

the
PRAYER
of
AGUR

Ancient Wisdom for Discovering
Your Sweet Spot in Life

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MULTNOMAH

Questions for Personal Reflection or Small Group Discussion

Introduction

1. How did you discover this book?
2. Have you previously given any thought to Agur or his prayer in Proverbs 30:7–9?
3. Describe a season of life in which you felt as though you were in balance—in a sweet spot. Or a time when you unexpectedly lost your balance.

Chapter 1: Major Impact from a Minor Character

1. What life lesson have you learned from a biblical character?
2. What life lesson have you learned from someone just passing through your life?
3. When was the last time you saw yourself as a skeptic, cynic, or seeker?

Chapter 2: Utterance from a Collector

1. In this world, which is a more valuable attribute: humility or overconfidence? Which is more dangerous?
2. Why should we listen to someone who confesses he does not have “human understanding” and has “not learned wisdom”?

3. It might be mere speculation, but how do you think a guy like Agur earned a spot in the Bible?

Chapter 3: Agur Asks Questions Worth Asking

1. Name a question to which you could answer “Surely I know!”
2. Currently, what is your source of confidence?
3. How do you think Agur’s contemporaries reacted when he implied that God has a Son?

Chapter 4: Agur Takes a Moment to Endorse Scripture

1. Why do you think the author of a single chapter in the Bible would include a personal endorsement of the Bible?
2. Are doubts evil?
3. How do you personally know the Bible is true?

Chapter 5: Agur’s Prayer, Part I: Regarding Lies Coming and Going

1. Describe your prayer life. How might lengthy prayers trip you up?
2. What’s more dangerous: hearing lies or telling lies?
3. How would you answer the question “What is truth?”

Chapter 6: Agur’s Prayer, Part II: Not Too Much, Not Too Little

1. What’s a bigger challenge: having too much or having too little?

2. Compare the idea of a “sweet spot” to “daily bread.” How are they similar or different?
3. Which way is our society headed today: toward minimalism or overconsumption?

Chapter 7: Agur’s Prayer, Part III: Possible Repercussions of Living in the Extremes

1. Do you have an emotional attachment to money?
2. Several Scripture verses in this chapter affirm Agur’s prayer. Which will you remember?
3. Is it reasonable to take Agur’s prayer for a financial sweet spot and apply it to other temptations and vulnerabilities?

Chapter 8: After the Prayer

1. Agur lists a few not-so-nice habits. Can you relate to any of them?
2. Are you quick to judge others? What might be another option?
3. Has Agur earned your trust? Or do you see him as he described himself—as a brute of a man who has not learned wisdom?

Chapter 9: List #1: Things Never Satisfied

1. Are you ready for the inevitable grave?
2. When was the last time you set aside your own agenda to help a hurting family member or friend?
3. How are you honoring your mother and father?

Chapter 10: List #2: Amazing Enigmas

1. Do you take God's design for this world for granted?
2. Have you taken the necessary steps to protect your heart and mind from adultery?
3. When is the last time you covered up a mistake or misdeed with the words "I've done nothing wrong"?

Chapter 11: List #3: Human Mistakes

1. Why would the earth tremble because of mere human mistakes?
2. Can you restate the lessons on leadership, moderation, and marriage?
3. What should your response be to biblical instruction?

Chapter 12: List #4: Small Wonders

1. Can you relate best to the lesson of the ants, hyraxes, locusts, or lizards?
2. What small thing in your life—whether frustration or opportunity—might be worthy of your full attention?
3. What gift, experience, or talent from your past that seemed trivial at the time might be worth reassessing?

Chapter 13: List #5: The Downfall of Kings

1. Do you have a kingdom?
2. What's the opposite of destructive pride?

3. Which of Agur's five lists left you with the most compelling personal insight?

Chapter 14: Life in the Sweet Spot

1. Do you see God's sweet spot as a compromise or a firm foundation for launching your next season of life?
2. What's the next big thing in your life, and what are the extremes you need to avoid?
3. What is the truest thing about you?

Chapter 15: The Sweet Spot Bonus

1. Before picking up this book, many readers were unfamiliar with Proverbs 30 but quite familiar with Ecclesiastes 3. Can you relate?
2. The mandate of the Sweet Spot Bonus is to be happy, do good, and find satisfaction. Which of those three directives do you find most difficult?
3. Name three activities that come easily to you, bring joy, and might be the key to finding your sweet spot.
4. When you find yourself in the center of God's will and checking off achievements that matter, to whom will you give the glory?

Notes

1. Rev. J. W. Nutt, “Proverbs 30,” in *Ellicott’s Commentary for English Readers*, ed. Charles John Ellicott, 1905, <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/ellicott/proverbs/30.htm>.
2. M. G. Easton, *Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, 3rd ed. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1897), s.v. “Agur,” www.biblestudytools.com/dictionaries/eastons-bible-dictionary/agur.html.
3. James Orr, ed., *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (1915), s.v. “Jakeh,” www.biblestudytools.com/dictionary/jakeh.
4. Scholarly sources consulted include James Strong, *New Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2003); and Matthew Poole, *A Commentary on the Holy Bible* (London, ON: Macdonald, 1985).
5. See Isaiah 9:6–7; Daniel 3:25; Hosea 11:1; Micah 5:1–3.
6. Adam Simnowitz, “Son of God in the Old Testament,” *Biblical Missiology*, February 11, 2013, <http://biblicalmissiology.org/2013/02/11/son-of-god-in-the-old-testament>.
7. Rev. R. Payne Smith, “Genesis 21,” in *Ellicott’s Commentary for English Readers*, ed. Charles John Ellicott, 1905, biblehub.com/commentaries/ellicott/genesis/21.htm.

8. Popularized by Pope Gregory the Great in the sixth century, the seven deadly sins were taught to all laypeople throughout the Middle Ages. For more information on their origins and history, visit www.deadlysins.com/history.
9. Vienny Nguyen, Blaine Lilly, and Carlos Castro, “The Exoskeletal Structure and Tensile Loading Behavior of an Ant Neck Joint,” *Journal of Biomechanics* 47, no. 2 (January 22, 2014): 497–504, www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0021929013005459.
10. “Ants Can Lift Up to 5,000 Times Their Own Body Weight,” *Entomology Today*, February 11, 2014, <https://entomologytoday.org/2014/02/11/ants-can-lift-up-to-5000-times-their-own-body-weight-new-study-suggests>.
11. See Leviticus 11:5; Deuteronomy 14:7.
12. See Psalm 104:18.
13. To read the story of Moses, Aaron, and the plagues in Egypt, see Exodus 7:1–12:42. For the mention of locusts in John’s vision, see Revelation 9:3–7.