life. His name is Agur and we meet him in Proverbs chapter 30. I’m going to read the first nine verses of the chapter and I invite you to follow as I read.

This is God’s Word for us this morning. Let’s listen with attentive minds and open hearts...

**1 The words of Agur son of Jakeh. The oracle.
The man declares, I am weary, O God;
I am weary, O God, and worn out.**
**2 Surely I am too stupid to be a man.
I have not the understanding of a man.**
**3 I have not learned wisdom,
nor have I knowledge of the Holy One.**
**4 Who has ascended to heaven and come down?
Who has gathered the wind in his fists?
Who has wrapped up 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?
Surely you know!**
**5 Every word of God proves true;
he is a shield to those who take refuge in him.**
**6 Do not add to his words,
lest he rebuke you and you be found a liar.**
**7 Two things I ask of you;
deny them not 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 is needful for me,
9 lest I be full and deny you
and say, “Who is the LORD?”
or lest I be poor and steal
and profane the name of my God.**

Agur’s Profile ... Worn out, but wise

“The words of Agur son of Jakeh. The oracle. The man declares, I am weary, O God; I am weary, O God, and worn out.” Proverbs 30:1



Who was Agur? We really don't know any more about him than we read right here. We know that he wasn't Jewish. His name and the name of his father place him in northern Arabia,⁴ a region that runs roughly between modern day Syria and Iraq. The little phrase, "the oracle" in verse 1 can also be read as a place name and if that is the case then he was from Massa, a place that was inhabited by descendants of Abraham's son, Ishmael (cf. Gen 25:14).

He was an Arab, not a Jew, but his ancestry traced its line back to Abraham and his words reflect knowledge of the true God. He refers to God as "the Holy One" (v.3) but more importantly, as "the LORD." (v.9) "LORD" translates the Hebrew name for God, YHWH. This man knew the one, true God, the Holy One of Israel.

His name means, "I am a sojourner."⁵ He was a traveler on this earth and what we know is his travels had made him "weary" and "worn out." The term "worn out" comes from a root word that means "consumed" or "eaten up." Life had worn him down and used him up. He had nothing left to give.

What it was in life that had worn him out we don't know and that's OK. It could have been failed relationships; it could have been the death of a spouse or a child; it could have been a failed business venture or advancing age and the realization that his goals in life hadn't been achieved; it could have been frustration with the brokenness of his own character. In other words, it could have been any of the many ways in which life wears us down. It could have been the very thing that wears you down and because of that, Agur relates to you and to me. Feeling weary, worn and used up is a common life experience that brings this ancient man's words into our world and into our lives. It's old truth, but it's also new every day. Are there days when you feel "weary" and "worn out"? I know there are.

Agur was worn out, but he was wise, at least wise enough to know in his weariness to turn to God: "I am weary, O God; I am weary, O God, and worn out." His heart cry takes him to God, not away from him. That's the mark of a wise man. He knows that in the rough and tumble of life that God has not abandoned him: he's just a prayer away!

Northern Arabia was east of the land of Palestine and if Agur was in fact from there that would make him another "wise man from the east." Every Christmas we celebrate the journey of the wise men from the east he came and sought out the newborn King of the Jews (Matthew 2:1ff) and every year we encourage ourselves with the thought that "**wise men still seek him.**" And just like the magi found Jesus, so anyone who sets out on the journey to find God's wisdom will find it because the Lord has said...

⁴ "Lemuel and Agur," *The Dictionary of the Old Testament: Wisdom, Poetry & Writings* (IVP 2008), p. 429

⁵ Roland E Murphy, "Proverbs," *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 22, loc. cit.



**“Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you.
You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart.”
Jeremiah 29:12-13**

Are you worn and weary today? In your weariness, be wise and turn to the Lord. He will hear you and he will answer you.

Agur’s Confession ... “I don’t know how to live!”

**“Surely I am too stupid to be a man. I have not the understanding of a man.
I have not learned wisdom, nor have I knowledge of the Holy One.”
Proverbs 30:2-3**

We are immediately struck with Agur’s honesty and vulnerability before God. I was talking with another pastor the other day about this verse and we both agreed that this would make a great verse to have engraved above our desks: “I am too stupid to be a man.” And please, I beg of you, suppress the urge to say, “Amen.”

Agur is using a word that refers to males. It’s the Hebrew word *ish* and it is often translated as “husband.” What this suggests is that he is thinking about his role as a husband, as a father, as a son, as a man within God’s world. He’s thinking about himself in relationship with other people around him and he confesses that he just doesn’t know how to live.

Maybe a child has just been born and he is overwhelmed with the challenge of fatherhood. Perhaps he been recently married and he is deeply impressed by his responsibility to care for his wife and the family that will come. Possibly he’s wondering how to care for his aged parents. It could be that he has been widowed and wonders how to live alone after years of shared life with his wife. It could be that he’s wondering about how to relate properly to the women of his extended family and his community. Maybe he’s facing a hard question in his business that is putting his integrity on the line. Something, something has led him to ask the question, “what does it mean to be a man?”

Now women, don’t tune him out yet, because he goes on to say, “I have not the understanding of a man.” And here he used the generic term, *adam*, which refers to humanity in general. He confesses, “I don’t know how to live as a human being!”

He could be facing the question of what his responsibilities to his community might be; he might be wondering about issues of right and wrong behaviour toward his neighbours; it’s possible that he’s asking himself what God’s expectations might be for his life: what does God want me to do with my life?. Something has led him to ask the question, “what does it mean to live as a human being in this world?”



You see, Agur's intention is to ask the human question for both men and women and because of that I think it would completely appropriate for women to take his first declaration and ask of themselves, "what does it mean to be a woman?" How am I to live as a wife, a mother or a daughter? How am I to relate to men as a woman? How am I to relate to my Creator who made me female and created me in his image? Those are the deep questions that Agur is leading us to ask ourselves.

I am deeply impressed by Agur's humility and his wisdom. He is a wise man, even though he declares that he is not. In fact, only a wise man knows that he is not wise. Only a fool is "wise in own eyes." (Prov. 26:12) Agur understands that the complexity of human life issues challenges that are beyond the grasp of any human being to answer. He knows he needs help. That is how a wise man thinks. A fool says, "I can handle life on my own." But a wise man knows that he needs to ask for help. And God promises to answer those who come to him with that humble spirit.

"The Lord's curse is on the house of the wicked, but he blesses the dwelling of the righteous. Toward the scorers he is scornful, but to the humble he gives favor." Proverbs 3:33-34

Or as James puts it in his letter...

"God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble." James 4:6

Agur knows that he needs wisdom. **Wisdom is knowing how to live God's way in God's world.** Wisdom is more than information. It's more than memorized Scripture. Wisdom is **living skilfully in this world every day without moral or theological compromise.** And wisdom is God's gift to those who ask humble and sincerely for it. Agur knows that if he is to gain wisdom for life he must come to the One who is the Author of Life and so he confesses that his greatest need is for "knowledge of the Holy One" because...

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight." Proverbs 9:10

This is why it is so important that we choose to make God our life coach. Others can help us to find His wisdom, but it's His wisdom we need, not theirs.

Agur's Question ... "Is there anyone in this world who can help me?"

You have to read Agur's series of questions with a knowing eye and a discerning ear. Agur is following the tried and true method of cross examination that lawyers use in trial situations. The principle of wise cross examination is that you never ask a question to which you do not already know the answer!



Agur is asking: “Is there anyone out there who can answer my need for wisdom better than the Holy One can? Is there anyone better than God from whom I might seek an answer?” The resounding answer is: NO!

“Who has ascended to heaven and come down?” (v.4)

I want you to hold onto this question. We’ll come back to it in a bit but the answer to this question in Agur’s day was “no one.”

“Who has gathered the wind in his fists?” (v.4)

Other than God, no one.

“Who has wrapped up the waters in a garment?” (v.4)

Ditto.

“Who has established all the ends of the earth?” (v.4)

Well, of course, the only candidate is God, the Creator.

“What is his name, and what is his son’s name? Surely you know!” (v.4)

“Ok, Ok, we get the point! There is no human being who could possibly help us better than our Creator can.”

I want you to feel the force of Agur’s questions. They are intended to back us into a corner with only one, possible way out. And the Bible asks these questions again and again. Isaiah, the prophet, wrote...

“Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand and marked off the heavens with a span, enclosed the dust of the earth in a measure and weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance?” Isaiah 40:12

Take your hand and hold up in front of your face. Cup it like you’ve got some water in the palm of your hand. Now image all the oceans and seas and rivers and ice bergs floating there. Imagine all the snow and rain that fell on Thursday this week in Alberta ... it’s all in there, too. It’s just a drop in the hollow of His hand.

Now, flatten the palm of hand. Tuck your thumb alongside your palm. The span of your hand is the measure across the flattened palm of your hand from your thumb to the other side ... that’s what the heavens are like to God! The entire universe, right there, in his hand.



“Who has measured the Spirit of the Lord, or what man shows him his counsel? Whom did he consult, and who made him understand? Who taught him the path of justice, and taught him knowledge, and showed him the way of understanding?” Isaiah 40:13-14

Answer: No one.

As a life coach, God’s resume is without equal! The One who is the Author of life itself is without peer in the wisdom business. Job, another one of the “wise men from the east” once challenged God’s resume and God responded...

**“Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge? Dress for action like a man; I will question you, and you make it known to me. Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding. Who determined its measurements—surely you know!”
Job 38:2-5**

Job was forced to admit, “No, God, I don’t know! In fact, God, as I stand here in your presence I realize for the first time that I know nothing at all!” (Job 42:1-6)

Agur’s Confidence ... “God’s Word is trustworthy and complete!”

**“Every word of God proves true; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him. Do not add to his words, lest he rebuke you and you be found a liar.”
Proverbs 30:5-6**

Our God of infinite power and wisdom has not left us to figure out how to live from analyzing the generalities of the created universe. Agur knows that there is much wisdom for life that can be gleaned from considering the wonders of his creation (cf. Proverbs 6:6; 30:25) but he is confident that the God who made the earth and the stars has also spoken a word that is true and trustworthy and it’s to this word that he points us for wisdom.

He values God’s Word because “every word of God proves true.” God’s Word has been tested and tried in the fires of daily life and it has stood the test. As David wrote,

“The words of the Lord are pure words, like silver refined in a furnace on the ground, purified seven times.” Psalm 12:6

Some years ago I was travelling with some fellow pastors to a conference. Our driver was a senior man who was retired but had been in ministry for many years before his retirement. We got talking about the trustworthiness of the Bible and he shared with us how his confidence in God’s Word had been shaken during his seminary years in the mid-twentieth century. He no longer believed that the Bible was God’s “pure word” but that it contained many errors and mistakes. He told



us that he had made a list of the many errors and inaccuracies of the Bible that he'd discovered and that he kept the list over his desk to remind him of the humanity of the Bible.

As he recounted the items on his list to us I was struck by something: every one of these supposed "inaccuracies and errors" had been resolved in the Bible's favour over the intervening years since he had written the list. In other words, Bible scholarship had been proving the Bible's trustworthiness but he was locked in his unbelief and doubt. Sadly, he died in it, several years later.

Let me tell you this: the Bible proves itself true in life, it proves itself true in fact and it will prove itself true in eternity. And because it is true you can depend upon it as a shield and refuge in life, in death and for eternity. It will never guide you wrong; it will never lie to you; it will never mislead you; it will never let you down.

God's Word is true, you can trust it. And because God's Word is God's word, you and I shouldn't try to add to it. We just don't have the anything worthy of addition to what God has said. Duane Garrett, an Old Testament Bible scholar, wrote that the temptation to add to God's Word is one that relates more to believers than to unbelievers. He suggests that believers regularly face the temptation of what the Apostle Paul called "going beyond with is written." (1 Cor 4:6) Garrett wrote...

*"Such a practice is apt to make one a popular Bible teacher since people think that the teacher has profound insight into the text and can find hidden truths. Sooner or later, however, such interpreters will be shown to be wrong."*⁶

If you're looking for wisdom for life you don't need to go any farther than God's book. It's the word of the Author of life on the life He created us to live. You simply can't find anything more authoritative or accurate on the subject of life than God's word. The purpose of this book is...

"to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work." 2 Timothy 3:15-17

Wise for salvation; wise for living; wise for God; wise for eternity ... that's the purpose of this book!

Agur's Prayer ... "Change my life, from the inside out!"

⁶ Duane Garrett, "Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs," *The New American Commentary*, vol. 14, (Broadman Press, 1993), p. 237.



As I said a few moments ago, wisdom is not about collecting information about God and about life; wisdom is about living life God's way. Agur knows that he needs more than information; he needs transformation!

“Two things I ask of you; deny them not to me before I die: Remove far from me falsehood and lying; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the food that is needful for me, lest I be full and deny you and say, “Who is the LORD?” or lest I be poor and steal and profane the name of my God.” Proverbs 30:7-9

Agur knows that there is something deep within his spirit that needs to be changed if he is going to live life God's way. He is a bent and broken man. His problem isn't simply a matter of lack of information about wise living; he has a twisted nature that loves lies rather than truth.

His first prayer isn't that God would keep liars away from him; it's that God would reach deep into his spirit, grab his own lie-loving heart and take it out.

“Remove far from me falsehood and lying” Proverbs 30:8

He longs, for what David called “truth in the inward being.” Agur wanted God to do the same thing for him that David had longed for; he wanted God to...

“teach me wisdom in the secret heart.” Psalm 51:6

We need the same transforming touch from God. **Who will transform us in the secret heart?** Let me leave the answer to that question for just a moment.

Agur's second request is that God would protect him from himself. Agur sees that the twist in his spirit not only loves lies rather than the truth, but it is also ready to rebel against God at the slightest provocation, in good times and in bad times. In good times, when plenty abounds, the twistedness of his spirit tempts him to deny his dependence upon God and say,

“Who is the LORD?” Proverbs 30:9

And then in times of hardship and want, the same twistedness tempts him to cheat and steal to meet his needs and so...

“profane the name of my God.” Proverbs 30:9

He asks the Lord to keep him from these temptations by only providing him with his “daily bread ... not so much that he would become spiritually complacent nor so little that he would become spiritually bitter but just enough to meet his needs. What Agur needs is contentment in his inner being. He needs to learn, what Paul called...



“the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need.” Philippians 4:12

Where can he learn that secret? **Who will teach us the secret of contentment?**

Let me pull together some threads that I’ve left intentionally hanging. Earlier I asked you to hold onto Agur’s question. Here’s the question...

**“Who has ascended to heaven and come down?” Proverbs 30:4
Who will transform us in the secret heart?
Who will teach us the secret of contentment?**

There is only one answer ... **Jesus.**

A man came to see Jesus one night. He longed for a new life. Jesus told him that he had to be “born again.” He needed a whole new life! “How?” the man asked! And Jesus said to him...

“No one has ascended into heaven except he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.” John 3:13-15

If we want a new heart we need a new life ... we need to be “born again” by the Spirit of God through faith in Jesus Christ. And the promise of God’s true word is that...

“If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.” 2 Corinthians 5:17

And if we want to learn the secret of contentment we need to learn it from Jesus. Paul said...

“I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me.” Philippians 4:11-13

Do you long for a new life? A changed heart? A spirit of contentment? My recommendation to you?

Make Jesus your life coach, not only for this life, but also for eternity!

- **Invitation to the Lord’s Table**



- **Welcome of New Members**
- **Songs of Communion:**
 - O Great God
 - Hallelujah, What a Saviour
- **Benediction**