Sleepy Eyelids, Proverbs 6:1-5

Dear Culture Contrarians:

“Surety” is an old-time word that means to collateralize a debt. Our world runs on debt; everyone is in debt: the government, our companies, and all too often, ourselves. Debt is universally regarded as something to avoid. Proverbs 6:1-5 is actually not primarily about debt, but about arrogance or pride.

Someone asks you to co-sign a debt for them and you agree to do it. How foolish can you be?! You should never co-sign for someone! Give them the money, but don’t co-sign. But we all like to play the big man. “Sure,” we say, “I’ll help you get your (fill in the blank).”

It seems to me that Solomon’s words do not apply to family members. He is referring to a neighbor, countryman, or foreigner, not a family member (6:1). Solomon has a whole genre about the benefits of family economics, but that is another article.

You have just been trapped like a bird by the fowler or the deer by the hunter. Solomon gives us some advice; “Go” an imperative that means to get up and travel. This is not the time for phone calls, emails, and texts. “Humble yourself”; it was pride that got us into this mess. “Press your case,” “plead,” “be in a state of contention” with your friend. No sleep for you! Don’t you dare shut your eyelids! Deliver yourself from the words of your mouth that agreed to make you responsible for the debt of another.

Don’t let our culture fool you. Debt is NOT a good thing!

**6** My son, if you become surety for your friend,

*If* you have shaken hands in pledge for a stranger,

2 You are snared by the words of your mouth;

You are taken by the words of your mouth.

3 So do this, my son, and deliver yourself;

For you have come into the hand of your friend:

Go and humble yourself;

Plead with your friend.

4 Give no sleep to your eyes,

Nor slumber to your eyelids.

5 Deliver yourself like a gazelle from the hand *of the hunter,*

And like a bird from the hand of the fowler.