

WISDOM FOR LIVING Sunday School- September 4, 2011

Unifying Topic: RIGHTEOUSNESS AND WISDOM

Lesson Text

I. Wisdom Through Mercy And Truth (Proverbs 3:1-4)

III. Wisdom Through Trusting In God (Proverbs 3:5-6)

III. Wisdom Through Commitment To God (Proverbs 3:7-12)

The Main Thought: Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. (Proverbs 3:5, KJV).

Unifying Principle: People want their lives to have purpose and meaning. Is there a way of living that really works toward that end? Proverbs is rooted in a tradition of instruction that encourages godly living.

Lesson Aim: To understand wisdom literature as a way to persuade us into living, godly lives and to keep us from choosing the path that leads to wickedness.

Life aim: To show how God's wisdom found in Proverbs 3 reveals purpose and meaning in our lives and will guide us as we journey on the path of righteousness.

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- 3:1 My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments:
3:2 For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee.
3:3 Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart:
3:4 So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man.
3:5 Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.
3:6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.
3:7 Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil.
3:8 It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones.
3:9 Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase:
3:10 So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.
3:11 My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; neither be weary of his correction:
3:12 For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.

HISTORY:

Wisdom is the principal theme of this book. Wisdom keeps us in harmony with the principles and purposes that the Lord had built into His world so that as we obey God everything works for us and not against us. King Solomon is the author of the Book of Proverbs. ¹King Solomon ruled the nation of Israel for 40 years. He brought peace and wealth to the nation. When he was young, Solomon obeyed God. He asked God for wisdom, and God gave it to him (1 Kings 3:9, 12). Solomon learned and wrote many proverbs (wise words). He spoke 3000 proverbs (1 Kings 4:32) and his songs were a thousand and five. The Book of Proverbs contains many wise sayings about the practical affairs of everyday life.

God wants His people to be wise. Two kinds of people portray two contrasting paths of life. The fool is the wicked, stubborn person who hates or ignores God. The wise person seeks to know (have a relationship) and love God by obeying Him.

Proverbs 3:1-4 Wisdom Through Mercy And Truth

3:1 My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments: "*My son*" tells us who this message is to. Solomon encourages his son to appreciate wisdom so that it would direct him. The law would be God's divine instructions, which is what Solomon followed. Learn the law first so you won't forget it. In order **not to forget** the Word, keep it in your heart. How does one **keep it in his heart**? He can't take it for granted but he would truly and sincerely observe the commandments daily. With the Word of God in your heart shows that you are applying what you've learned. As the child does this, he grows to depend on God instead of others. Our children need guidance from their parents but the parents are not to be their gods, but the children are to be dependent upon the Lord.

¹ <http://www.easyenglish.info/bible-commentary/proverbs1-9-lbw.htm>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sunday-school.html>

3:2 For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee. When we don't forget about what we've been taught, and when we've kept what we've learned in our heart, we've got to know that all of this is not for nothing!

What do we get? We will get:

- Length of days
- Long life
- Peace

This is a threefold blessing to them that keep God's Commandments. This seems to cover life on earth and throughout eternity in heaven, crowned by "*peace*," which is the Hebrew word "*Shalom*"; a peace of mind; a peace to stabilize us.

3:3 Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart:

²"*Mercy*" shows love to the utmost, for God and for man. "*Truth*" cannot be underestimated. It is beyond compromise. Do not forfeit these, but live up to them, and preserve interest in them. If a person could have the two most important strengths of character, it would be mercy and truth. The result of the implant of God's grace and truth in our heart will become for us a good reputation before God and men. Having mercy and truth are action words towards others. This "*binding them about the neck*", I believe, just means to treasure them highly and don't lose them somewhere along the way. "*Write them upon the tables of thine heart*" has to do with the heart dictating a person's actions. It isn't enough for a believer to carry the bible in their hands; they must let the Holy Spirit write it on their hearts where the word will come up at any and all times.

3:4 So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man. When we keep "*mercy*" (lovingkindness) in our outward demonstration and "*truth*" in our inward heart, we will "*find favor and good understanding in the sight of God and man.*" What that says to me is that you will begin to seek God's wisdom and in the time of crisis, you will not be frustrated because you didn't forsake mercy and truth; you rendered mercy and truth to others; you showed respect by not trying to compete in others' failure. And mercy and truth with good understanding will always be good in God's sight. The door of favor is always open. However, our understanding about making intelligent choices comes from knowing God is in charge of this favor and He allows the door of favor with Him and man.

Proverbs 3:5-6 Wisdom Through Trusting In God

3:5 Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. "*Trust*" is the conviction of knowing who God is and what God can do; your dependency is in nothing else but the Lord. It means that you have prayed about the situation and God has given wisdom to believe. Trust is not supposed to come from the head or what you think but from what God had placed in your *heart*. In verse 4, "*good understanding*", shall you find, and in verse 5 we are not to put our **own understanding** before believing God's wisdom. There is a danger when leaning to our own understanding; we will miss God's Will— something better in which we haven't thought of. What little knowledge that we do have is because of God's generosity towards us. We can do nothing of our own selves without God who should be the head of our lives.

3:6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. To succeed, said Solomon, we must put God first in our lives. Jesus emphasized this same truth; "*But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness*" *Matt.6:33*. Acknowledge means to recognize God first; go to God first in prayer to be directed. When you are aware of and have fellowship with God, he directs. The word, "*direct*" means to make smooth or straight. If God's truth is in the heart, you will definitely lean to it and walk in a smooth and straight path. Praise God!

Proverbs 3:7-12 Wisdom Through Commitment To God

3:7 Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil. When we become wise in our own eyes, we're then heading for trouble. Wisdom suggests that we take notice of God which is in opposition of the efforts

² <http://www.lovetheLord.com/books/proverbs/03.html>

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sunday-school.html>

of man; that we humbly recognize Him as that "*One*" who can best control the affairs of our lives. The one who "*fears the Lord*" (reverence and is in awe of Him) walks not in vanity of self-conceit, but "*departs from evil*" (shun, avoid, and abstain evil).

3:8 It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones. The approach to life will have the effect of producing "*health in the navel*," the lifetime of the body for one who is in a state of dependency. Just like the navel is the means by which the child receives life and nourishment from the mother while it is in the womb, so fearing God and departing from evil gives life to a child of God. Our commitment and dependency on God will show us how to have relief for dryness of bones. No human life can be imagined without the frame that upholds the body and the nervous system that is contained in the bone marrow. ³"*Marrow to thy bones*" or, "*watering*" them is that which irrigates and moistens them, and makes and keeps them strong and solid. Marrow is literally watering, i.e., refreshing. Bones will be continuously refreshed as a man trusts in Yahweh (Job 21:24) and commits to God's wisdom. What marrow is to the bones, then wisdom, or the fear of God is to the souls of men. It is the means of establishing and strengthening them against sin, and snares and temptations, and to do the will and work of God.

3:9 Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: It did not say honor wealth, but "*honor the Lord with our substance*"; give of your best to the Lord. Many people give their leftovers. However, trusting God will always be proven in the area of a man's stewardship of their material wealth. Stewardship is not an attempt to bribe God and ensure our own wealth. It is a committed response to the God who never forgets the needs of His people. ⁴There are various ways that we can honor the Lord. We can honor the Lord by living a pure life, a holy life, by worshipping Him, by proclaiming His truth. But one very significant and important way to honor the Lord is with our wealth. The tithe ($\frac{1}{10}$) is paid after the money is made.

It is better to give God the first part of our income. For example, when it comes to money, before making any further financial decisions, know that putting God first means that God, who is the first and best, must have the first and best of everything. I give the tenth of my gross not my net. The first fruits belong to the Lord (Deut.18; 4; 26:2). The first fruits are paid in anticipation of what will come. First fruits will be a faith offering. This demonstrates that God, not possessions, has the first place in our lives. If we are stingy, if we withhold the Lord's portion, if we don't give when the Holy Spirit prompts us to give, then we are dishonoring the Lord. Giving to God first helps us conquer greed, helps us properly manage God's resources, and opens us to God's special blessings. It shows that God's people can count on His blessings when they honor Him with their offerings.

3:10 So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine. "*Barns*" are the storehouses. "*Presses*" are the vats of a Roman vineyard, into which the wine flowed through a pipe from the wine-press. Therefore, the honoring of God leads to our material prosperity being filled. Those that do good with what they have shall have more to do more good as God leads. The result of such faithfulness to honor God is prosperity and satisfaction. I believe our "*barns*" today are the banks and our "*presses*" are the CD's and investments shall be filled with plenty and burst with newness.

3:11 My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; neither be weary of his correction: God is our Father who wants to teach us the wise path of life. Since even the wisest of God's children are subject to sin and bring dishonor to God, there is a necessity of God's fatherly discipline to increase wisdom and blessing. Such correction should not be resisted because it keeps us on the right track.

3:12 For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth. Man is born in sin and practices the art of sinning before he meets the God of grace. Thus the Lord's hand of correction is often found upon us to shepherd us away from sin. And because God delights in us, we must not be weary of His hand upon us or despise His gentle and persistent presence; a presence that is always grounded in His faithfulness. It is a sign

³ http://www.searchgodsword.org/com/geb/view.cgi?book=pr&chapter=3&verse=8#Pr3_8

⁴ <http://healtheland.wordpress.com/2008/01/22/ways-to-honor-god-proverbs-39-10/>

<http://www.pitwm.net//pitwm-sunday-school.html>

of both His displeasure of sin and His love for His children. A humble submission is an essential addition to our growth in spiritual truth (1Pt.5:6).

SUMMARY:

This is fatherly counsel to his son. This would be advice you would give to your son or daughter.

1. ⁵Be faithful (3:3-4)
2. Trust in God (3:5-8)
3. Give (3:9-10)
4. Accept discipline (3:11-12)

When you are **faithful**, you won't forget what you've been taught. I know a lot of times when leaving our parents house, we choose not to follow all the things they've said. But there are some things that you kept in your heart you will always follow and not forget. Those are the things that sticks and will always benefit you! They will in turn yield length of days, long life, and peace. If a person could have the two most important strengths of character, it would be mercy and truth to which God is faithful. A merciful, kind person cares for others in his heart. A truthful, loyal person acts responsibly and faithfully and finds favor and good understanding in the sight of God and man.

Trust is a word that speaks to all of us—children and adults. Who do we trust and how far are we to trust? We are to trust the Lord and it's with all our heart. How do we trust? We trust by not depending on our own understanding; we put ourselves wholly at the mercy of another (God); and we don't try to figure out everything on our own, because by acknowledging God in all our ways as the one we truly trust, He then makes our paths smooth; He keeps us on track.

A person cannot grow when he gets the attitude of pride. We then can't assume to know it all, we have to listen to God and our reverence to God will turn us from evil. The fear of the Lord will take away all arrogance and pride. There is a connection between physical health and spiritual or emotional health and that is trusting in God. Our body will glow with health and our bones will vibrate with life because we didn't follow evil but followed God's wisdom.

Giving of our material wealth honors the Lord. It really shows God where our heart lies. It also shows that God's people can count on His blessings when we honor Him with our offerings. Whatever our best is, God deserves it.

Accept discipline because it is out of love that God gives it. By not despising God's discipline or chastening, we grow.

APPLICATION:

The instruction for today is to live life wisely, not with fleshly understanding but building upon the foundation of God's wise and profound Word that will keep right attitudes and behavior.