

Proverbs Chapter 3

In this lesson of chapter 3, the study of truth leading to wisdom is commended to all. This is enforced by a contrast to the destinies of the wise and wicked.

Verses 1-20 is where Solomon instructs that wisdom is;

- (1) rooted in sound teaching, verses 1-4;
- (2) Rests in trust in God (verses 5-6);
- (3) Rewards those who obey (verses 7-10).

While wisdom demands chastening, it brings profound benefits (verses 13-18), and its importance is clear since it undergirds God's creation (in verses 19 and 20).

Proverbs 3:1 "My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments:"

"My law", Hebrew "Torah" from the verb "to throw, distribute, or teach, hence "teachings".

It is used of God's law but here (as in 2:1), it is used of the commands and principles that God gave through Solomon.

Proverbs 3:2 "For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee."

"My son" tell us who this message is to. It is not to the world in general, but to the followers of God. God reminds us to not forget His teachings, but hide them away in our hearts. God also reminds us to walk in His ways.

His "commandments" here are talking about all of His ways. Just as the commandment to honor father and mother promises that our days may be long upon the earth, we see the promises of length of days here if we follow in His ways.

When you know that you have done the right things, it does bring peace. Sin brings fear of punishment, but obedience brings peace.

Proverbs 3:3-4 Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart:" "So shalt thou find favor and good understanding in the sight of God and man."

"Neck ... heart." The virtues of mercy (the Hebrew word for loving kindness and loyal love), and truth that come from God are to become part of us, outwardly in our behavior for all to see as an adornment of spiritual beauty, and inwardly as the subject of our meditation. Such inward and outward mercy and truth is evidence of New Covenant salvation.

The Bible says the "merciful shall obtain mercy".

Matthew 5:7, "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy."

"Mercy" shows love to the utmost, for God and for man.

"Truth" cannot be underestimated. It is beyond compromise. A truthful person is a person whose character cannot and will not be questioned by anyone. One of the highest compliments that can be paid a man is to say that he is a man of truth.

If a person could have the two most important strengths of character, it would be mercy and truth. 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.

God will write His laws upon the heart of His people, if we will allow Him to. I believe that is the message here. God says if you have these two, mercy and truth, you have His laws on your heart. (In verse 4), we find if we practice these two, we will be able to get along with not only the men around us, but God as well.

Proverbs 3:5 "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding."

This (verse 5 here), applies to all believers, but even more to those who are in the service to God. God never chose any man or woman to work for Him because of their training and ability within themselves. God chooses people like Jeremiah who was just a lad with no formal training; and God put the words in Jeremiah's mouth to give to the people. You may read all about it (in chapter 1 of Jeremiah). When we depend upon our own ability, we fall very short. For a minister of God to be effective, it must be God speaking through him.

Proverbs 3:6 "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."

Three commands are given (in verses 5 and 6): Trust, meaning "rely on, depend on"; Lean not, meaning do not depend on your own native instincts, and Acknowledge him, meaning have fellowship and intimacy with God in all of life. The result of such devotion is that God will make the paths straight before you.

Here again, we get into the will of man. Man has to be willing to accept God's help and to give God the credit for the job well done. A Christian must first of all not start anything that the Lord is not in, and then we must praise Him in everything.

Hebrews tells us when we should praise the Lord.

Hebrews 13:15, "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name."

If He directs our path, we shall walk in the light and not stumble and fall.

Proverbs 3:7 "Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil."

The most dangerous thing, if you are trying to succeed in the world, is to get satisfied with yourself. A person cannot grow when he gets this attitude. When we rely upon our self, we are always disappointed. No one likes a know-it-all or a conceited person. We must remain humble. What little knowledge that we do have is because of God's generosity towards us.

Fear of the Lord will take away all arrogance and pride. In the first few verses of Proverbs, we learned that the fear of the Lord is true wisdom. Fear here could be looked at again as reverence or high praise. Give God the glory for it all.

Proverbs 3:8 "It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones."

The strength here is in the marrow, the inner parts. God is promising physical well-being for those who live wisely according to His will. Such physical well-being is what David forfeited before he confessed that he had sinned against Bath-sheba and Uriah.

Many illnesses are brought on by sins as we said before, not all illness, but some. Good clean living seems to assist in good health. For sure, good clean living brings a clear conscience and no regrets. When the spirit of man is healthy, it helps with the physical health, as well.

Exodus 15:26, "And said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the LORD that healeth thee."

Proverbs 3:9-10 "Honor the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase:" "So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine."

A biblical view of possessions demands using them for honoring God. This is accomplished by trusting God, by giving the first and best to God, by being fair, by giving generously and by expressing gratitude for all He gives. The result of such faithfulness to honor Him is prosperity and satisfaction.

Honoring the Lord goes much further than just attending church and stating that we are a believer. Our heart is where our pocket book and time is.

Luke 6:38 "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again."

We can see from Jesus' own words here, that if we plan to prosper, we must give both of ourselves and of our possessions.

Malachi 3:10 tells it all. Malachi 3:10 "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that [there shall] not [be room] enough [to receive it]."

Proverbs 3:11-12 "My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; neither be weary of his correction:" "For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son [in whom] he delighteth."

“Not despise ... chastening”: Since even the wisest of God’s children are subject to sin, there is necessity of God’s fatherly discipline to increase wisdom and blessing. Such correction should not be resisted.

In Romans we read why chastening and trials must come.

Romans 5:3-5 "And not only [so], but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience;" "And patience, experience; and experience, hope:" "And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."

You see, the only way a baby learns right from wrong is correction of parents. Sometimes a little paddling makes the lesson easier to remember. This is sometimes true with baby Christians, as well. When we do not obey God, He has to give us a spanking so that we will remember to obey next time. Just as an earthly parent corrects a child to help him grow in the knowledge of the truth, so does our heavenly Father.

If He cared not what becomes of us, He wouldn't bother to correct us (Read chapter 3 of Ephesians beginning with the 13th verse), it will thrill you that you have been tried. I will give one more Scripture here to show that God loves us in our tribulations and then go on.

2 Thessalonians 1:4-5 "So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure:" "[Which is] a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer:"

If God loves us, He corrects us; and we take on His worthiness.

Proverbs 3:13-14 "Happy [is] the man [that] findeth wisdom, and the man [that] getteth understanding." "For the merchandise of it [is] better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold."

One of the most wonderful gifts that God can give to man is wisdom and understanding. Solomon was no fool when he asked God for wisdom. Wisdom will bring prosperity of body, soul, and spirit. A wise man chooses God's ways and therefore cannot fail. If you have silver and gold, you can spend all of it and have nothing, but wisdom cannot be taken away; and with wisdom you can acquire silver and gold and any other thing that you might ever have need of.

Divine wisdom yields the richest treasures (described in verses 14-18 as "profits"; merchandise) "length of days," "riches," "honor," "pleasantness," "peace," "life", and happiness.

Proverbs 3:15 "She [is] more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her."

We will have to look back at the last lesson to see what the "she" is here. Wisdom is the she. In fact, this whole third chapter of Proverbs is all about wisdom. Material things of this world, regardless of how valuable they are, are not anything to compare with wisdom.

Proverbs 3:16 "Length of days [is] in her right hand; [and] in her left hand riches and honor."

The right hand blessing is always the best blessing. Length of days is spoken of here as being more wonderful to possess than riches and honor. If a man has no time left to spend his riches and fame, most would trade all of that to extend life a little longer. Even this blessing of extended days is still far short of the blessing of wisdom.

Proverbs 3:17 "Her ways [are] ways of pleasantness, and all her paths [are] peace."

Again here, the "her" is wisdom. Wisdom is pleasant and brings peace.

Proverbs 3:18 "She [is] a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her: and happy [is every one] that retaineth her."

This expression is a metaphor referring to temporal and spiritual renewal and refreshment (compare 11:30, 13:12, and 15:43).

No precious jewels or earthly treasures are worthy to be compared with true wisdom, whether the concerns of time or eternity be considered. We must make wisdom our business; we must venture all in it and be willing to part with all for it. This Wisdom is the Lord Jesus Christ and his salvation, sought and obtained by faith and prayer. Were it not for unbelief, remaining sinful, and carelessness, we should find all our ways pleasantness, and our paths peace, for his are so; but we too often step aside from them, to our own hurt and grief. Christ is that Wisdom, by whom the worlds were made, and still are in being; happy are those to whom he is made of God wisdom. He has wherewithal to make good all his promises.

Proverbs 3:19-20 "The LORD by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding hath he established the heavens." "By his knowledge the depths are broken up, and the clouds drop down the dew."

The wisdom of God so far surpasses anything we might know of. God actually, through His great wisdom and knowledge, placed the stars, sun, and moon in the open sky. The earth was hung in open air, as well. Not only did God hang them in the atmosphere in perfect orbit, but He also made all of this, as well. Not only did God make all of this, but it is all subject to His will. God causes the sunshine and the rain. He controls the whole universe.

John describes it all.

John 1:1-3 "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." "The same was in the beginning with God." "All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made."

Solomon is indicating that wisdom is basic to all of life, for by it God created everything. Since God used it to create the universe, how eager must we be to use it to live in this universe?

Proverbs 3:21-22 "My son, let not them depart from thine eyes: keep sound wisdom and discretion:" "So shall they be life unto thy soul, and grace to thy neck."

True wisdom belongs to God. God will give us wisdom if we seek it prayerfully. The grace that Jesus has provided for us has to be held in high esteem, even to the saving of our soul. We must remain in that wisdom.

Proverbs 3:23 "Then shalt thou walk in thy way safely, and thy foot shall not stumble."

If we remain in the wisdom that God hath provided for us in His Son, Jesus Christ, we shall be able to walk in His way and not stumble.

Proverbs 3:24 "When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid: yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet."

Here again, if we remain in the wisdom that the Lord has given us, there is no fear of death. Death of the body would just transform us into that heavenly place with Jesus. There is no fear for the Christian with faith. So many times in these lessons, we have made the statement that fear is the opposite of faith. Sleep is sweet for those wise unto salvation. No regrets haunt us. We have gotten forgiveness and are living just as if we had never sinned: justified by Jesus. Sleep is sweet when everything is alright with you and God.

Proverbs 3:25-26 "Be not afraid of sudden fear, neither of the desolation of the wicked, when it cometh." "For the LORD shall be thy confidence, and shall keep thy foot from being taken."

We see many instances in the New Testament when the demon spirits are afraid of Jesus, because they know that He is the Judge of the world and that they have a terrible fate awaiting them.

In Matthew 8:29, "And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?"

You see, sudden fear gripped them, because of the terrible fate they know they have awaiting them. If you know that you are saved and safe with the Lord, you have no sudden fear. The only fear permitted to those who trust in the Lord is Godly fear. You see, trust in the Lord brings confidence, a knowing that all is well.

Proverbs 3:27 "Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do [it]."

As opportunity arises, we must help anyone and everyone that is within our power to help. It seems those full of wisdom seem to be better off financially.

We see in 1 Timothy, that having a little more than those around you carries responsibility with it.

1 Timothy 6:17-18 "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;" "That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate;"

Proverbs 3:28 "Say not unto thy neighbor, Go, and come again, and tomorrow I will give; when thou hast it by thee."

This is saying, do not put your neighbor off until to-morrow if you have the ability to help them today. Their need is now. We should be eager to help those less fortunate. Only God has seen fit for us to be the better off.

Proverbs 3:29 "Devise not evil against thy neighbor, seeing he dwelleth securely by thee."

One of the two most important things God wants us to do is love thy neighbor as thyself. We would not figure up evil against ourselves, so we must not against the neighbor, either.

Proverbs 3:30 "Strive not with a man without cause, if he have done thee no harm."

We should not live in strife and fussing, but should learn to live peaceably with all men. If we live for the Lord, we are promised that even our enemies will be at peace with us. This does not say that there is never a time for strife. If your enemy attacks you, you may defend yourself; but you must not start strife nor keep it going.

Proverbs 3:31 "Envy thou not the oppressor, and choose none of his ways."

We must never choose the way of the oppressor. Bullies as children are not to be looked up to. We must not even fellowship with those who choose to oppress others. The worldly wealth that some acquire with their oppression of others should never be envied or desired. Evil and good are like oil and water. They cannot mix.

Proverbs 3:32 "For the froward [is] abomination to the LORD: but his secret [is] with the righteous."

"Froward" means perverted or wicked. The wicked will not know the secret, because they will not see; and hearing, they will not hear. They (the wicked), will not understand the things of God. The secret that the righteous know is that Jesus Christ is their Savior. God reveals Himself to those who love Him.

Proverbs 3:33 "The curse of the LORD [is] in the house of the wicked: but he blesseth the habitation of the just."

From Genesis throughout the Bible, God promises blessings to those who follow in God's commandments and curses to those who do not follow in the ways of God.

Proverbs 3:34 "Surely he scorneth the scorners: but he giveth grace unto the lowly."

Those who reject the teachings of the Lord are rejected themselves by Him. The scribes and Pharisees are a typical example of this. They thought too highly of themselves and turned the Lord of glory down. The lowly of the world were willing to receive and were granted grace of the Lord.

Psalms 138:6, "Though the LORD be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly: but the proud he knoweth afar off."

Proverbs 3:35 The wise shall inherit glory: but shame shall be the promotion of fools."

The wise seek God. Those who seek God inherit glory. The glory of the only begotten Son is shared with those who live for God. This is a shared inheritance. Fools live worldly lives for the here and now. Worldly, selfish live shamefully.

Proverbs Chapter 3 Questions

1. Material things of this world cannot compare with what?
2. In verse 16, what is in wisdom's right hand?
3. Which hand has always been the best blessing?

4. The Lord by _____ hath founded the earth.
5. Who does John 1:3 say created all things?
6. By His _____ the depths are broken up.
7. True wisdom belongs to whom?
8. How must we seek wisdom to receive it?
9. What description is given of the sleep of the wise?
10. If we remain in the wisdom that the Lord has given us, there is no fear of _____
11. Who shall be thy confidence?
12. Why were the demon spirits afraid of Jesus?
13. What is the only fear permitted to believers in the Lord?
14. In 1 Timothy chapter 6, we see what about those who are wealthy?
15. When someone asks your help and you have the ability to help, when should you help him?
16. In verse 29, we are warned not to do what to our neighbor?
17. Strive not with a man _____ .
18. What are we told about the oppressor?
19. Evil and good are like _____ and _____. They cannot mix.
20. The froward is an _____ to the Lord.
21. What does froward mean?
22. What is in the house of the wicked?
23. Who does God give grace to?
24. Psalms 138:6 says God has respect for the _____.