

Proverbs 3 Commentary

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Proverbs Overview						
Purpose of Proverbs 1:1-7	Proverbs to Youth 1:8-9:18	Proverbs of Solomon 10:1-24:34	Proverbs of Solomon (Hezekiah) 25:1-29:27	Words of Agur 30:1-30:33	Words of Lemuel 31:1-31:31	
	Father's Exhortations	First Collection of Solomon	Second Collection of Solomon	Numerical Proverbs	Wisdom for Leaders 31:1-9	Virtuous Wife 31:10-31

Title: Proverbs 1:1	Precepts of Wisdom	Proverbs of Solomon	Proverbs Copied by Hezekiah's Men	Proverbs of Agur	Proverbs of Lemuel 31:1-9	Capable Wife 31:10-31
Theme: Proverbs 1:7	Wisdom for Young Men	Proverbs for Everyone		Personal Notes from Agur & Lemuel		
Prologue	Principles of Wisdom			Epilogue		
Commend Wisdom	Counsel of Wisdom			Comparisons of Wisdom		

Proverbs 3:1 My son, do not forget my teaching, But let your heart keep my commandments;

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

- forget. ch. 1:8; 4:5; 31:5. De. 4:23. Ps. 119:93, 153, 176. Ho. 4:6.
- let. De. 4:9; 6:6-9; 8:1; 30:16-20. Ps. 119:11, 16, 34, 47, 48. Is. 51:17. Je. 31:33. Jno. 14:21-24.

NET Note -

- The chapter begins with an introductory exhortation (Pr 3:1-4),
- followed by an admonition to be faithful to the Lord (Pr 3:5-12).
- Wisdom is commended as the most valuable possession (Pr 3:13-18), essential to creation (Pr 3:19-20),
- and the way to a long and safe life (Pr 3:21-26).
- There then follows a warning to avoid unneighborliness (Pr 3:27-30)
- and emulating the wicked (Pr 3:31-35).

A J Higgins - [What the Bible Teaches](#)

Pr 3:1-10: Five Commands of a Father to His Son

- Pr 3:1-2: Forget not
- Pr 3:3-4: Let not
- Pr 3:5-6: Trust and lean not
- Pr 3:7-8: Be not
- Pr 3:9-10: Honour and hoard not

NB: "Lord"—Pr 3:5, 7, 9

"Life"—Pr 3:2.

Pr 3:11-20: Five-Fold Commendation of Wisdom

- Pr 3:11-14: Its Profit
- Pr 3:15: Its Preciousness
- Pr 3:16: Its Prosperity
- Pr 3:17: Its Pleasantness
- Pr 3:18: Its Peace

NB: "Lord"—Pr 3:11, 12, 19

"Life"—Pr 3:18.

Pr 3:21-35: Five-Fold Cautionary Note or Prohibitions

- Pr 3:25-26: Be not
- Pr 3:27: Withhold not
- Pr 3:29: Devise not
- Pr 3:30: Strive not

- Pr 3:31: Envy not

NB: "Lord"—Pr 3:26, 32, 33

"Life"—Pr 3:22.

Highlights for further study include:

- *The life of faith and how it is produced*
- *The "nots" which are tied around a young man's neck*
- *The introduction of creatorial wisdom in Pr 3:19-20*
- *The Genesis motif which is found in the chapter*

John Hannah's Outline - The superiority of the way of wisdom (1:8-9:18)

- A. The teachings of wisdom (Pr 1:8-33)
 - 1. The exhortation to listen to wisdom (Pr 1:8-9)
 - 2. The warning against evil companions (Pr 1:10-19)
 - 3. The invitation to wisdom (Pr 1:20-33)
 - a. The call of wisdom (Pr 1:20-23)
 - b. The dangers of rejecting wisdom (Pr 1:24-33)
- B. The value of wisdom (Pr 2:1-22)
 - 1. The conditions of obtaining wisdom (Pr 2:1-4)
 - 2. The benefits of wisdom (Pr 2:5-22)
- C. The rewards of wisdom (Pr 3:1-35)
 - 1. The rewards of wisdom (Pr 3:1-12)
 - 2. The superiority of wisdom (Pr 3:13-20)
 - 3. The application of wisdom (Pr 3:21-35)
 - a. The promise of blessing (Pr 3:21-26)
 - b. The obligations of wisdom to one's neighbor (Pr 3:27-35)

Duane Garrett reminds us that "Devotion to God and devotion to Wisdom are inseparable. For the scholar, who may be tempted to seek knowledge without having first submitted to God, this means that the search will be futile and the wisdom gained will be distorted if one has not first oriented oneself to the Creator in faith, humility, and obedience. For the religious person, this means that one's alleged piety is hollow if it does not embrace the simple and indeed very earthy precepts of wisdom. Basic axioms of moral integrity, matters as ordinary as being a decent neighbor (Pr 3:28-29), must adorn the life of anyone who would claim to possess the fear of the Lord. In this time, when there are far too many examples of Christians and especially of ministers who seem to have forgotten that right living is essential for those who would claim to know God, this lesson cannot be proclaimed loudly enough."

Bridges - THIS is not the stern language of command. We are listening to our Father's voice in all the endearing persuasiveness of promise—My son. He had before instructed us to seek and search after wisdom, and set out before us its invaluable blessings. Now he calls us to bring it into practical exercise—Forget not my law. Not the infirmity of the memory, (for which a special, though we fear too much neglected, help, is provided,)(John 14:26) but the wilful forgetfulness of the heart, (Pr 2:17, Psalm 9:17; 10:4. Comp. Pr 4:5, Deut. 4:23, Psalm 119:93, 176.) is here implied. Let thine heart—like the ark of the testimony—be the keeping place of my commandments. (Pr 4:4, Deut. 11:18, Isa. 51:7, with Exod. 40:20, Heb. 9:4.) And is not this the child's desire—"O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes?" (Psalm 119:6; 69, 129.) while his conscious helplessness takes hold of the covenant promise—"I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts." (Jer. 31:33)

Teaching (instruction, teaching) ([08451](#))([torah](#) from [yarah](#)) is a feminine noun meaning instruction, direction, law, Torah, the whole Law. As discussed above yarah derives from a word that means to shoot an arrow, for a teacher aims to hit the target and achieve specific goals in the lives of the students.

Torah refers to instructions from God to His people on how to live (cf Job 22:22), and this was to be a total way of life, permeating every decision, thought, deed, etc. Torah was given to make known the way we should walk. In Israel, parents (Pr. 1:8; 6:20) and wise persons (Pr 13:14; 28:4) were major sources of instruction for life. Rebels were not willing to accept God's instructions in any manner (Isa 30:8, 9). In a similar way, the scribes handled the torah deceitfully and falsely "'How can you say, 'We are wise, And the law of the LORD is with us'? But behold, the lying pen of the scribes Has made it into a lie." (Jer. 8:8). Torah is often found paired with other words or phrases - "the word of the Holy One of Israel" (Isa. 5:24), "the word of the LORD" (Isa. 1:10); "To the law and to the testimony" (Isa. 8:20). Torah depict priestly instructions in general or as a whole. The Lord rejected the priests of Israel for

they had disregarded it -- "those who handle the law did not know Me" (Jer 2:8) "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being My priest. Since you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children." (Hos. 4:6). They had been charged to carry out and teach all the instructions of the Lord (Dt 17:11).

Torah in Proverbs -

Prov. 1:8; Prov. 3:1; Prov. 4:2; Prov. 6:20; Prov. 6:23; Prov. 7:2; Prov. 13:14; Prov. 28:4; Prov. 28:7; Prov. 28:9; Prov. 29:18; Prov. 31:26

Guzik on Let your heart keep my commands: Deciding to not forget God's word is more than a mental exercise of memory. It is also connected to a life of obedience, one that does keep the commands of God. If one mentally remembers God's Word yet fails to obey it, we could rightly say he or she has forgotten God's commands. We note also that this obedience is one of the heart. Our goal in obedience is not mere outward conformity to God's will, but a heart that loves and obeys Him. "The heart is the first thing that wanders away from God, and it is also the first thing that returns to God." (Bridges)

Proverbs 3:2 For length of days and years of life and peace they will add to you.

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

- length. ver. 16; ch. 4:10; 9:11. Job 5:26. Ps. 34:11–14; 91:16; 128:6. Ep. 6:1–3. 1 Ti. 4:8.
- long life. Heb. years of life. Ps. 21:4.
- and peace. ver. 17. Ps. 119:165. Is. 32:17; 57:19–21. Ro. 5:1; 14:17; 15:13.

Length of days - While it is true that many godly people die young, it is wonderfully true that eternal life is theirs in heaven and the new earth. Furthermore, it is at least statistically true that a life lived in obedience to the Word of God leads to a healthier and longer physical life for each individual than it would be otherwise. (H Morris)

It is not the **quantity** (length) of one's life, but the **quality** of that length that counts in eternity! God gave an unnamed robber on a Roman cross a ministry that lasted only a few seconds and yet it clearly demonstrated he was saved and it has borne fruit for over 2000 years, for it was recorded in Luke's Gospel! Here is the extent of this saved robber's fruitful testimony

And one of the criminals who were hanged there was hurling abuse at Him, saying, "Are You not the Christ? Save Yourself and us!" But the other answered, and rebuking him said, "**Do you not even fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we are receiving what we deserve for our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong.**" (Lk 23:39-41+)

See the [short sketch of Robert Murray McCheyne](#) below, a man who died at 29 but whose spiritual impact has rippled through the ages!

Bridges - Herein lies our interest, not less than our obligation. The reward of this lively obedience (need we add—a reward of grace?) is a long and happy life—the highest earthly good. (Psalm 34:12. Comp. ver. 16; 4:10; 9:11; 10:27, Job. 10:12.) The wicked indeed live long, and the godly often "live out only half his days." The wicked die in outward comfort, the righteous in outward trouble. (Eccl 9:2) But length of days is the promise to the righteous—whether for earth or for heaven, as their Father deems fittest for them. In itself the promise, as regards this life, has no charm. To the ungodly, it is a curse; (Gen. 4:11–15, Isa. 65:20.) to the people of God, a trial of faith and patience; (Gen. 27:46; 47:9, 1 Kings 19:4, Phil. 1:23, 24, Rev. 22:20.) to all a weariness. But peace added forms the sunshine of the toilsome way (Psalm 119:165, Isa. 32:17; 48:17, 18)—"peace with God through the blood of sprinkling," (Rom. 5:1, Eph. 2:13, 14, Col. 1:20) eternal peace in his home and in his bosom (Psalm 37:37, Isa. 57:2.)—where all the fightings of a rebellious flesh—all the counterstrivings of a perverse and ungovernable will, shall have ceased forever. "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gate into the city." (Rev. 22:14)

Perowne - long life Rather, with A.V. marg. and R.V. text, years of life. There is perhaps a climax; not only length of days, prolonged existence, but years of life truly so-called, life worth living. The distinction is at least suggested by the use of βίος in the first clause and ζωή in the second by the LXX. μ κος βίου, τη ζω ζ: not alone vita quam vivimus, but vita quâ vivimus.

Perowne - peace This word, meaning literally wholeness, completeness, contains implicitly and is gradually developed into its full Biblical sense: "the greatest blessing, even peace, a blessing which no man is able to afford," Philo quoted by Bp Westcott on St John 14:17. Comp. Phil. 4:7.

NET Note - The noun οἰλήσις (shalom, "peace") here means "welfare, health, prosperity" (BDB 1022 s.v. 3). It can be used of physical

health and personal well-being. It is the experience of positive blessing and freedom from negative harm and catastrophe.

As a medical doctor, I learned 50 years ago in medical school that when the body is deficient in various nutrients, it is ravaged by a host of pathological effects. Applying this truth metaphorically to our soul and our spiritual life, let me ask you as a physician, "**Are you experiencing a "deficiency" of inner peace deep down in your soul?"** Then this article may be just the "medicine" the Great Physician Jehovah Rapha, the LORD your Healer (Dt 32:39, 2Ki 20:5, 8, 2Chr 7:14, Ps 41:4, Isa 57:19, Jer 3:22, 17:14, 33:6, Hos 6:1, 14:4), might "prescribe" to heal your mind and restore peace to your soul. In sum, this article is not meant to be solely (pun intended) an intellectual exercise, but is also written to prompt your heart to meditate on God's great Shalom, an aspect of the fruit of the Holy Spirit, and as you meditate, the Spirit would use the truth about Shalom to renew your mind and transform you from glory to glory into the image of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 3:18-[note](#)).

Peace (07965)([shalom](#) from **salam/salem/shalom** = to be safe, sound, healthy, perfect, complete [1Ki 7:51, Neh 6:18]) signifies a sense of well-being and harmony both within and without - Completeness, wholeness, peace, health, welfare, safety, soundness, tranquility, prosperity, fullness, rest, harmony; the absence of agitation or discord, a state of calm without anxiety or stress.

The root meaning of **shalom** is to be whole or sound and this leads to translations that speak of completeness, wholeness, well-being, welfare and peace. **Shalom** also includes the idea of vigour and vitality in all dimensions of life. In short, **shalom** speaks of holistic ("holy") health for our souls and spirits.

Boice - Shalom is a large, embracing word for the good that comes to the one God favors.

Guzik - The Hebrew word is **shalom**, which is more than the cessation of hostility - it is God's word for wholeness and goodness and **total satisfaction in life. This is the abundant life Jesus promised!** (John 10:10)... shalom... is the gift of precious well-being... it is the establishment of a lasting, righteous, good. (Commentary on Nu 6:24-26) ([Commentary](#))

Kenneth Hemphill notes that **shalom** "means much more than the cessation of violence and hostility. There is a considerable difference between peace and a truce. It is glorious good news that Jehovah is peace... The idea behind the word shalom is wholeness and harmony in relationship with God. Peace is the deepest desire and need of the human heart. When you find yourself wondering where is the blessing of God's presence in your life, you need to remember that He is Jehovah Shalom. He desires to bring peace if you will simply return to Him. ([The Names of God- Ken Hemphill](#) - highly recommended)

Shalom speaks of the peace or tranquility of death, a state of restful calm, as seen in the passing of of godly people (e.g., Ge 15:15; Ex 18:23; 1Ki. 2:6; 2Ki. 22:20). **Shalom** is pictured as the equivalent or close synonym for "prosperity" in a material sense (cf. Ps 72:3ff.; Isa. 54:13). Isa. 66:12; Jer. 33:6ff. describes this kind of peace as the gift of God. Isa. 48:22; 57:21 declare that there is no peace for the wicked. The withdrawal of God's peace is viewed as a curse (cf. Jer. 16:5; Lam. 3:17; Eze. 7: 5; 13:16). Peace is identified as the fruit of righteousness (Isa. 32:17); and as a specific blessing from God (cf. 1Ki. 2:33; Ps 29:11; 85:8; Pr 3:17; Isa. 52: 7; 53:7; Jer. 28:9; Nah. 1:15; Hag. 2:9). Shalom is also found in formulae such as the greeting "Peace be ... " (cf. Ge 43:23; Jdg 6:23; Isa. 57:19). It is also found in the benediction "Go in peace" (cf. Ex 4:18; Num. 6:26; Jdg 18: 6; 1Sa. 20:42; 2Ki. 5:19). Peace in the sense of "absence of military conflict" is indicated in Dt 20:10; Jdg 4:17; 1Ki. 2:5; 4:24; Ec 3: 8; Isa. 39: 8. Isa. 9:7 refers to the anticipated peaceful rule of the Messianic Servant of Yahweh. The unique messianic title "prince of peace" is found in Isa. 9:6. There are a number of associated meanings, including that of "safe," found in 2Sa 18:29, 32 in relation to David's inquiry after the safety or welfare of his son Absalom. Job 21:9 speaks of houses "safe" from fear.

The peace offering (fellowship offering) (Nu 6:14) is the word **shelem** which is related to **shalom**. The peace offering was one of the blood sacrifices of which the shed blood was the atonement on which reconciliation and peace were based (Lev. 3; Lev 7:11-21). In the peace offering this restoration of fellowship between God and man, broken by sin, but now atoned for by the shed blood, was indicated by the fact that both God and man, priest and people, partook of the offering.

THOUGHT - Shalom implies a state of mind that is satisfied and has relationships which are characterized by [harmony](#) (a tuneful sound [Great picture! -- Does that describe your/my marriage/family/church relationships? Or would a better word be [cacophony](#) {discordant sounds, harshness in the sound of one's speech}?!] Harmony is a pleasing arrangement of parts, internal calm.

Shalom in Proverbs - Prov. 3:2; Prov. 3:17; Prov. 12:20;

Guzik on they will add to you - There is a real benefit from this life and heart that obeys God. In principle, life and heart obedience brings long life and peace. This is a blessed combination; length of days could be a curse and not a blessing without peace. i. We say in principle because this is largely how Proverbs was written and should be regarded. The principle of Proverbs 3:2 is not an absolute promise; there are some people who truly are given to obedience in both conduct and heart and die relatively young. Some godly persons have trouble living in peace. We regard these as true principles, not absolute promises.

Robert Murray McCheyne - One hundred and fifty years ago there appeared briefly, in the Kirk and city of Dundee, a man considered by Christian people world-wide ever since to be a shining light and saint extraordinary. He was Robert Murray McCheyne.

Writing in 1843 a Mr Hamilton of Regent Square, London said of this poet, prophet and saint: "... Whilst the possession of such a bright and shining light was the Church of Scotland's privilege, the rarity of such is the Church of Scotland's sin." Dr George Reid said as much in his article on "life style" in the September's Life and Work: "In the Church of Scotland saints are somewhat thin on the ground."

McCheyne's ministry was short. Inducted to the charge on November 24, 1836, at the age of 23, he died on March 25, 1843, at the age of 29. During an epidemic of typhus fever he was struck down while visiting sick people in the parish. Six years and four months!

If his life and work was short his influence has been long. His sheer spiritual impact on the life of Dundee and Scotland has provoked Christian folk ever since to make what can only be described as a pilgrimage to the scene of his life, love and labours.

From the Commonwealth, the United States and Europe, visitors come in order to stand in the pulpit that is said to have been wet with his tears as he urged people to commit their lives to Christ. With reverence they stand with bowed head before the memorial stone which marks his grave.

His friend and biographer, Dr Andrew Bonar once said, "There is a fragrance about McCheyne's grave." Certainly pilgrims past and present agree. Perhaps it is hardly passing strange that today Robert Murray McCheyne is not well known in Dundee since "a prophet is not without honour save in his own country."

Brought up on the West coast of Scotland, as a young man and boy my knowledge of Dundee included Our Wullie, the Broons, jute, jam and journalism, and a former Dundee player, Billy Steel. But for as long as I can remember the two names most closely identified with Dundee, both heroes of the faith, have been Mary Slessor and Robert Murray McCheyne.

Brought up in Edinburgh, where his father was a lawyer, Robert Murray McCheyne distinguished himself at the Royal High School and Edinburgh University. While still at school he wrote his first poem on "Greece, but living Greece no more," and at university his poem "On the Covenanters" won the prize in the Moral Philosophy class. His poem "I am a debtor" appears as hymn number 582 in the Revised Church Hymnary:

When this passing world is done,
When has sunk yon glaring sun,
When we stand with Christ in glory,
Looking o'er life's finished story,
Then, Lord, shall I fully know -
Not till then - how much I owe.

Chosen not for good in me,
Wakened up from wrath to flee;
Hidden in the Saviour's side,
By the Spirit sanctified,
Teach me, Lord, on earth to show,
By my love, how much I owe.

While at university it would appear that the young McCheyne, like the young Francis of Assisi, was fun-loving and pleasure seeking. The death of his brother David, a brilliant classical scholar and a Writer to the Signet, seems to have been the turning point in his life. David, a very religious man, was only 26 when he died. Robert, eight years his junior, had a tremendous admiration for David.

Inner struggle - Following the death of David, as is the common manifestation of sinners on the road to sainthood, McCheyne's writings indicate a deep inner spiritual struggle with temptation, sin, and a longing for forgiveness. Today, we might consider it guilt ridden and morbid when he writes on May 21, 1834:

"This day I have attained my twenty-first year. Oh, how long and worthlessly I have lived, Thou only knowest."

Since sin is no longer a fashionable notion, and in these enlightened times we have excised it from human consciousness, no doubt behavioural scientists would regard the young McCheyne as deeply disturbed and suffering from some form of extreme neurosis.

The language used to describe McCheyne's saintliness by his biographer, Dr Bonar, has a kind of Beulah land cadence to it that would hardly commend itself to us today, but the historical facts couched within it are beyond dispute.

In the 1830s Dundee was a boom town. When jute replaced flax, the city's fame spread throughout the commercial world, but in the manner of prophets and saints, McCheyne was not very impressed and his description is not very flattering: "A city given to idolatry and hardness of heart." However, McCheyne settled down to work in the parish of St Peter's with a burning conviction that the Spirit of God would work mightily in hard hearts. His sentiments are summed up in the following words:

Give me a man of God the truth to preach,
A house of prayer within convenient reach,
Seat-rents the poorest of the poor can pay,
A spot so small one pastor can survey:
Give these - and give the Spirit's genial shower,
Scotland shall be a garden all in flower.

While he was on a "Mission of Inquiry to the Jews," motivated by a deep concern for them as the people of the Covenant, a profound spiritual awakening took place in Dundee under the ministry of the locum, Mr William C. Burns. On his return McCheyne was confronted by a dramatically changed situation; the spiritual manifestation for which he had worked and prayed had happened while he was abroad.

Night after night St Peter's would be packed to the extent that many had to stand in the aisles and sit on the pulpit steps while the crowd outside was unable to gain entry. In order to accommodate the crowds it became necessary to hold services in the open air.

Spiritual revival - During this time both public and private prayer meetings were started on impulse, even the children conducted their own prayer meetings. On his return from Palestine, McCheyne found 39 prayer meetings, five of them conducted by children for children. Prayer groups continued to proliferate in the city and in the factories. A grass-roots spiritual awakening, or revival as some would describe it, had come to Dundee. It is generally conceded that the revival was due to the prophetic preparation and saintliness of Robert Murray McCheyne.

Proverbs 3:3 Do not let kindness and truth leave you; Bind them around your neck, Write them on the tablet of your heart.

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

NLT Proverbs 3:3 Never let loyalty and kindness leave you! Tie them around your neck as a reminder. Write them deep within your heart.

- mercy. Proverbs 16:6; 20:28. 2 Sa. 15:20. Ps. 25:10. Ho. 4:1. Mi. 7:18–20. Mal. 2:6. Mat. 23:23. Ep. 5:1, 2, 9.
- bind. Proverbs 6:21; 7:3. Ex. 13:9. De. 6:8; 11:18–21. Ps. 119:11.
- write. Je. 17:1. 2 Co. 3:3. He. 10:16.

DO NOT LET KINDNESS AND TRUTH LEAVE YOU: Our fallen flesh is the anti-thesis of kindness and truth, therefore we need to daily be filled with the Spirit (Eph 5:18+), Whom Jesus called the "Spirit of truth," that we might be enabled to walk throughout the day in His power and for the glory of Jesus (Gal 5:16+), bearing the fruit of "love, joy, peace, etc" (Gal 5:22+). That is a sure way to **not let kindness and truth** leave us!

In the Septuagint **kindness** is translated with the Greek **eleemosune** which is often translated alms in the NT, and speaks of kind deeds, charitable giving, compassionate, benevolent activity (especially toward the poor). It is surprising that truth is translated with **pistis** which means faith, faithfulness, reliability, commitment. The Hebrew verb **leave** (azab) is translated in Greek with the verb **ekleipo** which means to cease, fail, be used up, come to an end, die out. Don't let that happen to these two godly attributes! Keep on relying on the Spirit (keep in step with the Spirit) to enable these traits. This is not a suggestion but a command in the **aorist imperative** which speaks of its urgency and necessity.

Guzik - Matthew Poole observed that mercy and truth could be understood both as God's mercy and truth to us and as the mercy and truth that is man's duty to show to others. Both are important and should never be forsaken. "Mercy and truth are frequently joined together, as they are in God, as Psalms 25:10 57:3, &c., or in men, as Proverbs 16:6 20:28 Hosea 4:1, and here." (Poole)

BIND (Qal Imp) **THEM AROUND YOUR NECK** (Pr 6:21, 7:3, Dt 6:8) - The virtues of **mercy** and **truth** that come from God are to become part of us inwardly and then exude outwardly in our behavior for all to see as an adornment of Christ-like spiritual beauty and inwardly as the subject of our meditation. Such inward and outward **mercy and truth** is evidence of New Covenant salvation (cf. Jer. 31:33, 34) and shines light a light giving glory to our Father (Mt 5:16+).

Perowne - mercy and truth] The phrase is often used to represent the character of Almighty God as exhibited in His dealings with men (Gen. 24:17, 32:11; Ex. 34:6; Ps. 25:10). Hence it comes to represent the perfection of moral character in man (16:6, 20:28).

Bridges - Mercy and truth are the glorious perfections of God—always in exercise—always in combination (Gen. 32:10, Psalm 25:10; 85:10; 89:14; Ps. 100:5; 117:2, Mic. 7:18–20.)—for his people’s good. While we rest upon them for salvation, let us copy them in our profession. Are not his children new created in his image. Let then our Father’s image be manifested in us, “as his dear children.” (Eph. 4:24; 5:1, 2, 9.) Let these graces be, as with God, in combination. ‘The want of one buries the commendation of the other. Such a one is a merciful man to the poor; but there is no truth in him. Such a one is very just in his dealings, but as hard as flint.’ (F. Taylor’s exposition of Prov. 1–9. 4to. 1655–7.) “Put on, as the elect of God, bowels of mercy. But lie not one to another. Speak every man truth with his neighbor.” (Col. 3:12, 9, Eph. 4:25.) Nor must these virtues be in temporary or occasional exercise.

Mercy (Lovingkindness) ([02617](#)) (**Hesed/Chesed/Heced** See detailed study on [hesed/chesed/heced](#)) is the idea of faithful love in action and often in the OT refers to God's lovingkindness expressed in His covenant relationship with Israel (His "loyal love" to His "Wife" Israel [cp Hos 2:18, 19, 20-see [note](#), Is 54:5, Je 31:32] = His "loyalty to covenant"). God's **hesed** His denotes persistent and unconditional tenderness, kindness, and mercy, a relationship in which He seeks after man with love and mercy (cp God immediately seeking man Ge 3:9, who was immediately hiding Ge 3:8 trying to cover their shame Ge 3:7 - contrast God's lovingkindness manifest by spilling blood to provide skins to cover their shame! Ge 3:21). **Hesed** expresses both God’s loyalty to His covenant and His love for His people along with a faithfulness to keep His promises.

Hesed/heced in Proverbs -

Prov. 3:3; Prov. 11:17; Prov. 14:22; Prov. 14:34; Prov. 16:6; Prov. 19:22; Prov. 20:6; Prov. 20:28; Prov. 21:21;
Prov. 31:26;

Truth is that which one can rely on because it is stable and so it includes the idea of faithful and faithfulness (trustworthy).

Truth (faithfulness, faithfully) ([0571](#)) (**'emeth** from the verb [aman](#) = to confirm, support, believe, be faithful) is a feminine noun meaning truth, faithfulness, that which gives complete reliability. It is frequently connected with lovingkindness (Pr 3:3; Hos 4:1, 40:11, 61:7, 69:13, 85:10, 86:14, 89:14, 108:4) and occasionally with other terms such as peace (2Ki 20:19); righteousness (Isa. 48:1); and justice (Ps. 111:7). To walk in truth is to conduct oneself according to God’s holy standards (1Ki 2:4; 3:6; Ps. 86:11; Isa. 38:3). Truth was a measure of one’s word (1Ki 22:16; Da 11:2) and actions (Ge 24:49; Josh. 2:14). God is the God of **truth** (Ps 31:5, Ps 57:3, 10, 69:13 = "saving truth"; Ps 71:22, Ps 111:7, 115:1) See God's attribute of [Truth](#). The Lxx often uses [aletheia](#) (or cognates like [alethinous](#)) to translate **'emeth**.

All uses of **'emeth** in Proverbs -

Prov. 3:3; Prov. 8:7; Prov. 11:18; Prov. 12:19; Prov. 14:22; Prov. 14:25; Prov. 16:6; Prov. 20:28; Prov. 22:21;
Prov. 23:23; Prov. 29:14;

Let them not forsake thee. Bind them as jewels about thy neck. (Pr 6:21, 7:3, Deut. 6:8.) Let them be “written—not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart.” (Pr 7:3, 2 Cor. 3:3) God indeed is not thy debtor—yet none shall serve him for naught. The man who shews mercy to his neighbor shall find it with him. (Psalm 18:25, Matt. 5:7) “They that deal truly are his delight.” (Pr 12:22)

Perowne - bind them ... write them] Cultivate alike their outward exhibition “about thy neck,” and their inward possession upon the table of thine heart. Let them be in thee at once attractive and genuine. (Comp. 7:3; 2 Cor. 3:2, 3; 1 Pet. 3:3, 4).

The **neck** houses the throat, which in Hebrew [thought] is the very life of the person.

POSB - Mercy and truth or faithfulness are to be tied to the throat, so that they are literally a part of a person’s every breath. This is the better explanation, and more accurately expresses the intent of the command.

Guzik on Bind them...write them: “Striking expressions for glorying in, meditating on and (Pr 7:3) acting by these principles.” (Kidner) “By ‘binding’ and ‘writing’ the teacher is stressing that the teachings become a part of the disciple’s nature.” (Ross)

POSB - The binding to the neck and the writing upon the heart express the fact that God desires His commands to be the very life of His people—every breath they breathe and every beat of their hearts.

I am reminded of Moses description of the primacy and sufficiency of God's Word in Dt 32:47 where he says to Israel...

“For (TERM OF EXPLANATION - see Dt 32:46) **it** (THE WORD) is not an idle (empty, vain, worthless) **word** for you; indeed **it** (THE WORD) is your life. And by this **word** you will prolong your days in the land, which you are about to cross the Jordan to possess.”

THOUGHT - Do you consider the Word as so important that it is your life? Jesus said "It is the Spirit who

gives **life**; the flesh profits nothing, the words that I have spoken to you are **spirit** and are **life**." (Jn 6:63)
Are you daily taking in the living and energetic **Word of life** (1 Jn 1:1, cf Php 2:16) that you might truly live (cf Lk 4:4+, Mt 4:4) and grow in grace and Christlikeness (1 Pe 2:2, 2 Pe 3:18) and allow the Spirit to renew your mind (Eph 4:23, cf Ro 12:2, Col 3:16)?

Write (qal imperative) **them on the tablet of your heart** ([see below on heart](#)) - First, notice this is a command not a suggestion. Application point - Just do it! But how? Clearly this description is figurative, so the question is how can one write them on the table of one's heart? Obviously we can read the word, but an even more profitable way to "write" the Word on our heart is to memorize it! If you are not practicing the precious discipline of memorizing God's Word (under grace not law), you are missing the opportunity of a lifetime. There are not many things that will survive when heaven and earth fade away, but the written Word of God is one of those things and thus it behooves us to write it on our heart (heart speaking of our "control center" so to speak). The Holy Spirit then will take the Holy Word "written" on your heart and use it to make you progressively more holy. Paul writes

But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord (IN THE WORD), are (CONTINUALLY) being transformed into the same image (INTO GREATER CONFORMITY WITH GOD'S SON) from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit (THE SPIRIT SUPERNATURALLY TRANSFORMS US).(2 Cor 3:18+).

Here are some passages to ponder (and even memorize)...

Psalm 119:11 Your word I have treasured in my heart, That I may not sin against You.

QUESTION - This question is simple yet profound - what is a major impediment to that sin that so easily trips you up? Now beware because by just memorizing a relevant passage you should not think that you have a "lucky charm" that will keep you from slipping into that sin again. What you do have is "24/7" ready access to is the Word of Truth, the "sword of the Spirit" (Eph 6:17) which you can use even as did Jesus when He was tempted in the wilderness. He defeated the Devil's intense temptations because He was (1) filled with the Spirit (Lk 4:1+) and (2) filled with the Word.

Psalm 1:2 But his delight (SEE THE REQUIRED "PREREQUISITES" FOR DELIGHT = Psalm 1:1) is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night.

Psalm 37:31 The law of his God is in his heart; His steps do not slip.

QUESTION - Why do David's steps not slip? Do you desire a more stable spiritual walk? This passage makes it clear the practice you need to begin (memorize)!

Psalm 40:8 I delight to do Your will, O my God; Your Law is within my heart."

QUESTION - Why does David delight to do God's will according to this passage? Do you see the impact writing (treasuring, memorizing) God's Word on your heart can have on your spiritual life?

Gilbrant notes that "The Hebrew language was often written on readily available potsherds with ink, for everyday uses and letters. Shorter texts were written on flat pieces of wood and waxed over; these tablets could be bound together with leather straps forming a booklet (cf. Isa. 30:8; Hab. 2:2). Leather scrolls were also popular in Palestine, and writing was done in columns (Jer. 36:23). In Ezek. 2:9f the unusual length of the message is indicated by the necessity to write on both sides of the scroll. This differs from scrolls found in Qumran which have writing only on the hairy side for the most part. (Complete Biblical Library Hebrew-English Dictionary)

There is a parallel exhortation by Moses (yes, given to Israel but applicable to all followers of Christ)...

Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one! 5 "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. 6 "These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. 7 "You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. 8 "You shall **bind them** as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. 9 "You shall **write them** on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. (Deut. 6:4-9)

Even better than writing them on doorposts is to write them on our heart! How? Clearly but daily reading of God's Word of truth. But even better by daily memorizing God's Word so that we have it with us all day long (like "frontals" on our forehead!) and can facilitate the lost discipline of meditating on the Scriptures.

John Phillips - It was not easy for an Old Testament Jew to forget God's Word. He was required by law to write Bible texts on the doorposts of his house. When he went out, the texts on his doorposts called after him: "Where are you going? With whom will you

be? What business are you transacting? Be mindful of your conduct. Guard your conversation. Watch out for your character. Listen to your conscience. God never sleeps." When he returned home, the texts on his doorposts cross-examined him: "Where have you been? What have you been doing? Examine yourself. You cannot get away from God." We may remind ourselves of Bible verses we have memorized, but even so, God's Word can be pushed from our minds in the rush and bustle of life. Peer pressure, the demands of business, the hot lure of temptation, and other distractions can join forces to crowd God's Word out of our minds. But when God's Word is in our hearts, it will always hold center stage. Most of Daniel's contemporaries in exile conveniently forgot God's law regarding eating ceremonially unclean food. We can hear their excuses as they told themselves: "We are virtual prisoners. We are exiles. It is good policy to bow to the king's will. It's not as though we are breaking a moral law." Daniel scorned such sophistry. He "purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself" by eating the king's meat (Daniel 1:8). His contemporaries vanished into the anonymity of history, but Daniel became one of the most famous men of all time.

Related Resources: Word of God

- [Memorizing His Word](#)
- Topical Memory List - to help "jump start" you on this glorious journey.
- [1 Peter 2:2-3 Commentary](#)
- [2 Timothy 2:15 Commentary](#)
- [2 Timothy 3:16-17 Commentary](#)
- [A Primer On Biblical Meditation](#)
- [Application: Meditate on the Bible](#)
- [Colossians 3:16 Commentary](#)
- [Hebrews 4:12 Commentary](#)
- [Illumination of the Bible](#)
- [Inductive Bible Study: Observation](#)
- [Joshua 1:8 Commentary](#)
- [The Power of God's Word](#)
- [The Word of God - Quotations and Illustrations](#)

Here is an interesting note on **writing** - F. F. Bruce rightly emphasizes that the Hebrews in Palestine had a great advantage over the Egyptians and over those in Mesopotamia who wrote on clay tablets. The Hebrews had an alphabet. Whereas one must know several hundred signs to read Akkadian and also a large number to read Egyptian, the Hebrews only had to learn twenty-two. Says Bruce, "It is worth noticing that it was the alphabet that made it possible for all classes to be literate; its invention is therefore a landmark of great importance in the history of civilization," and, we may add, in the spread of the knowledge of God's word (*The Books and the Parchments*, rev. ed., 1963, p. 30). Harrison draws a significant conclusion, "It is no longer necessary to assume that an extended period of oral transmission is a necessary prerequisite to the written form of many if not all of the OT documents as is common in liberal circles" (HIOT p. 209). (Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament)

William Arnot - THE matter to be recorded is "mercy and truth:" the tablet for receiving it is the human heart; and here we have some instructions on the art of printing it.

Look first to the legend itself—"mercy and truth." These two, meeting and kissing in the Mediator, constitute the revealed character of God himself; and He desires to see, as it were, a miniature of his own likeness impressed upon his children. As we cannot have any printing without a type, we cannot have mercy and truth in holy union raised on the life of a human being, unless we get the exemplar brought from above, and transferred to man.

What God desires to see in man, he showed to man. He who dwelleth between the cherubim, merciful and true, shone forth upon his creatures, that those who look might be transformed into the same image, as by the Spirit of the Lord.

It is only in Christ that we can know God. As manifested there, He is just and forgiving: mercy and truth meet in the person and sacrifice of the Son. Without the Saviour, we can conceive of mercy or truth being displayed by God to the rebellious. We could at least conceive of mercy without truth; but then it would admit the unclean into heaven: we could also conceive of truth without mercy; but then it would cast mankind without exception into hell. In order that there might be mercy and truth from the Judge to the sinful, Christ obeyed, and died, and rose again. "God so loved the world, that He gave his only-begotten Son;" but God so hated sin, that He gave Him up to die as an expiation to justice. Mercy reigns, not over righteousness, but through righteousness.

"Be ye followers [imitators] of God as dear children" (Eph. 5:1). If we receive grace reigning through righteousness, a corresponding result will appear in our life. The reception of these into the heart is, as it were, the sowing of the seed; and that seed will bring forth fruit after its kind. If, conscious of guilt and condemnation, you accept and rejoice in free grace from God, this doctrine will not lie

barren within you. It will burst forth in meekness, gentleness, pity, love, to all the needy. If you mark, as you get pardon, how it comes—pardon through Christ crucified; if you take it as it comes,—bought by His blood; you will never make light of sin, either in yourselves or others. In all religions, true and false, there are an original and a copy. Either God manifested leaves the impress of his own character on the receptive heart of a believing man, or man unbelieving transfers his own likeness to the gods whom he makes in his imagination or by his hands. “Mercy and truth”—there is the type let down from God out of heaven; are our hearts open, soft, receptive, to take the impression on?

“Let them not forsake thee: bind them about thy neck.” These injunctions indicate that there is a fickleness which makes the printing difficult, and the impression indistinct at the best. This command to bind them about the neck (Deut. 6:8) was adopted by the Jews in the letter, and neglected in spirit. It degenerated into a superstition; and hence the phylacteries, the amulets worn by the Pharisees. The command here is more specific—“Write them upon the table of thine heart:” the reference obviously is to the writing of the law on tables of stone. These tables were intended to be not a book only, but also a type. From them we may read the law, indeed; but by them also an impression should be made on our own hearts, that we may always have the will of God hidden within us. This idea is with marvellous fulness expressed by Paul: “The epistle of Christ, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God: not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart” (2 Cor. 3:3). Men can easily read the word from the old table of stone; but they are slow to learn “the art of printing” it on their own nature, so that it may be legible in all their life. This impression can be effectually taken only in the melting down of the regeneration, as Paul expresses it, Rom. 6:17: “Ye have obeyed from the heart that mould of doctrine into which ye were delivered.”

This fleshly table of the heart lies open, and it is continually receiving impressions of some kind. It seems to harden after youth has passed, so that what it has previously received it tenaciously keeps; what is afterwards applied, it does not so readily take on. Of great moment it is, therefore, that right impressions should go deeply in, while the mind is still in a receptive state. But in this promiscuous life, the table of a young man’s heart lies open for all comers; it is often seen indented deeply and crowded all over with “divers lusts and pleasures,” so that no room is left whereon the things of God may mark themselves.

At places of public resort, such as the summit of a lofty mountain, or the site of some famous monument, you may see tables of wood or stone or level turf. All over them inscriptions have been chiselled so thickly, that you could not now find an unoccupied spot to plant a letter on. The characters are various: some old, some new, some well formed, some irregular scrawls, some mere scratches on the surface, which a winter’s storm will wash out, some so deep that they will be legible for ages. As to matter, some are records of personal ambition, others a spurt of thoughtless jollity, others the date of some great event; some are profane, and some political. The table lies there, the helpless recipient of ideas, good or bad, that stray comers may choose to impress on it.

I have thought, as I looked on the Babel-like confusion, that the heart of a man, which the Bible calls a “table,” is like one of these common public receptacles. In youth it is peculiarly soft, and affords an inviting material for every adventurous sculptor to try his hand upon. It often lies exposed, and receives the accidental impressions of ever passer by. Many legends of mere emptiness have been written on it, and were thought innocent; but there they are, at life’s latest day, taking up room, and doing no good. Some impure lines have been early carved in, and now they will not out, even where the possessor has been renewed, and learned to loathe them. Parents, set a fence round your children; youth, set a fence round yourselves. Perhaps you may have seen one of these monumental tablets suddenly enclosed, and a notice exhibited over the gateway, doing all men to wit, that “whereas some evil disposed persons have imprinted vain and wicked words on this table, it has been surrounded by a strong fence, and henceforth no person shall be admitted to write thereon except the owner and his friends.” Go thou and do likewise. Warn, ward the intruders off. Reserve that precious tablet for the use of the King its owner, and those who will help to occupy it with His character and laws.

Take these three in the form of practical observations.

1. The duty of parents is clear, and their encouragements great. Watch the young. Stand beside that soft receptive tablet. Keep trespassers away more zealously than ever hereditary magnate kept the vulgar from his pleasure-grounds. Insert many truths. Busily fill the space with good, and that too in attractive forms. This is the work laid to your hand. Work in your own subordinate place, and the Lord from above will send the blessing down.

2. Afflictive providences generally have a bearing on this printing process. God sends what will break the heart: nay, sometimes a fire to melt it like water within you; and this, in wise mercy, to make it take on the truth. When the pilgrims compare notes in Zion at length, it will be found that most of them learned this art of printing in the furnace of affliction. “Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I have kept thy word” (Ps. 119:67). The heart, in contact with a busy world, was rubbed smooth and slippery; the type, when it touched, glided off the surface, and left no mark behind; this bruising and breaking opened the crust, and let the lesson in.

3. Whether in youth or in age, whether in sickness or in health, it is not an effort from within or a

providence from without that will make the heart new and the life holy. It is the type, by the Spirit's ministry impressed on the prepared page; it is the mercy and truth united in Christ crucified for sin,—embodied love let down from heaven and touching the earth; it is Christ clasped to a softened heart, that will reimprint the image of God upon a sinful man.

Proverbs 3:4 So **you will find** favor and good repute In the sight of God and man.

KJV Proverbs 3:4 So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man.

Septuagint - kai pronouo (2SPMM: pronouo: think of beforehand, perceive ahead of time, foresee;take thought for 1Th5.8; give attention to doing someth., be concerned to show Ro12.17; 2Co8.21) kala enopion kuriou kai anthropon

- shalt. Ge. 39:2–4, 21. 1 Sa. 2:26. Ps. 111:10. Da. 1:9. Lu. 2:52. Ac. 2:47. Ro. 14:18.
- good understanding. or, good success. Jos. 1:7, 8, marg. Ps. 111:10.

MOTIVATION TO PRACTICE PROVERBS 3:3!

The fact that **you will find** is a command is at first somewhat confusing and does not readily suggest Pr 3:4 is motivation for practicing Pr 3:3. The **NET Note** is helpful here stating...

The form מצא (umétsa', "find") is the imperative but **it functions as a purpose/result statement.** Following a string of imperatives (v. 3), the imperative with a prefixed vav introduces a volitive sequence expressing purpose or result (v. 4).

SO YOU WILL FIND: The point is that we must discover this wonderful truth for ourself (with God's help of course). We won't come upon it if we are wandering in the path of unrighteousness, groveling in the miry clay of sin. We must be walking on the highway of holiness. We must be walking in the Spirit. Spiritual Truth is ONLY discerned spiritually. We must search but we will find because God is not a man that He should lie but remains steadfastly faithful to His covenant promises. Cp Pr 1:23, 8:17

Waltke - "Favor (hen, see Pr 1:9), the common word for 'grace,' here denotes the positive disposition of heaven and earth toward the son because of his attractiveness. Like hesed, it cannot be compelled; it is extended voluntarily and unilaterally to preserve a valued relationship."

Bridges - **So shalt thou find favor and good understanding**—(Psalm 111:10.)(success)(Jos. 1:7, 8.) both in his sight, and in the sight of man. Witness Joseph in Egypt (Gen. 39:2–4, 21–23; 41:37–43; 45:16)—David in the family of Saul (1 Sam. 18:5, 14–16.)—the servants of God in the Eastern courts (Dan. 1:8, 9; 4:8, 9; 5:11; 6:1–3, 27, 28.—His three companions, 3:30, Ezra 7:9–12.—Neh. 2:1–6. Mordecai, Esth. 10:3.)—the early Christians with the people around them. (Acts 2:44–47) What is more lovely than thus to live down reproach by consistent godliness? What more acceptable to God, or more edifying to the Church? (Pr. 16:7, Rom. 14:16–19.) Was not this the record of "the holy child, that he increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man?" (Luke 2:52)The highest crown of a youthful profession is conformity to the Divine pattern. (Comp. 1 Sam. 2:26)

Perowne - **favour and good understanding**] Your character will conciliate for you by its two great elements of mercy and truth, the two corresponding tributes of good-will and respect. (Comp. 1 Sam. 2:26; Luke 2:52.) To find good understanding in the sight of anyone (A.V. and R.V. text), i.e. to be regarded by him as prudent and intelligent, gives a satisfactory sense, without having recourse to the other renderings, good success (A.V. marg.); good repute (R.V. marg.); care or consideration (Maurer, who compares Ps. 41:1 [Heb. 2], where the same Heb. word is rendered considereth). We are told in this Book that good understanding giveth (or getteth) favour, 13:15.

Garrett - "This means that others will recognize the competence and intelligence of the wise individual."

Trapp on having **favor before man**: "As did Joseph, Moses, David. He was a man after God's own heart, and whatsoever he did pleased the people. It is God that gives credit; he fashioneth men's opinions, and inclineth their hearts, as Ezra oft acknowledges with much thankfulness. [Ezra 7:27-28]"

Favor (grace) ([02580](#)) ([chen/hen](#) from verb **chanan** = to favor) means favor (acts which display one's fondness or compassion for another), grace (acts of kindness displaying one's pleasure with an object, which benefit the object of pleasure), acceptance. The idea is that a person finds favor in the sight of another person or acceptance by the person. This word plays a major role in helping

us understand God's relationship with sinful men as shown in the first use in Genesis 6:8 with those wonderful words "And Noah found favor (grace) in the eyes of the Lord." The result of this favor was that he was delivered by God from His judgment of the world through the Flood. In a similar vein, the nation of Israel was granted by God to receive "favor in the sight of the Egyptians." (Ex 3:21, 11:3, 12:36). Meanings include - Favor, grace, charm, graciousness, kindness, beauty, pleasantness, attractiveness, loveliness, affectionate regard. The basic meaning of **chen** is "**favor**." Whatever is "pleasant and agreeable" can be described by this word. **Chen** conveys a sense of acceptance or preference. The related verb **chanan** depicts a heartfelt response by someone who has something to give to one who has a need.

Chen occurs...

- 43x as "matsa chen" = "find favor in the eyes of,"
- 7x with verb "to give,"
- 3x with verb "to obtain"

The essence of **chen** is that it speaks of an "unmerited favor or regard in God's sight. Beyond this, however, the word conveys a sense of acceptance or preference in a more general manner as well, such as the enticement of a woman (Pr. 31:30; Nah. 3:4); elegant speech (Eccl. 10:12); and some special standing or privilege with God or people (Nu 32:5; Esther. 5:2; Zech. 12:10). (Baker)

What the Bible Teaches in the sight of God and men – The word for **sight** is interesting and illuminating. **It means to look in the eye**. Whether it is the man able to look God in the eye, or God able to look a man in the eye, the force of the word is similar. Here is a man who can look up to God and out to his fellow man with no sense of pretense or fear of disclosure. He is not living a double life. His approval is both before God and man. God has the first place as this has priority in our lives. **We cannot be right before men if we are not right before God**. But he also finds favour before men. All his relationships are maintained as a result of a right relationship with God. Many of our problems in relationships, if not all, whether in marriage, family, assembly life, or social and business life, can be traced to the fact that we are not right before God. Fix the vertical and the horizontal will fix itself.

Proverbs 3:5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart And do not lean on your own understanding.

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

LXE Trust in God with all thine heart; and be not exalted in your own wisdom.

- Trust. Proverbs 22:19. Job 13:15. Ps. 37:3, 5, 7; 62:8; 115:9–11; 125:1; 146:3–5. Is. 12:2; 26:3, 4. Je. 17:7, 8. Ep. 1:12.
- and. Pr 3:7; Proverbs 23:4; 28:26. Je. 9:23; 10:23. Ro. 12:16. 1 Co. 3:18–20; 8:1, 2.

ON WHOM ARE YOU LEANING? SELF OR SAVIOR?

This speaks of our priority! What you value, you will make your priority! Here the key word is **trust**! It is like a "key" which opens the door to God's bountiful blessing.

Duane Garrett - True piety manifests itself as intellectual humility (vv. 5–8), submission of material wealth to God's rule (vv. 9–10), and patient acceptance of divine discipline (vv. 11–12).

John Phillips - The book of Proverbs takes the Mosaic law and breaks it up into its glowing primeval colors, as a prism divides a ray of light. The 613 commandments in the law covered all aspects of life, including the simply prosaic and pragmatic matters of fact. In Proverbs those commandments are transformed into poetry, flashing and scintillating with color. The wise man wanted us to see in a spectrum of color what happens when we enthrone God's Law in our hearts.... Our God is utterly dependable. His character makes it impossible for Him to lie. His wisdom is so great He can never make a mistake. Our God can be trusted. He has high and holy purposes and no ulterior motives. His love is so limitless He can never be unkind. Yet perfect love is always balanced by absolute holiness. As Preston Moore, a preacher friend of mine, says, "He will never let us go, never let us down, and never let us off." So we can trust Him. We must trust Him. We must trust Him with all our heart. Anything less is an insult. A divided heart and a double mind are almost as bad as no trust at all. However, God is patient; He will begin a relationship with us when we have only a flawed faith, but He demands complete commitment. He expects us to trust Him even in the darkest times, and He expects our trust to grow.

POSB - Verses five and six are the best known and most memorized verses of Proverbs. In fact, they are the life verses of many believers. These two cherished verses describe a life of total dependence and commitment to God. This is what our Heavenly Father wants of us, His dear children-all who truly follow Him. He longs for us to be completely dependent upon Him and to have

utter confidence in Him. This is what it means to trust. The object of the wise person's **trust** is the **Lord** (Yahweh, Jehovah): the covenant-keeping God, the God who cannot lie (Titus 1:2; He. 6:18). At this point—where this father emphasizes keeping the commandments of God—he instructs his son **not to focus his trust in the law of God but in the God of the law**. God is trustworthy because of who He is. Yahweh is His personal name. It is the name by which He revealed Himself to Moses and to the children of Israel (Ex. 3:13-15). **Trust does not come from the head but from the heart. It is not the result of reasoning; it is the result of believing.** “Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.” (Ro. 4:3; also Ga. 3:6; Jas. 2:23). But when Abraham leaned on his own understanding, he failed miserably. According to his understanding, God could not provide for him in the famine (Ge. 12:10-20). God could not give him a son when he and Sarah were far past the natural age of childbearing (Ge. 16:1-4). Abraham's lack of trust—the result of leaning on his own understanding—still has major implications in the world approximately 4,000 years later. Trust is an all or nothing proposal: “Trust in the Lord with all thine heart.” **Partial trust is not trust at all. Either God is trustworthy, or He is not. If He cannot be trusted with all, He cannot be trusted at all.**

Bridges - This is the polar-star of a child of God—faith in his Father's providence, promises, and grace. Let the eye look upward, and all will be light. (Matt. 6:22. Comp. Psalm 32:8, 34:5.) This is the privilege of adoption. The unmeaning expression of **trust** on the lips of the ignorant and ungodly is a fearful delusion. What ground of confidence can there be, when there is every thing to fear? Can the sinner's God—a just, avenging God—be an object of **trust**? What owe we to that precious atonement, which has opened up our way to a reconciled God (Rom. 5:11.), and assured our confidence in him as our Friend and Counselor! Nor is this the cold assent of the enlightened judgment. It is the **trust of the heart—of all the heart**. It is a childlike confidence without wavering (Comp. 1 Chron. 12:33; 2 Chron. 14:11. Contrast Jas. 1:6–8.), in our Father's well-proved wisdom, faithfulness, and love. Any limit to this confidence is a heinous provocation. (Psalm 78:18–21) He is truth itself. Therefore he loves, that we should take him at his word, and prove his word to the utmost extent of his power.

But our **trust** must not only be **entire**, it must be **exclusive**. No other confidence—no confidence in the flesh—can consist with it. (Comp. Phil. 3:3) Man with all his pride feels that he wants something to lean to. As a fallen being, he naturally **leans to himself**,—to his own foolish notions and false fancies. Human power is his idol. He makes his **understanding** his god. Many would rather be convicted of want of principle than of want of talent. Many bring God's truth to their own bar, and cavil at it, as an excuse for rejecting it. In these and other ways, man “trusteth to himself, and his heart departeth from the Lord.” (Jer. 17:5.) This is the history of the fall—the history of man from the fall—the dominant sin of every unhumiliated heart—the lamented and resisted sin of every child of God. Need we advert to it as the sin of youth? How rare is the sight of the “younger submitting unto the elder!” If advice is asked, is it not with the hope of confirming a **previously-formed purpose? In case of dissent, the young man's own understanding usually decides the course.**

John Trapp - To trust in God is to be unbottomed of thyself, and of every creature, and so to lean upon God, that if he fail thee thou sinkest.

Trust - The Lxx uses **peitho** emphasizing the idea of having come to a settled persuasion concerning some truth -- in the present context, the truth that God has our best interest at heart.

Wiersbe on **trust** - The word translated “trust” in verse 5 means “to lie helpless, facedown.” It pictures a servant waiting for the master's command in readiness to obey, or a defeated soldier yielding himself to the conquering general.

Higgins agrees that the Hebrew word **batach** “means to stretch out or to lie face down. It is a picture of a man totally stretched out on his face before God. The message of his posture is his total helplessness and dependence upon God. It bespeaks that he is totally yielded to that will. Matthew reminds us of the Lord Jesus that He “fell on his face, and prayed ... not as I will, but as thou wilt” (Mt 26:39). ([Ibid](#))

Trust (Rely, confident, secure)([0982](#))(**batach** speaks of being confident or trusting and pertains to placing reliance or belief in a person or object (Ps 112:7; Isa 26:3) Batach expresses sense of well-being and security from having something or someone in whom to place confidence. Notice all the uses in the book of Psalms (see below) where many if not most refer to trust in Jehovah (this would make a great devotional study to see what is associated with trust in the LORD). In the first use (Dt 28:52) Israel had failed to trust in Name of Jehovah, but instead put their trust in their “towns” with their “high and fortified walls” which would be broken down. In Jdg 9:26 men of Shechem put their trust in Gaal. In Jdg 9:26, 18:7, 10, 27 all mean “secure” referring to people living in security. Hezekiah trusted in LORD. The uses of batach are so wonderful that all the 116 verses are listed below to facilitate easy study. Note especially all the uses of trust in Psalm 22 a clearly Messianic psalm.

NET Note on batach - (1) literal physical sense: to physically lean upon something for support and (2) figurative sense: to rely upon someone or something for help or protection (BDB 105 s.v. **בָּטַח**; HALOT 120 s.v. **בִּטַח**). The verb is often used with false securities, people trusting in things that prove to be worthless. But here the object of the secure trust is the LORD who is a reliable object of confidence.

Uses of batach in Proverbs -

Prov. 3:5; Prov. 11:15; Prov. 11:28; Prov. 14:16; Prov. 16:20; Prov. 28:1; Prov. 28:25; Prov. 28:26; Prov. 29:25; Prov. 31:11

Guzik on with all your heart: If trust in God is to be true, it must be complete. To put half trust in God and half trust in self or something else is really failure to trust the Lord at all. We should endeavor to give God all our conscious trust. "They trust not God at all that do it not alone. He that stands with one foot on a rock, and another foot upon a quicksand, will sink and perish as certainly as he that stands with both feet on a quicksand." (Trapp). This aspect troubles some, because they fear there is some part of their heart that is not truly trusting God. We may sympathize with this concern, knowing that as imperfect people it is impossible for us to trust in the Lord perfectly. In principle, we gather that Proverbs 3:5-6 does not describe an objectively perfect trust in God, but a heart and life that does not consciously reject or defy God with unbelief. In fact, the following phrases will explain what Solomon intended with the phrase with all your heart. "This trust is not the mere cold assent of enlightened judgment. It is trust ... with all your heart. It is a childlike, unwavering confidence in our Father's well-proved wisdom, faithfulness, and love." (Bridges)

NET Note on heart - The "heart" functions as a metonymy of subject encompassing mind, emotions and will.

Heart (03820) (leb) note that this discussion also includes the closely related noun lebab [03824](#) sometimes refers to a literal heart (Ex 28:29, 1Sa 25:37, 2Ki 9:24), but most often is used figurative to refer to what I term the "control center" of our being. Think of an Air Traffic Controller and how dysfunctional, even destructive it is when the controllers fail to function as they should.

Just as a healthy human heart is at the center of the body and absolutely essential for physical life and health, so too a healthy spiritual heart (intellect, emotion, will) is at the center of one's inner being (soul) and is vital for a healthy soul, serving as the "fountain" of all moral attitudes and actions. Our spiritual heart thus controls out actions and our actions determine our habits, which in turn determine our character. When God measures the "worth" of a man's life He puts the measuring tape around his heart, not around his head. Be a man after God's Own heart (Acts 13:22) We must continually "post a guard" at the doorway of our heart, so that every avenue for sin's entry is blocked.

John MacArthur - The "heart" commonly refers to the mind as the center of thinking and reason (Pr 3:3; 6:21; 7:3), but also includes the emotions (Pr 15:15, 30), the will (Pr 11:20; 14:14), and thus, the whole inner being (Pr 3:5). The heart is the depository of all wisdom and the source of whatever affects speech (Pr 4:24), sight (Pr 4:25), and conduct (Pr 4:26, 27). (MacArthur Study Bible Nashville: Word)

Related Resource - see notes on Proverbs 4:23 where **heart** is discussed in more detail

NET Note on heart - The "heart" functions as a metonymy of subject encompassing mind, emotions and will

All uses of heart (leb) in Proverbs - Clearly heart is a key word in Proverbs!

Prov. 2:2; Prov. 2:10; Prov. 3:1; Prov. 3:3; Prov. 3:5; Prov. 4:4; Prov. 4:23; Prov. 5:12; Prov. 6:14; Prov. 6:18; Prov. 6:21; Prov. 6:32; Prov. 7:3; Prov. 7:7; Prov. 7:10; Prov. 7:25; Prov. 8:5; Prov. 9:4; Prov. 9:16; Prov. 10:8; Prov. 10:13; Prov. 10:20; Prov. 10:21; Prov. 11:12; Prov. 11:20; Prov. 12:8; Prov. 12:11; Prov. 12:20; Prov. 12:23; Prov. 12:25; Prov. 13:12; Prov. 14:10; Prov. 14:13; Prov. 14:14; Prov. 14:30; Prov. 14:33; Prov. 15:7; Prov. 15:11; Prov. 15:13; Prov. 15:14; Prov. 15:15; Prov. 15:21; Prov. 15:28; Prov. 15:30; Prov. 15:32; Prov. 16:1; Prov. 16:5; Prov. 16:9; Prov. 16:21; Prov. 16:23; Prov. 17:3; Prov. 17:16; Prov. 17:18; Prov. 17:20; Prov. 17:22; Prov. 18:2; Prov. 18:12; Prov. 18:15; Prov. 19:3; Prov. 19:8; Prov. 19:21; Prov. 20:5; Prov. 20:9; Prov. 21:1; Prov. 21:2; Prov. 21:4; Prov. 22:11; Prov. 22:15; Prov. 22:17; Prov. 23:7; Prov. 23:12; Prov. 23:15; Prov. 23:17; Prov. 23:19; Prov. 23:26; Prov. 23:33; Prov. 23:34; Prov. 24:2; Prov. 24:12; Prov. 24:17; Prov. 24:30; Prov. 24:32; Prov. 25:3; Prov. 25:20; Prov. 26:23; Prov. 26:25; Prov. 27:9; Prov. 27:11; Prov. 27:19; Prov. 27:23; Prov. 28:14; Prov. 28:26; Prov. 30:19; Prov. 31:11

Bridges - Great reason then is there for the warning—**Lean not to thine own understanding**. Once indeed it gave clear unclouded light, as man's high prerogative—created in the image of God. (Gen. 1:26, Col. 3:10.) But now—degraded by the fall, (Psalm 49:20) and darkened by the corruption of the heart (Eph. 4:18.)—it must be a false guide. Even in a renewed man—a prophet of God—it proved a mistaken counselor. (2 Sam. 7:2–5.) Yet throw it not away. Let it be diligently cultivated in all its faculties. In a world of such extended knowledge—ignorance is a reproach—the fruit of sloth, dissipation, or misguided delusion. Use it then actively. Religion strengthens—not destroys—its power. But—**lean not to it—lean—trust in the Lord** Self-dependence is folly (Pr 28:26)—rebellion, (Jer. 2:13, 9:23) ruin. (Gen. 3:5, 6, Isa. 47:10, 11.) 'The great folly of man in trials'—as Dr. Owen justly remarks—'is—their leaning to or upon their own understanding and counsels. What is the issue of it? "The steps of his strength shall be straightened, and his own counsel shall cast him down." (Job 18:7) First he shall be entangled, and then cast down; and all by his own counsels, until he come to be ashamed of it. (Hos. 10:6) Whenever in our trials we consult our own understandings, or hearken to self-reasonings, though

they seem to be good, and tending to our preservation; yet the principle of living by faith is stifled, and we shall in the issue be cast down by our own counsels.' (Treatise on Temptation, chap. 8)

AND DO NOT LEAN ON (expresses attitude of trust) **YOUR OWN UNDERSTANDING:** Don't trust yourself...your unrenewed fleshly thinking is still just that = fleshly. And it does not seek to please God but to satisfy self. So in discerning whether you are in God's will or not, be careful invoking your own understanding in the matter...what seems reasonable and logical thru temporal, human eyes, may be absolutely foolish when viewed through eternal eyes. So let us pray that we would be filled with knowledge of God's will in all spiritual wisdom and UNDERSTANDING (Col 1:9+, cp Ep 5:17).

Adam Clarke - "It is on GOD, not on thyself, that thou art commanded to depend. He who trusts in his own heart is a fool...Self-sufficiency and self-dependence have been the ruin of mankind ever since the fall of Adam. The grand sin of the human race is their continual endeavour to live independently of God."

Do no lean in the Septuagint is translated with epiro which means lifting up and so speaks of exalting oneself, to be presumptuous, putting on airs. That is what we do when we lean on our own understanding rather than humbling ourselves and leaning on God's perfect understanding! This is not a good trade!

Lean on (rely on, trust) (08172)(**sha'an**) primarily means to lean on something (Saul on his sword = 2Sa 1:6) or someone (2Ki 5:16, 7:2, 17), to rest on (resting one's full weight on so to speak), to support oneself (Jdg 16:26), figuratively to trust (2Chr 13:18, Job 8:15, other versions render rely), to rest (Ge 18:4). Rely on got King Asa in trouble! (2 Chr 16:7 - twice). Micah 3:11 = "lean on the LORD" (NET = "claim to trust"). In Isa 30:12, Isa 31:1, Isa 50:10 we see "trust in" (batach) paralleled with "relied on" (sha'an) Sha'an is translated as "steadfast" in Isa 26:3.

Gilbrant - The meaning of the verb **shā'an** is "to lean on" something or someone. Saul leaned on his spear (2 Sam. 1:6). Samson leaned against the pillar (Judg. 16:26). This meaning led to the common usage of this verb as a figurative idea of "relying on" someone for help. Kings had a close aid or officer to "lean on" or accompany them and give advice, help and even protection (2 Ki. 5:18; 7:2, 17). The idea of having a sense of security and support is found in Job 24:23. A person can trust in his house (8:15). Abraham told the three angels to rest or recline under the tree, using this verb (Gen. 18:4). A graphic picture of leaning on someone for help who is the wrong source is Judah trusting in and leaning on Egypt like a staff and having it break like a reed and hurt them (Ezek. 29:7). Asa quit looking to or "leaning on" the Lord for help against enemies as he used to do and so was rebuked and punished (2 Chr. 14:11; 16:7f). Isaiah rebuked the people for rejecting God's Word and depending on oppression and deceit (Isa. 30:12), and for depending on horses and chariots instead of seeking the Lord (31:1). Micah 3:11 says the leaders were falsely ministering out of greed. They claimed that they leaned on the Lord and assumed that they were secure from enemy attack because God was in Judah. Often, this verb is used in parallel with the more common verb for "trusting," batach. The most well-known verse which uses both verbs is Prov. 3:5: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart; and lean not unto your own understanding." ([Complete Biblical Library Hebrew-English Dictionary](#))

NET NOTE on lean - Heb "do not lean." The verb **שׂוּן** (sha'an, "to lean; to rely") is used in (1) literal physical sense of leaning upon something for support and (2) figurative sense of relying upon someone or something for help or protection (BDB 1043 s.v.). Here it functions figuratively (hypocatastasis: implied comparison); relying on one's own understanding is compared to leaning on something that is unreliable for support (e.g., Isa 10:20).

POSB - We have to make a choice: we can follow our own **understanding** or **trust in a God who is greater than our understanding**. What we have to recognize is that our understanding is not trustworthy. (1) Human understanding is darkened by our nature of sin, spiritual blindness, and hard hearts. (Ep.4:18). (2) Human understanding is limited. God's understanding is far higher. (Ro 11:33-34, Is.55:8-9). (3) Human understanding is often contrary to God's wisdom. Common sense is good, but God's ways do not always parallel the common sense of human beings. (1 Co.1:25-29).

Higgins on our **own understanding** - Here is underlined the danger of using mental faculties without the Lord. God has given us intelligence and expects it to be used. But it is always linked with the desire to please God and to be yielded to His direction. Are we to jettison our intelligence? Rather we are to yield it to be enlightened by His wisdom. "One is a fool to rely on his thimble of knowledge before its (wisdom's) vast ocean, or on his own understanding, which is often governed by irrational urges that he cannot control" (B. Waltke). ([What the Bible Teaches](#))

Understanding (0998)(**binah**) means "understanding, insight, discernment, i.e., a good sense or wisdom to respond properly to the LORD and his Torah (Dt 4:6), (2) understand, i.e., to be given a revelation as well as its meaning (Da 10:1); (3) understand, i.e., skillfully react to life situations (1Ch 12:32."

Binah "carries strong moral and religious connotations. In Job 28:28, the act of turning away from evil was said to be understanding and was based on a prior proper discernment of what was evil. A lack of this kind of understanding was morally culpable and resulted in sin and even drove away God's compassion for persons who did not have it (Isa. 27:11). Happily, understanding as a

moral or religious entity can be acquired (Pr 4:5, 7) and even increased (Isa. 29:24) by seeking after it diligently. The understanding that God desires has a cognitive dimension, therefore, as further illustrated when the author of Proverbs spoke of words of "understanding" (Pr 1:2). The understanding and discernment that is the object of all knowing is the knowledge of the Holy One (Pr 9:10). Understanding is to mark God's people. It is not surprising, therefore, to learn that by means of understanding, God made all His created order (cf. Ps. 136:5). God has graciously endowed human beings with the ability of understanding and comprehension, but this faculty is not infallible, and, therefore, we are to ask God for guidance at all times (Pr 3:5). Our own ability of understanding should, however, function to give us discernment, for instance, in showing a proper attitude toward seeking the riches of this world (Pr 23:4). Our understanding is also the ability that enables us to understand languages (Isa. 33:19), literature, visions, and dreams (Da 1:20-note). It is the ability that decodes the symbols of communication for us. The writer of Proverbs personifies understanding along with wisdom in the famous wisdom chapter of Proverbs (Pr 2:3; 8:14)." (Complete Word Study Dictionary)

NET NOTE on understanding - Heb "your understanding." The term בִּינָה (binah, "understanding") is used elsewhere in this book of insight given by God from the instructions in Proverbs (Prov 2:3; 7:4; 8:14; 9:6, 10; 23:23). Here it refers to inherent human understanding that functions in relative ignorance unless supplemented by divine wisdom (Job 28:12–28; 39:26). The reflexive pronoun "own" is supplied in the translation to clarify this point. It is dangerous for a person to rely upon mere human wisdom (Prov 14:12; 16:25).

Binah in Proverbs -

Prov. 1:2; Prov. 2:3; Prov. 3:5; Prov. 4:1; Prov. 4:5; Prov. 4:7; Prov. 7:4; Prov. 8:14; Prov. 9:6; Prov. 9:10; Prov. 16:16; Prov. 23:4; Prov. 23:23; Prov. 30:2

Leaning On — the Everlasting Arms

[\(Click title to play tune sung in movie "True Grit"\)](#)

What a fellowship, what a joy divine,
Leaning on the everlasting arms;
What a blessedness, what a peace is mine,
Leaning on the everlasting arms.

CHORUS

Leaning, leaning,
Safe & secure from all alarms;
Leaning, leaning,
Leaning on the everlasting arms.

Oh, how sweet to walk in this pilgrim way,
Leaning on the everlasting arms;
Oh, how bright the path grows from day to day,
Leaning on the everlasting arms.

What have I to dread, what have I to fear,
Leaning on the everlasting arms;
I have blessed peace with my Lord so near,

Leaning on the everlasting arms.

Text: Elisha A. Hoffman

Music: Anthony J. Showalter

William Arnot - FAITH is not fear, and fear is not faith. The terrors of the Lord beaming in upon the conscience, using guilt as fuel for the flame of a premature torment, do not constitute conversion. Christianity is not a dark ground, with here and there a quivering streak of light thrown in; blessed hope is the basis of it all. Many dark spots deface it, at the best; but the ground is a bright ground. It is a positive, and not a negative thing. It has many diseases and pains, but it is in its nature a life, and not a death. It flies to God, not from him. It is not a slave's struggle to escape from divine vengeance: it is a dear child's confidence in a Father's love. Christ is the way; but it is unto the Father that the prodigal returns. The only method of reconciliation is the looking unto Jesus, and looking on until confiding faith spring up; but the religious act of a soul saved is a trust in God.

This is an unseen thing, and it is misunderstood by those who look toward it from without. The reason why those who are wedded to their pleasures count religion to be dull and painful seems to be this:—they see religious people really renouncing the pleasures of

sin and sense: they know, they feel what that renunciation would be to themselves; but they do not know, they cannot conceive the consolation which the peace of God gives even now to a human heart. They see what a religious man lets go; but they do not see in that other region the worth of the equivalent which a religious man gets; for it is spiritually discerned, and they are not spiritual. In their conception Religion is a grim tyrant, who snatches every delight from the grasp of a youth, and gives him nothing in return. The servant of the man of God sees on the one side an host of enemies pressing round, and on the other side no help at hand. "Alas, my master!" he cried, "how shall we do?" (2 Kings 6:16, 17). "Fear not," said Elisha; but it was not until the young man's eyes were opened to see the mountain full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha that he could be confident, or even composed. We need the same re-creating Spirit to open the blind eyes of the carnal, ere they can see that the joys which God in grace gives are more than the pleasures of sin, which his presence drives away. The green apple does not like to be twisted and torn from the tree; but the ripened fruit, that has no more need for the root's sap, drops easily off. Trust in the Lord, when a soul attains it, loosens every other bond, and makes it easy to let go all which the world gives. When you feel your footing firm in the peace of God, you will not be afraid though the earth should sink away from beneath you.

Trust is natural to the creature, although trust in the Lord be against the grain to the guilty. It is our nature to be dependent: it is our instinct to lean. In regard to the unseen, man has an innate consciousness of his own frailty, and in general it is not difficult to persuade him to lean on something beyond himself. Ever since sin began, gods many and lords many have invited men's confidence, and offered them aid. It is easy to persuade Papists to lean on priests and saints, on old rags and painted pictures—on any idol; but it is hard to get a Protestant really to trust in the living God. It is a common remark that Papists have more devotion in their way than we have in ours. The fact is obvious: the reason of it is not always seen. Popery sails with the stream when it bids men trust, for this falls in with a tendency of nature; but it puts forward to receive the confiding soul a dead idol, whose presence is no rebuke to indulged sin. Among Papists you will find real devotion in all who are conscious of nature's weakness, and willing to trust; but among Protestants you can find real devotion only in those who are prepared to crucify the flesh—who, at enmity with their own sins, bound forward to meet the offered embrace of "our God," and so plunge their bosom lusts into "a consuming fire."

"With all thine heart." God complains as much of a divided allegiance as of none. A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways. In cleaving to Christ the effort to reserve a little spoils all. It endangers ultimate safety, and destroys present peace. The soul should grow into Christ, as grows the branch on the vine; but the reserved part is dead matter lying between the two lives, preventing them from coalescing into one. The somewhat which the soul refuses to surrender sticks in between, so that you cannot have your life hid in Christ; Christ cannot live in you. Your hope cannot find way into his heart, his peace cannot flow into yours. "Except ye be converted and become as a little child, ye cannot enter into the kingdom."

"In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." Observe the universality of the command. There is no hardship in this; the commandment is holy and just and good. If we keep back any of the conditions, we lose all the promised return. This injunction is aimed, not at the speculative atheism which denies that there is a God, but at the much more common practical ungodliness which keeps Him at a distance from human affairs. Few will refuse to acknowledge a superintending Providence at certain times, and in certain operations that are counted great. If the commandment had been, "Acknowledge God in the uncertain and difficult ways of life," it would have met with a more ready compliance. To uphold the world and direct its movements, to appoint the birth and the death of men, to provide redemption from sin, and open the way into glory—in these grand and all-comprehensive operations men would be content to acknowledge God, provided they were allowed to retain all minor matters under their own management. They will treat God as subjects treat a king, but not as a wife treats her husband. The large, and the formal, and the public, they will submit to his decision; but the little, and close, and kindly, they will keep to themselves. Let him compass you about, as the atmosphere embraces the earth, going into every interstice, and taking the measure of every movement. "Trust in the Lord at all times; pour ye out your hearts before him."

The command is encouraging as well as reproofing. It is not merely the promise that is encouraging, but also the command which precedes it. Does God claim to be acknowledged in all my ways? May I trouble the Master about everything, great or small, that troubles me? May I lay before the Almighty Ruler every care of my heart, every step of my path? Yes, everything. The great and glorious sun shines down from heaven upon the daisy; and the feeble daisy sweetly opens its breast, and looks up from earth upon the sun. God is the maker of them both; both equally enjoy His care, and equally speak His praise. The genuine spirit of adoption may be best observed in little things. The distant and unconfiding will come on occasion of state formalities to the sovereign; but the dear child will leap forward with everything. The Queen of England is the mother of a family. At one time her ministers of state come gravely into her presence to converse on the policy of nations: at another her infant runs into her arms for protection, frightened at the buzzing of a fly. Will she love less this last appeal, because it is a little thing? We have had fathers of our flesh to whom we came confidently with our minutest ailments: How much more should we bring all our ways to the Father of our spirits, and live by simple faith on Him?

Introduction: We are so often faced with things for which we are not really equipped. Many problems leave us fractured. The pressures of life mount up, and we lose our orientation. We so often hear, "I do not know what to do."

What should you do when you do not know what to do? Here are ten suggestions ?

I. Walk Closely With the Lord

- A. Maintaining daily fellowship with Him will help in time of need
- B. Make a regular practice of turning everything over to Him

II. Take the Matter to Him in Prayer

- A. Do not ever do anything without His guidance
- B. Do not fail to do anything He shows you to do

III. Don't Try to Figure Things Out on Your Own ? ?Lean Not on Your Own Understanding?

- A. Unaided reason will always lead to more problems
- B. It is not wrong to use your reason
 - 1. So long as it is not your reason alone
 - 2. Reason must be submitted to the will of God

IV. Submit Yourself and the Situation to His Will

- A. Be willing no matter what His will may be. "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine" (John 7:17)
- B. Do not try to predetermine or "rubber-stamp" His will

V. Clearly Express Your Problem

- A. Put it in writing
 - 1. Helps to clarify it
 - 2. We sometimes find answers while stating the problem
- B. Be sure you really have a problem
 - 1. Sometimes our only problem is worry
 - 2. Some problems are not worth having

VI. Search for Bible Principles

- A. If there is no direct teaching available
- B. Try to find principles that apply
 - 1. Why it is important to express the problem clearly
 - 2. There are principles for every situation

VII. Be Sure There Is No Sin or Disobedience Involved

- A. "If I regard iniquity in my heart" ? (Psalm 66:18)
- B. Sin blocks
 - 1. Not doing what we know we should while seeking to know more
 - 2. Broken fellowship prevents answers
- C. Sometimes our problem is that we know the answer, but we just will not act on it

VIII. Seek Godly Counsel

- A. Cautions
 - 1. Do not go to those you know will agree with you
 - 2. Do not seek too many
- B. Why it helps
 - 1. Others may have been through the same thing
 - 2. The uninvolved see more clearly

IX. Do Not Act Until You Have to or Until You Know What to Do

- A. Often we do not have answers because we do not need them yet
- B. Many situations care for themselves or provide their own answers

X. Expect God to Give You Direction

- A. Move on ? do not let it stop you
- B. This verse is a promise

Conclusion:

Here's what to do when you do not know what to do.

These steps can help you do something about the tough situations and keep you going until you find the solutions God has for you.

Wood, C. R. Sermon Outlines on the Book of Proverbs

God's Direction

Read: Proverbs 3:1–8 | Bible in a Year: Isaiah 45–46; 1 Thessalonians 3

In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths. —nkjv Proverbs 3:6

A century ago, 41-year-old Oswald Chambers arrived in Egypt to serve as a YMCA chaplain to British Commonwealth troops during World War I. He was assigned to a camp at Zeitoun, six miles north of Cairo. On his first night there, October 27, 1915, Chambers wrote in his diary, "This [area] is absolutely desert in the very heart of the troops and a glorious opportunity for men. It is all immensely unlike anything I have been used to, and I am watching with interest the new things God will do and engineer."

Chambers believed and practiced the words of Proverbs 3:5-6: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths" (Prov. 3:5-6 nkjv).

Wherever God puts us, our one great aim is to pour out a whole-hearted devotion to Him.

This is both a comfort and a challenge. There is security in knowing that the Lord will lead us each day, but we must not become so attached to our plans that we resist God's redirection or His timing.

"We have no right to judge where we should be put, or to have preconceived notions as to what God is fitting us for," said Chambers. "God engineers everything. Wherever He puts us, our one great aim is to pour out a whole-hearted devotion to Him in that particular work."

Lord, may I love and serve You with all my heart where You have placed me today.

Read more of Oswald Chambers' work at utmost.org

As we trust in God, He directs our steps.

By David C. McCasland

INSIGHT - The book of Proverbs is a collection of wise sayings, advice, instructions, and warnings. It is structured as a life manual from a father to his son—an encouragement to live wisely and in a way that obeys and honors God. Solomon, who spoke about 3,000 proverbs (1 Kings 4:32), is the main author (see Pr 1:1-6; 10:1; 25:1). Other authors include unnamed Jewish wise men (22:17–24:34), Agur (ch. 30), and Lemuel (ch. 31). In today's reading Solomon admonishes us not to neglect God's Word but to obey it (3:1). A wise person is faithful (v. 3), trusts and depends on God (vv. 5-6), is not proud and avoids evil (v. 7), puts God first in everything (v. 9), and learns from God's discipline (v. 11). Sim Kay Tee ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Directions From Above

Read: Proverbs 3:1-6

Trust in the Lord . . . ; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths. —Proverbs 3:5-6

During a visit to Chicago, I stayed on the 25th floor of a downtown hotel. As I gazed out the window, I was fascinated by the maze of cars flowing four lanes abreast in opposite directions.

One motorist faced an emergency. He had engine trouble and was stalled in the middle of all that traffic. From my vantage point I could see for blocks. I watched several drivers switch into the same lane as the stalled auto, unaware of what was ahead. Thinking they were gaining time, these motorists were actually crossing over into a lane that would only spell greater delay.

As we travel along life's road, we do much the same as those misguided drivers. With our limited foresight we select the route that seems best—only to find that the temporary advance has led us into a course filled with delay and heartache. But how reassuring that we can look to One who is above everything, who knows the end from the beginning! This is why the writer of Proverbs could say, "In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths" (Proverbs 3:6). When the Lord indicates a "stop" or a "change of lanes" or a "wait," we should gladly obey.

Yes, look for direction from above.

He leadeth me! O blessed thought!
O words with heavenly comfort fraught!
Whate'er I do, where'er I be,
Still 'tis God's hand that leadeth me.
—Gilmore

The best way to know God's will is to say "I will" to God.

By Richard DeHaan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Advice from My Father

Read: Proverbs 3:1–7

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. Proverbs 3:5

After being laid off from an editorial job, I prayed, asking for God to help me find a new one. But when weeks went by and nothing came of my attempts at networking and filling out applications, I began to pout. “Don’t You know how important it is that I have a job?” I asked God, my arms folded in protest at my seemingly unanswered prayer.

When I talked to my father, who had often reminded me about believing God’s promises, about my job situation, he said, “I want you to get to the point where you trust what God says.”

My father’s advice reminds me of Proverbs 3, which includes wise advice from a parent to a beloved child. This familiar passage was especially applicable to my situation: “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight” (Proverbs 3:5–6). To “make . . . paths straight” means God will guide us toward His goals for our growth. His ultimate goal is that I become more like Him.

This does not mean that the paths He chooses will be easy. But I can choose to trust that His direction and timing are ultimately for my good.

Are you waiting on God for an answer? Choose to draw near to Him and trust that He will guide you.

Lord, thank You for guiding and caring for us every step of the way. Help us to trust in You daily.

Your Father in heaven knows what’s best for you.

By Linda Washington

INSIGHT The first nine chapters of Proverbs don’t follow the same format (pithy sayings; poetry couplets) that the rest of the book follows. The beginning chapters are a father’s encouragement to his son. The father tells his son of the benefits of wisdom, of its ability to make life more pleasant and fulfilling. Wisdom and folly are personified and invite the young man to pursue them. But why is this important? It seems obvious that wisdom is better than folly, so why go to such lengths to convince a child of the need to pursue wisdom? The answer is experiential. You see, folly is the easier of the two, the more natural. As we read chapters 10–31, we see what the better choice is. But folly is far simpler to choose—it seems hardwired into us. Whether it’s a harsh word, a selfish action, or self-indulgence, folly is always ready to embrace us. That’s why the father takes such time to encourage his son to pursue wisdom. Wisdom isn’t restricted to big decisions, however; we need it for every action we take and every word we speak. How can we pursue wisdom today? J.R. Hudberg ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

The Forgotten Man

Read: Matthew 1:18-25

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding. —Proverbs 3:5

Amid all the Christmas activities, one man is often forgotten.

No, I don’t mean the person whose birthday we’re celebrating. Although we often fail to give Jesus first place as He deserves, we don’t usually forget Him. I’m talking about Joseph—the man God trusted so much that He placed His Son in his home to love and nurture. What a responsibility!

Joseph truly is the forgotten man in the Christmas story. Yet his task was an important component of God’s incredible plan. As we

read the story of the birth of Jesus, we find that Joseph was just, righteous, merciful, protective, and courageous. But most of all—he was obedient. When the angel told him to take Mary as his wife, he obeyed (Matt. 1:24). And when the angel told him to flee to Egypt with Mary and Jesus, he did (2:13-14).

Just as Mary was carefully chosen to bear the Son of God, Joseph was deliberately chosen to provide for his young wife and the Christ-child. And trusting God, Joseph followed through on everything God asked him to do.

What is God asking of you today? Are you willing to commit yourself to do whatever He wants you to do?

We can learn much about obedience from Joseph, the forgotten man of Christmas.

It matters not the path on earth
My feet are made to tread;
It only matters how I live:
Obedient to God. —Clark

The proof of our love for God is our obedience to the commands of God.

By Cindy Hess Kasper ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Lost In The Fog

Read: Proverbs 3:1-6

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding. —Proverbs 3:5

The fog was as thick as pea soup. Visibility was limited to a few feet, and the lake was as smooth as glass. The only sound to break the silence was the laughing of a loon across the lake.

I rowed for an hour around the shore, trying to catch fish in different areas, but the fish weren't biting! So I decided to go back to my cabin for a cup of coffee. I was at the mouth of a small inlet, which I knew was directly across the lake from the cottage. So I set out across the lake on a straight course (I thought) toward the dock.

The minutes went by—and after an hour I was surprised when I arrived back at the mouth of the little stream from which I started. I had been going in a circle in the fog. I was so sure I knew where I was going, but after an hour I had gotten nowhere! If I had only taken my compass—instead of relying on my own sense of direction.

Proverbs 3:5 comes to mind: "Lean not on your own understanding." Without the Lord as your guide through the fog of life, and His Word as your compass, you will wander aimlessly.

So be sure to make Proverbs 3:6 your lifelong motto: "In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths."

My Lord is ever with me
Along life's busy way;
I'll trust in Him completely
For guidance day by day.
—Anon.

To avoid going wrong, follow God's leading.

By Mart DeHaan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

O God, Why?

Read: Job 1:1-22

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding. —Proverbs 3:5

Several years ago, the growing season had been unusually good in eastern Michigan. Farmers were elated at the thought of their potential profits. Then, just before harvest, the rains came—and stayed.

Potatoes rotted in the ground; beans molded in their pods. The entire harvest season remained wet. Anticipation of a record yield quickly faded. One discouraged farmer was quoted as saying, "You ask yourself, 'Why? What have we done wrong?'"

People have always asked why when faced with reversal and hardship. Their question is significant because it reflects the fact that nothing happens by chance. God is in control. Neither Satan nor man can go any further than is allowed by the Almighty.

The story of Job, however, makes it clear that we should not become too preoccupied with the question why. God's reasons are often kept to Himself. He may hold them high above our understanding and far beyond our natural field of vision in order to develop our faith. Our response to trouble should be like that of Job at the beginning and at the end of his problems (Job 2:10; 42:1-6).

Obediently trust God in your circumstances—even when you can't understand what He's doing.

When through life's darkened maze I go
And troubles overwhelm my soul,
O grant me, Lord, Your grace to know
That You are surely in control. "
—DJD

When God conceals His purposes, He consoles with His promises.

By Mart DeHaan ([Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Your Way, Not Mine

Read: Luke 22:39–46

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. Proverbs 3:5

Kamil and Joelle were devastated when their eight-year-old daughter Rima was diagnosed with a rare form of leukemia. The disease led to meningitis and a stroke, and Rima lapsed into a coma. The hospital medical team counseled her parents to make arrangements for Rima's funeral, giving her less than a one percent chance of survival.

Kamil and Joelle fasted and prayed for a miracle. "As we pray," Kamil said, "we need to trust God no matter what. And pray like Jesus—not my way, Father, but Yours." "But I want so much for God to heal her!" Joelle answered honestly. "Yes! And we should ask!" Kamil responded. "But it honors God when we give ourselves to Him even when it's hard, because that's what Jesus did."

Before Jesus went to the cross, He prayed: "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done" (Luke 22:42). By praying "take this cup," Jesus asked not to go to the cross; but He submitted to the Father out of love.

Surrendering our desires to God isn't easy, and His wisdom can be difficult to understand in challenging moments. Kamil and Joelle's prayers were answered in a remarkable way—Rima is a healthy fifteen year old today.

Jesus understands every struggle. Even when, for our sake, His request was not answered, He showed us how to trust our God in every need.

I want to be "all in" for You, Father. I trust in Your unfailing love and give myself to You as Your servant today.

God always deserves our commitment and praise. By James Banks

INSIGHT Today's reading shows us the dramatic scene of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, facing the horrors of the cross. Not only was it one of the most painful and excruciating means of execution invented by the Romans, but for our Lord it would mean taking the sins of the world upon Himself. Just prior to His crucifixion, we witness the Son's mysterious request of His Father. Christ asked if the cup of crucifixion could be taken from Him. Yet our Lord yielded His will to the Father knowing that it was His mission on Earth to redeem all who would believe in His sacrificial death. The lesson for us is significant. Even when we face terrible suffering, we know God can deliver us; however, we must also trust Him if He chooses not to. Only by holding our Father's hand in the valley can we endure to see the light of the mountaintop ahead. What troubling circumstance are you facing today, and how can you depend on God no matter what His will brings? Dennis Fisher ([Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Proverbs 3:6 In all your ways **acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight.**

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

- In. Proverbs 16:3; 23:17. 1 Sa. 23:4, 11, 12; 30:8. 1 Chr 28:9. Ezr. 7:27; 8:22, 23. Ne. 1:11; 2:4. 1 Co. 10:31. 2 Co. 8:16. Phi. 4:6. Col. 3:17, 23.
- and. Proverbs 16:9. Ps. 25:8, 9; 32:8. Is. 30:21; 48:17. Je. 10:23. Ja. 1:5.

KNOWING GOD THE KEY TO STRAIGHT PATHS

Note the words **in all** - this speaks of total commitment on our part. As Higgins explains "God is to have sovereign control over a believer's life. That means in the major decisions of life as well as in the principles which control day to day living. The knowledge of God comes through His Word. As I learn Him, I will know what pleases Him. An illustration may be helpful here. As two people come to know each other better, husband and wife, or two close friends, they instinctively know what will please the other. Their nearness has afforded them a vantage point from which to learn the heart of the other. In a similar manner, as we know intimacy with the Lord, we will know what brings His heart pleasure." ([What the Bible Teaches](#))

Constable asks an important question - How can we tell if a proverb is a promise as well as a proverb? We can do so by consulting the rest of Scripture. If a proverb expresses a truth promised elsewhere in Scripture, we know it is a promise. In the case of Pr 3:5-6 we have the repetition of a promise made numerous times in Scripture that people who trust God will experience His guidance through life (cf. Heb. 11). In our attempt to "handle accurately the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15) we must carefully distinguish proverbs that restate promises from those that do not and are only proverbs.

Phillips - When we enthrone God's law in our hearts, our priorities are dictated and our paths are directed.

Higgins - The more we know (**acknowledge**) God, the clearer His will becomes. We are to walk in the light He has provided through His Word. Knowing God is never presented as an abstract academic endeavour. It creates trust and controls behaviour. A knowledge of God includes the awareness of what brings Him pleasure. To know God is to know what is consistent with His character. This knowledge will answer the vast majority of questions we have about His will. ([What the Bible Teaches](#))

Acknowledge Him, this is a command to know Him, to be intimately acquainted with God, to be in fellowship with Him. If we "know" Him, we know His will, thus the NLT paraphrases it "Seek His will in all you do, and He will show you which path to take."

Related Resources:

- [The Will Of God](#)
- [How can I know God's will for my life? What does the Bible say about knowing God's will?](#) (Includes short video)
- [How can I be sure I am praying according to the will of God?](#)
- [How can I find my spiritual calling?](#)
- [How can I get to know God better?](#)
- [What is the difference between God's sovereign will and God's perfect will?](#)
- [1 Thessalonians 4:3 Commentary](#)
- [Colossians 1:9 Commentary](#)
- [Colossians 4:12 Commentary](#)
- [Ephesians 1:11-12 Commentary](#)
- [Ephesians 5:17-18 Commentary](#)
- [Romans 12:2 Commentary](#)
- [Will - Thelema \(Greek Word Study\)](#)

Guzik - Trusting God with all our heart means to honor and acknowledge Him in all that we do. It is the choice to "invite" God into our everyday life and conduct. It is to practice the presence of God in the regular and sometimes mundane things that happen every day.

John Trapp - "Ask counsel at his mouth, aim at his glory, be evermore in the sense of his presence, and light of his countenance."

NET NOTE on acknowledge Him - Heb "know him." The verb יָדָע (yadah, "to know") includes mental awareness of who God is and the consequential submission to his lordship. To know him is to obey him. The sage is calling for a life of trust and obedience in which the disciple sees the LORD in every event and relies on him. To acknowledge the LORD in every event means trusting and obeying him for guidance in right conduct.

POSB comments on **acknowledge** that the "Hebrew word (yada) "is not fully represented by 'acknowledge Him.'" This is the word that means to know intimately and personally. It describes experiential knowledge (Pr 1:2). It is the knowledge David spoke about in his counsel to Solomon at the end of His life: "'As for you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve Him with a

whole heart and a willing mind; for the LORD searches all hearts, and understands every intent of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will let you find Him; but if you forsake Him, He will reject you forever." (1 Chr.28:9). Our trust in God grows as we learn more and more about Him. The more we **know** God, the closer we draw to Him and the easier it becomes to commit our ways to Him. Trusting God cannot be separated from intimacy with God. These three...(1) trusting Him (2) leaning wholly upon Him and (3) knowing Him intimately are the mechanics of a life that is totally committed to Him. If we live such a life, we are assured of this promise: **He will direct your paths or make them straight**. What does this mean? In Old Testament times, roads were rough at best and dangerous at worst. Travel was exhausting and perilous. When a king took a journey, some of his servants would go ahead of his caravan to smooth the rough places and remove the obstacles in the road. They would make his paths straight. This image is used of John the Baptist's role in relation to the coming of Jesus: "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain" (Is.40:3-4). It is also what God promised to do for Cyrus: "I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways: he shall build my city, and he shall let go my captives, not for price nor reward, saith the Lord of hosts" (Is. 45:13). This is what God does for the people who trust in Him—who lean wholly upon Him. He will go ahead of us and smooth the road. He will remove all the obstacles in our way so we can reach the destination He intends for us. This does not mean, however, that there will be no difficulties, interruptions, or deterrents along the way. It means that God will be with us and help us to rise above everything in our path that threatens to trip us up or throw us off course. We, in turn, have to put ourselves in His hands. We have to trust and lean upon Him wholly.

Bridges - Next—let our confidence be uniform—In all thy ways acknowledge him Take one step at a time—every step under plain warrant, and Divine direction. (Comp. Ez. 8:21–23, Neh. 1:11) Never venture to plan for yourself, except in simple dependence on God. (James 4:14. If the Lord will—as Fuller remarks with his pithy quaintness—'a parenthesis, and yet the most important part of the sentence.')

It is nothing less than self-idolatry to conceive, that we can carry on even the ordinary matters of the day without his counsel. He loves to be consulted. Therefore take all thy difficulties to be resolved by him. Be in the habit of going to him **in the first place** before self-will, self-pleasing (See the awful hypocrisy, and judgment of asking counsel of God under this deadly influence. Jer. 42:1–3, 19–22, Ezek. 14:1–6), self-wisdom, human friends, conveniences, expediency. Before any of these have been consulted, go to God at once. Consider no circumstance too clear to need his direction. (See the evil consequence of this inconsiderate neglect. Jos. 9:14)

In all thy ways, small as well as great—in all thy concerns, personal or relative, temporal or eternal, let him be supreme. Who of us has not found the unspeakable "peace" of bringing to God matters too minute or individual to be entrusted to the most confidential ear? (Phil. 4:6, 7. "In every thing.") Thus it was that Abraham **acknowledged God**. Wheresoever he pitched a tent for himself, there was always an altar for God. (Gen. 12:7, 13:18) In choosing a wife for his son there was a singular absence of worldliness. No mention of riches, honor, beauty, or of any thing, but what concerned the name and honor of his God. (Pr 24:1–8. Comp. also his servant, Pr 3:12–27.) Thus did the wise man's father **in all his ways acknowledge God**, asking counsel of him in all his difficulties, and never disappointed. (1 Sam. 23:9–11, 30:6–8, 2 Sam. 2:1, 5:19. Compare the smarting rod from the neglect of this godly habit. 1 Sam. 27:1,29.) This is indeed to walk with God as a Father. This is true faith—not superseding, but invigorating exertion. (Comp. Gen. 32:9–20, Neh. 2:4–20, 4:9.)

Now if we be weaned from the idolatry of making our bosom our oracle, and our heart our counsellor; if in true poverty of spirit we go every morning to our Lord, as knowing not how to guide ourselves for this day—our eye constantly looking upward for **direction** (Psalm 5:3, 143:8–10, 25:4, 5. - see on site study = "[Vertical Vision](#)"), the light will come down.

NET NOTE on way - The term דֶּרֶךְ (derekh, "way") is figurative (hypocatastasis: implied comparison) referring to a person's course of life, actions and undertakings (Prov 2:8; 3:6, 23; 11:5; 20:24; 29:27; 31:3; BDB 203 s.v. 5; cf. TEV "in everything you do"; NCV, NLT "in all you do"). This is a call for total commitment in trust for obedience in all things.

Gilbrant on way (derek) - Metaphorically, derek often refers to the actions and behavior (or ways) of people (Ps. 10:5; 35:6; 37:5). People either follow the way of the righteous or the way of the wicked (Ps. 1:6). The way of the righteous is closely linked to "the way of the Lord." Parents are to direct their children in the way of the Lord (Gen. 18:19; Prov. 22:6). God's ways are much higher than man's ways, and the wicked are urged to forsake their sinful ways (Isa. 55:7ff).

Derek is a key word in **Proverbs**. Prov. 1:15; Prov. 1:31; Prov. 2:8; Prov. 2:12; Prov. 2:13; Prov. 2:20; Prov. 3:6; Prov. 3:17; Prov. 3:23; Prov. 3:31; Prov. 4:11; Prov. 4:14; Prov. 4:19; Prov. 4:26; Prov. 5:8; Prov. 5:21; Prov. 6:6; Prov. 6:23; Prov. 7:8; Prov. 7:19; Prov. 7:25; Prov. 7:27; Prov. 8:2; Prov. 8:13; Prov. 8:22; Prov. 8:32; Prov. 9:6; Prov. 10:9; Prov. 10:29; Prov. 11:5; Prov. 11:20; Prov. 12:15; Prov. 12:26; Prov. 12:28; Prov. 13:6; Prov. 13:15; Prov. 14:2; Prov. 14:8; Prov. 14:12; Prov. 14:14; Prov. 15:9; Prov. 15:19; Prov. 16:2; Prov. 16:7; Prov. 16:9; Prov. 16:17; Prov. 16:25; Prov. 16:29; Prov. 16:31; Prov. 19:3; Prov. 19:16; Prov. 20:24; Prov. 21:2; Prov. 21:8; Prov. 21:16; Prov. 21:29; Prov. 22:5; Prov. 22:6; Prov. 23:19; Prov. 23:26; Prov. 26:13; Prov. 28:6; Prov. 28:10; Prov. 28:18; Prov. 29:27; Prov. 30:19; Prov. 30:20; Prov. 31:3

AND HE WILL MAKE YOUR PATHS STRAIGHT: God will clear obstructions and enable you to go forward. He directs the paths of those who wholeheartedly trust in Him.

Bridges - He shall direct thy paths. We want no new revelations or visible tokens. (Such as Ex. 13:21, 22) **Study the word with prayer. Mark the Divine Spirit shedding light upon it.** (See on site topic [Illumination of the Bible](#)) Compare it with the observation of the **Providence** of the day; (Psalm 107:43) not judging by constitutional bias (a most doubtful interpreter), but pondering with sober, practical, reverential faith. Let the will be kept in a quiet, subdued, cheerful readiness, to move, stay, retreat, turn to the right hand or to the left, at the Lord's bidding; always remembering, **that** is best, which is least our own doing, and that a pliable spirit ever secures the needful guidance. (Comp. Psalm 32:8, 9, Isa. 48:17, 18, with Isa 30:21.) We may "be led," for the exercise of our faith, "in a way that we know not." (Isa. 42:16, 50:10)—perhaps a way of disappointment, or even of **mistake**. Yet no step well prayed over will bring ultimate regret. Though the promise will not render us infallible; our very error will be overruled for deeper humiliation and self-knowledge; and thus even this mysterious **direction** will in the end be greatly acknowledged—"He led me forth in the right way." (Psalm 107:7)

Make straight is translated in the Septuagint with **orthotomeo** (in present tense - continually) which literally describes cutting a straight road through difficult terrain and so to make a straight path. Figuratively orthotomeo is used in 2 Ti 2:15+ to refer to correctly or accurately teaching God's Word of Truth, "holding to a straight course," so to speak.

NET NOTE on make straight - The verb יָשַׁר (**yashar**) means "to make smooth; to make straight" (BDB 444 s.v.). This phrase means "to make the way free from obstacles," that is, to make it successful (e.g., Isa 40:3). The straight, even road is the right road; God will make the way smooth for the believer.

Yashar in Proverbs - Prov. 3:6; Prov. 4:25; Prov. 9:15; Prov. 11:5; Prov. 15:21

Paths (0734)(**orach/orah**) means way, byway, or highway, sometimes a literal path one walks on (Jdg. 5:6), but more often figuratively to describe the course of one's life (Job 6:18), their characteristic lifestyle as either good or evil (Ps 16:11, Pr 2:13).

"How can a young man keep his **way** pure? By keeping it according to Your word." (Ps 119:9)

But the **path** of the righteous is like the light of dawn, That shines brighter and brighter until the full day. (Prov. 4:18)

Gilbrant - A prime function of the word (orach) is describing the way or path of life or of death. The word can mean "way" or "lifestyle." Theologically, the usage of 'ōrach is to contrast the life activities or character orientation of the sinner with the obedient, godly person. Essentially, one chooses one or the other "path," but there are sure and certain consequences which result from that choice. True life is in following Yahweh's path (his righteous character). See Ps. 25:10; 27:11; 44:18 for a penitential perspective. (Complete Biblical Library Hebrew-English Dictionary)

Victor Hamilton on orah - Most often 'ōrah is used in a figurative way, describing the way to life or to death. It often is parallel with the word derek, meaning "way, lifestyle." (Ps 27:11).(Pr 4:14; cf. Ps 139:3; Pr 2:8; Pr 12:28, Job 6:18; Isa 30:11). The contrast is between the way of sin/death and the way of obedience/life. These exhaust the options available to man. Man makes his own choice but he cannot choose his own consequences. The path of life (Ps 16:11; Pr 2:19; 5:6; 10:17; 15:24) corresponds with the path of integrity (Ps 27:11), the path of uprightness (Pr 2:13), the path of justice (Pr 2:8; 17:23; Isa 26:8; 40:14), the path of righteousness (Pr 8:20). Conversely, one is to spurn the path of evil (Ps 119:101) for it is a false path (Ps 119:104, 128). To follow the path of truth and life is to follow God's own path (Ps 25:4, 10; 44:18; 119:115, where the word is a synonym for God's Torah; Isa 2:3). The way which one chooses determines one's destiny. There is such a thing as the "road" of no return (Job 16:22). Bildad speaks of the "fate/path" of all that forget God (Job 8:13). Interestingly, the LXX translates 'ōrah here as ta eschata "the end." Pr 1:19 indicates, "Such is the 'way/end' for those who are after dishonest gain," that consequences of evil behavior are intrinsic to that action and are not superimposed as a penalty. Thus the Bible can say that the way (derek) of the transgressor is hard. When Jesus contrasts the two ways, the two doors and the two destinations in the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 7:13-14), he is basically repeating the concept of 'ōrah and derek, as taught in Hebrew wisdom literature. Our Lord's reference to himself as "the way, the truth, the life" (Jn 14:6) means that Jesus is the way to the truth about life. He is not the answer. That would be an oversimplification. **He is the way that leads to the answer.** Only after one steps out on the way does he discover that Jesus is the truth about life. Wisdom literature too challenges us to step out on the right way, the way of life, the way that leads to life. (Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament)

Orach/orah - 59x in 57v - caravans(1), childbearing*(1), course(1), highways(1), path(13), paths(19), traveler(1), way(15), ways(6).

(Genesis 18:11) Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in age; Sarah was past childbearing.

(Genesis 49:17) "Dan shall be a serpent in the way, A horned snake in the path, That bites the horse's heels, So that his rider falls backward.

(Judges 5:6) "In the days of Shamgar the son of Anath, In the days of Jael, the highways were deserted, And travelers went by roundabout ways.

(Job 6:18) "The paths of their course wind along, They go up into nothing and perish.

(Job 6:19) "The caravans of Tema looked, The travelers of Sheba hoped for them.

(Job 8:13) "So are the paths of all who forget God; And the hope of the godless will perish,

(Job 13:27) "You put my feet in the stocks And watch all my paths; You set a limit for the soles of my feet,

(Job 16:22) "For when a few years are past, I shall go the way of no return.

(Job 19:8) "He has walled up my way so that I cannot pass, And He has put darkness on my paths.

(Job 22:15) "Will you keep to the ancient path Which wicked men have trod,

(Job 30:12) "On the right hand their brood arises; They thrust aside my feet and build up against me their ways of destruction.

(Job 31:32) "The alien has not lodged outside, For I have opened my doors to the traveler.

(Job 33:11) 'He puts my feet in the stocks; He watches all my paths.'

(Job 34:11) "For He pays a man according to his work, And makes him find it according to his way.

(Psalm 8:8) The birds of the heavens and the fish of the sea, Whatever passes through the paths of the seas.

(Psalm 16:11) You will make known to me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; In Your right hand there are pleasures forever.

(Psalm 17:4) As for the deeds of men, by the word of Your lips I have kept from the paths of the violent.

(Psalm 19:5) Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber; It rejoices as a strong man to run his course.

(Psalm 25:4) Make me know Your ways, O LORD; Teach me Your paths.

(Psalm 25:10) All the paths of the LORD are lovingkindness and truth To those who keep His covenant and His testimonies.

(Psalm 27:11) Teach me Your way, O LORD, And lead me in a level path Because of my foes.

(Psalm 44:18) Our heart has not turned back, And our steps have not deviated from Your way,

(Psalm 119:9) How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping it according to Your word.

(Psalm 119:15) I will meditate on Your precepts And regard Your ways.

(Psalm 119:101) I have restrained my feet from every evil way, That I may keep Your word.

(Psalm 119:104) From Your precepts I get understanding; Therefore I hate every false way. Nun.

(Psalm 119:128) Therefore I esteem right all Your precepts concerning everything, I hate every false way. Pe.

(Psalm 139:3) You scrutinize my path and my lying down, And are intimately acquainted with all my ways.

(Psalm 142:3) When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, You knew my path. In the way where I walk They have hidden a trap for me.

(Proverbs 1:19) So are the ways of everyone who gains by violence; It takes away the life of its possessors.

(Proverbs 2:8) Guarding the paths of justice, And He preserves the way of His godly ones.

(Proverbs 2:13) From those who leave the paths of uprightness To walk in the ways of darkness;

(Proverbs 2:15) Whose paths are crooked, And who are devious in their ways;

(Proverbs 2:19) None who go to her return again, Nor do they reach the paths of life.

(Proverbs 2:20) So you will walk in the way of good men And keep to the paths of the righteous.

(Proverbs 3:6) In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight.

(Proverbs 4:14) Do not enter the path of the wicked And do not proceed in the way of evil men.

(Proverbs 4:18) But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, That shines brighter and brighter until the full day.

(Proverbs 5:6) She does not ponder the path of life; Her ways are unstable, she does not know it.

(Proverbs 8:20) "I walk in the way of righteousness, In the midst of the paths of justice,

(Proverbs 9:15) Calling to those who pass by, Who are making their paths straight:

(Proverbs 10:17) He is on the path of life who heeds instruction, But he who ignores reproof goes astray.

(Proverbs 12:28) In the way of righteousness is life, And in its pathway there is no death.

(Proverbs 15:10) Grievous punishment is for him who forsakes the way; He who hates reproof will die.

(Proverbs 15:19) The way of the lazy is as a hedge of thorns, But the path of the upright is a highway.

(Proverbs 15:24) The path of life leads upward for the wise That he may keep away from Sheol below.

(Proverbs 17:23) A wicked man receives a bribe from the bosom To pervert the ways of justice.

(Proverbs 22:25) Or you will learn his ways And find a snare for yourself.

(Isaiah 2:3) And many peoples will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, To the house of the God of Jacob; That He may teach us concerning His ways And that we may walk in His paths." For the law will go forth from Zion And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

(Isaiah 3:12) O My people! Their oppressors are children, And women rule over them. O My people! Those

who guide you lead you astray And confuse the direction of your paths.

(Isaiah 26:7) The way of the righteous is smooth; O Upright One, make the path of the righteous level.

(Isaiah 26:8) Indeed, while following the way of Your judgments, O LORD, We have waited for You eagerly; Your name, even Your memory, is the desire of our souls.

(Isaiah 30:11) "Get out of the way, turn aside from the path, Let us hear no more about the Holy One of Israel."

(Isaiah 40:14) With whom did He consult and who gave Him understanding? And who taught Him in the path of justice and taught Him knowledge And informed Him of the way of understanding?

(Isaiah 41:3) "He pursues them, passing on in safety, By a way he had not been traversing with his feet.

(Joel 2:7) They run like mighty men, They climb the wall like soldiers; And they each march in line, Nor do they deviate from their paths.

(Micah 4:2) Many nations will come and say, "Come and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD And to the house of the God of Jacob, That He may teach us about His ways And that we may walk in His paths." For from Zion will go forth the law, Even the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

Learning From Lincoln

Read: Proverbs 3:1-8

In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths. —Proverbs 3:6

The day before his 52nd birthday, Abraham Lincoln left Springfield, Illinois, to become President of the United States. With the threat of civil war looming, he said goodbye to the friends and neighbors who had come to see him off. "I now leave," he told them, "not knowing when, or whether ever, I may return, with a task before me greater than that which rested upon Washington. Without the assistance of the Divine Being who ever attended him, I cannot succeed. With that assistance I cannot fail. Trusting in Him who can go with me, and remain with you, and be everywhere for good, let us confidently hope that all will yet be well. To His care commending you, as I hope in your prayers you will commend me, I bid you an affectionate farewell."

Lincoln's reliance on God for guidance and strength reflects the instruction of Solomon: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths" (Prov. 3:5-6).

On this 200th anniversary of Lincoln's birth, we celebrate his kindness, integrity, and courage. And we can also learn from him how to face a daunting future with confident hope in the Lord.

Into His hands I lay the fears that haunt me,
The dread of future ills that may befall;
Into His hands I lay the doubts that taunt me,
And rest securely, trusting Him for all.
—Christiansen

Living without trust in God is like driving in the fog.

By David C. McCasland ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Too Close

Read: Proverbs 3:1-18

In all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight. Proverbs 3:6

I grew up in Oklahoma where severe weather is common from early spring through the end of summer. I recall one evening when the sky boiled with dark clouds, the TV weather forecaster warned of an approaching tornado, and the electricity went out. Very quickly, my parents, my sister, and I climbed down the wooden ladder into the storm cellar behind our house where we stayed until the storm passed by.

Today "storm chasing" has become a hobby for many people and a profitable business for others. The goal is to get as close as possible to a tornado without being harmed. Many storm chasers are skilled forecasters with accurate information, but I won't sign up for a tornado tour anytime soon.

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding." (Proverbs 3:5)

In moral and spiritual areas of my life, however, I can foolishly pursue dangerous things God tells me to avoid because of His love for me, all the time believing I won't be harmed. A wiser approach is to read the book of Proverbs, which contains many positive ways to elude these snares of life.

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding," Solomon wrote. "In all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight" (Prov. 3:5-6).

Our Lord is the master of the adventure of living, and following His wisdom leads us to fullness of life.

Father, Your wisdom leads us along the path of life. Help us to follow Your guidance today.

How can you trust the Lord today?

Every temptation is an occasion to trust God. By David C. McCasland

INSIGHT The Hebrew word translated "teaching" in Proverbs 3:1 is torah. Torah is most often translated "law" in the Old Testament, but it can also be translated "instruction" or "guidance." The father in Proverbs 3 is not just advising his son to obey rules. He is urging him to internalize loving and helpful instructions: "Do not forget my teaching [instruction, guidance], but keep my commands in your heart." Dennis Moles ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Alternate Route

Read: Proverbs 3:1-12

There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death. —Proverbs 14:12

My daughter was coming home from college for the weekend to play the piano at her friend's wedding. Before she left, I sent her an e-mail directing her to take an alternate route instead of the one she usually travels for the 6-hour drive home. Why? Because on that road a few weeks earlier my wife and I had been delayed for 2 hours by construction crews.

As parents, we must provide alternate routes in life as well. We've observed the wrong highways others have traveled or perhaps the foolish ways we have taken, and we know they lead to delay or danger.

Think of all the possible paths our children might choose—the road of sexual immorality, the avenue of alcohol and drug abuse, the way of ungodly friends. But in Christ, there is an alternate path—a route that will lead our children away from the struggles we know they'll face on any other road.

The right route starts with the Via Dolorosa—the way of the cross. It starts with salvation. It continues with a path that is straight (Prov. 3:5-6) and is directed by God's Word (Ps. 119:105). It includes Jesus as a traveling companion (Jn. 8:12). That's the ultimate alternate route. Let's model it clearly so our children will see the right way.

The journey that we're on each day
Has many roads to choose;
But if we trust the Lord to guide,
Our way we cannot lose. —Sper

To guide your children on the right way, you must go that way yourself.

By Dave Branon ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Rerouting . . . Rerouting

Read: Proverbs 3:1-8

In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths. —Proverbs 3:6

Don't worry. I know right where I'm going," I said to my passengers. Then an almost-human voice rattled me out: "Rerouting . . . rerouting." Now everyone knew I was lost!

These days, millions of drivers recognize those words, or others like them, as a sign they've gone off track or missed a turn. The GPS device not only recognizes when a driver is off course, but immediately begins plotting a new path to get back on track.

Sometimes followers of Jesus need help to get back on track spiritually. We may intentionally veer off course because we think we

know best, or drift away slowly, failing to notice we're moving further and further from the walk God wants with us.

God has not left us on our own, however. He has given all believers the Holy Spirit (John 14:16-17; 1 Cor. 3:16), who convicts us of our sin (John 16:8,13). When we're going off course, He sounds the alarm and triggers our conscience (Gal. 5:16-25). We may ignore the warning, but we do so to our own detriment (Isa. 63:10; Gal. 6:8).

What comfort to know that God is at work in our lives through the convicting work of the Holy Spirit! (Rom. 8:26-27). With God's help and guidance, we can continue on a path that is pleasing to Him.

Holy Spirit, we would hear
Your inner promptings, soft and clear;
And help us know Your still, small voice
So we may make God's will our choice. —D. DeHaan

We're never without a helper, because we have the Spirit within.

By Randy Kilgore ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Proverbs 3:7 Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and turn away from evil.

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

Septuagint - me isthi (2SPAM) phronimos (Lxx:relating to the quality of one's thinking resulting fr. insight: wise, intelligent, sensible, Mt7.24; Gn3:1; 41:33,39; 1Ki3:12) para seauto phobou (2SPMM) de ton theon kai ekkline (2SPAM: Command to continually turn fr. doing what is bad 1Pe3.11; declining to follow false teachers Ro16.17) apo pantos (all) kakou

- Be. Proverbs 26:12. Is. 5:21. Ro. 11:25; 12:16.
- fear. Proverbs 14:27; 16:6. Ne. 5:15. Job 1:1; 28:28. Ps. 34:11–14. Ec. 12:13.

ONE NEGATIVE COMMAND AND TWO POSITIVE COMMANDS

NLT "Don't be impressed with your own wisdom." This is a sure sign that we are headed for trouble!!! "Abraham did this when he went to Egypt (Gen. 12:10–20) and so did Joshua when he attacked the little town of Ai (Josh. 7:1-26)."

Do not be wise in your own eyes- In the Greek this is a command in the present imperative, which means stop being wise in your own eyes (or don't let it begin). There is not a greater enemy to the fear of the Lord in the heart, than self-conceit of our own wisdom. Paul gave a similar exhortation in Romans - "Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation." (Ro 12:16)

The Septuagint for **wise** is **phronimos** which means sensible, thoughtful, prudent. Being "sensible" by relying on self is not sensible! There is a place for being prudent as when one hears Jesus' words (in Sermon on the Mount) and acts on them or obeys them (enabled by the Spirit), for then that person is like a wise man who built his house on the rock and when the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock. (Mt 7:24, 25).

Matthew Poole on wise in your own eyes: "Be not puffed up with vain conceit of thine own wisdom, as if that were sufficient for the conduct of all thine affairs without direction or assistance from God, or without the advice of others."

Fear the LORD and turn away from evil - **Fear** is a command in Hebrew and Greek (present imperative = fear Him continually). This is a powerful principle and repeatedly seen in the Bible. When God is our affection, the lesser (sinful) affections lose (or at least are more likely to lose) their power and grip on our hearts. Look as Job 1:1 "There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job; and that man was blameless, upright, **fearing God** and **turning away from evil**." See this principle in Pr 8:13, 14:27, Ne 5:15, Job 1:8, 28:28, Ps 34:11-14, Eccl 12:13, 2 Co 7:1+. In Romans 13:14+ Paul commands us "**put on** (aorist imperative - Just do it!) the Lord Jesus Christ, and **make no provision** ([present imperative with a negative](#) = Stop doing this! It is a subtle but sticky trap!) for the flesh in regard to its lusts." Notice the order - Jesus first! The old Scottish preacher, Thomas Chalmers, has a sermon, "[The Expulsive Power of a New Affection](#)," where he argues that the only thing powerful enough to drive out our love for the world is our new love for the Father.

Guzik on fear the Lord - This is the natural result of trusting God. As we trust Him we come to know Him better, leading to natural reverence and awe (to fear the LORD). As we trust Him, we are drawn more to God and further from evil.

What is fear of the Lord? Or how is it manifest? Or how is it cultivated in the soil of our heart? Read - Ps 112:1 "Praise the LORD! How blessed is the man who fears the LORD, Who greatly delights in His commandments." Note that in Hebrew the second phrase often is given to help deepen the understanding of the first phrase!

GODLY FEAR MANIFEST ITSELF IN ACTION THAT PLEASES GOD: [Ge 22:12] "for now I know that you **fear** God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me."

Related Resource:

- Fear of the Lord - in depth discussion

In the **Septuagint** **turn away** is **ekklino** (present imperative = make this your habitual practice! Necessitates continual reliance of the supernatural enabling power of the indwelling Spirit) which means to keep away from, steer clear of or avoid. Ekkline was used in a secular writing advising staying clear of prickly shrubs! Good advice physically but even more morally/ethically! One is reminded of Paul's commands in 1 Cor 6:18 and 2 Ti 2:22

Bridges - Another warning against self-confidence! (Pr 3:5. Comp. Pr 23:4, Ro 12:3, 16. See the mind of God expressed in that solemn woe, Isa. 5:21.) and who needs it not? So natural is it to idolize our own devices! Yet self-wisdom is self-delusion. (Even a heathen could remark—"I suppose that many might have attained to wisdom, had they not thought they had already attained it.' seneca de Irâ.Lib. iii. c. 36. Comp. 1 Cor. 8:2, Gal. 6:3.) **True wisdom is its opposite—the fear of God and the fear of sin.** (Pr 14:27; 16:6, Gen. 39:9, 10, Neh. 5:15, Job 28:28.) God is loved and honored. Sin is hated, loathed, resisted. (Rom. 7:18–24.) It lives indeed; but it is condemned to die. (Ro 6:6) It cleaves to the child of God; but his heart **departs from it**. Often is it the sickness of the body: always of the soul. (Hos. 7:9) **The departure from it**, in the exercise of self-denial and godly discipline, is **health** to the body (Pr 3:1-2). The soul revives in fruitfulness. (Hos. 14:5–7) The man that **feareth the Lord**, under "the healing beams of the Sun of Righteousness goeth forth," (Mal. 4:2) as from his sick chamber, full of life and Christian energy. "The joy of the Lord is his strength." (Neh. 8:10)

NET Note - If one fears the LORD and turns away from evil, then he is depending on the LORD and not wise in his own eyes. There is a higher source of wisdom than human insight.

Arnot - The Health of Holiness "Fear the Lord, and depart from evil. It shall be health to thy navel and marrow to thy bones."—3:7, 8.

BY a striking and strongly figurative expression, which can be perfectly comprehended by readers of any age or clime, it is intimated that a religious rectitude preserves mental and physical health, and gives fullest play to all the human faculties. All God's laws come from one source, and conspire for one end. They favour righteousness and frown on sin. The law set in nature runs parallel, as far as it goes, to the law written in the word. It is glory to God in the highest, as governor of the world. Vice saps the health both of body and mind. Every one of us has seen monuments of this awful law, almost as deeply blighted as the warning pillar on the plain of Sodom, only they stalk about, and so publish their lesson more widely. When the brain has been dried, and the eye dimmed, and the countenance bleared, and the limbs palsied, and the tongue thickened by drunkenness, and other vices that march in its company or follow in its train, what remains of the man should be to us as dread a warning against his course, as if he had been turned into a salt statue, and stood upon the wayside to scare the solitary passenger. It behoves us to walk circumspectly, and not as fools. All around us, sin is withering the bloom of youth, and wasting manhood's strength—is shrivelling the skin upon the surface, and drying up the marrow in the heart of the bones. Verily we are in the hands of the living God: in Him we live, and move, and have our being: we cannot elude His observation, or break from his grasp.

Dreadful though its results be, I rejoice in these providential arrangements. The law by which disease and imbecility closely track the path of lust, is of God's own making, and, behold, it is very good. It is righteous, and merciful too. The link which connects the suffering with the sin, I would not break though I could: even so, Father! for so it seemed good in thy sight. These wastings of the marrow are the terrors of the Lord set in array against evil; if they were wanting, human governments could not withstand the tide of universal anarchy. These providential arrangements clog the wheels of evil, and so secure for the world a course of probation. If the Creator had not fixed in nature these make-weights on the side of good, the tide of evil that set in with sin would have soon wrought the extinction of the race. It is especially those sins that human governments cannot or will not touch, that God takes into his own hands, and checks by the stroke of his judgment. He has bowed his heavens and come down. He concerns Himself with the details of human history. He who does the great things, neglects not the less. He who makes holiness happy in heaven, makes holiness healthful on earth. Gather up the fragments of his goodness, that none of them be lost: set them all in the song of praise.

The High Cost Of Sin

Read: Proverbs 3:1-12

Fear the Lord and depart from evil. It will be health to your flesh, and strength to your bones. —Proverbs 3:7-8

It was only a little comma, but it cost the Lockheed corporation millions of dollars! An error was made in a contract with an international customer—a misplaced comma in a crucial number. The company insisted that the manufacturer honor the contract as written. Unfortunately for Lockheed, the error was made in an equation that adjusted the sales price, and it cost them \$70 million.

That's the way it is with sin too. It has a high cost, even though at the time it may seem so small. Seemingly harmless transgressions can end up doing great damage. Carrying a few extra pounds can cost a runner valuable time in an important race. Likewise, a "root of bitterness" or hatred in our lives can produce enormous spiritual harm to ourselves, others, and to our relationship with God (Heb. 12:15).

Proverbs 3 tells us that we can expect God's chastening if we disobey Him (vv.11-12). That's why we would be wise to "fear the Lord and depart from evil" (v.7). If we take God and His Word seriously, we will hate any sin in our lives—big or little.

How about you? Are you letting some sin entangle you and slow you down in your Christian race? (Heb. 12:2). Confess it now, or it will have a much higher cost later. By David C. Egner (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

The price of sin is very high,
Though now it may seem low;
And if we let it go unchecked,
Its crippling power will grow. —Fitzhugh

Uproot the weed of sin while it's still small.

Avoiding Spiritual Sickness Proverbs 3:7, 8 Wood, C. R

Introduction: There is more than one way to get sick. You can get physically sick, but you can also get spiritually sick. Spiritual sickness is often far worse as it affects that part of us that will live forever. Here are some tips on how to avoid spiritual sickness.

I. ?Be Not Wise in Thine Own Eyes? (v. 7)

- A. Do not be impressed with yourself
 - 1. Nothing uglier than the pretty girl who knows it
 - 2. Nothing dumber than the intelligent one who knows it
- B. Do not be closed to instruction
 - 1. Learn from your critics
 - 2. Listen to your teachers
 - 3. Find some models on which to pattern your life

II. ?Fear the Lord? (v. 7)

- A. Basic meaning
 - 1. Hold God in awe
 - 2. Old Testament term for salvation
- B. Further implications
 - 1. Need some fear of the Lord in the sense of being afraid of what He can do
 - 2. Remember
 - a. God sees everything you do
 - b. God knows everything you think
 - c. God knows everywhere you go
 - 3. You will answer for all the above, in the judgment

III. ?Depart From Evil? (v. 7)

- A. Turn away from doing evil
 - 1. Other side of doing right
 - 2. Avoid every potentially evil situation
- B. Stay away from the evil man (vv. 31-35)

1. Envy him not
2. Choose not his ways
3. Agree with God's analysis of him ? he is wicked and a fool

Conclusion: A good spirit in any group depends on the members of that group. The success of any enterprise also depends on every person in the group. Spiritual sickness will ?take you out of the play.? Resolve to stay healthy by avoiding spiritual sickness.

Proverbs 3:8 It will be healing to your body And refreshment to your bones.

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

- shall. Proverbs 4:22; 16:24. Ps. 147:3. Is. 1:6. Je. 30:12, 13.
- health. Heb. medicine. thy. Eze. 16:4, 5.
- marrow. Heb. watering, or moistening. Job 21:24.

THE RESULT OF TURNING FROM EVIL IN PROVERBS 3:7

The **NET Note** on **it will be** helps understand how this verse expresses the result of Pr 3:7 - Heb "it will be." The form is Qal jussive of הַיָּה (hayah) and is one of **the rare uses of the volitive to express purpose or result**, even though there is no vav prefixed to it. This indicates that Pr 3:8 is the outcome of Pr 3:7. If a person trusts in the LORD and fears him (Pr 3:5–7), God will bless him (Pr 3:8).

Gibrant on healing - The noun riph'ûth refers to the "healing" or "medicine" that comes to a person as a result of godly wisdom and reverence for the Lord.

Hebrew word for "**body**" = umbilical cord, navel (the source of nutrition in utero). The Hebrew word is [synecdoche](#) to refer to the entire body.

NET Note - Heb "your navel" (cf. KJV, ASV). MT reads שַׁרְרֶכָּה (sharrekha, "your navel") which functions as a synecdoche of part (= navel) for the whole (= body), meaning "your body" (BDB 1057 s.v. שָׂר). The geminate noun שָׂר (sor, "navel; navel-string [= umbilical cord]") occurs only two other times in OT (Ezek 16:4; Song 7:3). The LXX reads τὸ σῶματί σου (tō sōmati sou, "your body"). So the BHS editors suggest emending MT to the more commonly used terms בְּשָׂרֶכָּה (bésarekha, "your flesh") or שְׂאֵרֶכָּה (shé'erekha, "your body"). But this kind of emendation runs counter to the canons of textual criticism; normally the more difficult reading or rarer term is preferred as original rather than a smooth reading or common term. Since "navel" occurs only twice elsewhere, it is difficult to imagine that it would have been confused for these two more common terms and that a scribe would mistakenly write "your navel" instead. If MT "your navel" is a synecdoche for "your body," the LXX is not pointing to a different textual tradition but is merely interpreting MT accordingly. In similar fashion, the English versions which read "your body" are not rejecting the MT reading; they are merely interpreting the term as a figure ([synecdoche](#)) for "your body."

POSB on navel - The image here in Proverbs is of the health-giving nourishment and strength that flow from the mother's body through the umbilical cord into her preborn baby's body. The fear of the Lord is a healing flow into our sin-sick souls. It is the marrow or nourishment-drink, refreshment-for our bones.

And refreshment (drink) - The Hebrew word means liquid served to a person to drink. The Septuagint translates it with the noun epimeleia and is used to describe the "Good Samaritan" in Lk 10:34+ who "took care of" the man who had been robbed and beaten.

NET Note - Heb "drink." The noun שִׁיקְוֵי (shiqquy, "drink") is a figure: metonymy of cause (= drink) for the effect (= refreshment); see BDB 1052 s.v. Just as a drink of water would bring physical refreshment to one's body, trusting in God and turning away from evil will bring emotional refreshment to one's soul.

Bones - figure of speech = seat of the emotions. E.g., [Jer 20:9;23:9] both used parallel to "heart"). David speaks of the burden of sin "There is no health in my **bones** because of my sin." (Ps 38:3).

NET Note on bones - Heb "your bones." The term אֶצְמוֹתֶיךָ ('atsmotekha, "your bones") functions as a [synecdoche](#) of part (= bones) for the whole person (= physical and moral aspects); cf. Ps 6:3; 35:10; Pr 3:8; 14:30; 15:30; 16:24; Isa 66:14 and BDB 782 s.v. אֶצְמָה 1.d. Scripture often uses the body to describe the inner person (A. R. Johnson, *The Vitality of the Individual in the Thought of Ancient Israel*, 67–8).

Bones (Heb = etsem) in Proverbs = Prov. 3:8; Prov. 12:4; Prov. 14:30; Prov. 15:30; Prov. 16:24;

Sin makes for spiritual sickness, while righteousness leads to healing.

George Lawson - Proverbs 3:8. The navel is a useful part of the body, being a sort of ligament to knit the bowels together;—the bones are the strength and fence of the body. The fear of God is health to the outward, as well as to the inward man. Health is an object of great desire to all, and the wise man will not only use medicines when sick, for the restoration of it, but will attentively consider what food and what exercise are the most proper for preserving health in the navel, and marrow in the bones. The spiritually wise will remember, that in God's hands is our life, and breath, and all our ways,—that diseases are his servants, which come and go at his pleasure,—and that the surest way to health is to walk before him unto all pleasing. Does he then enjoy health? he has a blessing along with it. Is he the victim of disease? it will be more beneficial to him than is to the wicked his unsanctified health.

Religion has a natural tendency to impart health and vigour to the body, because it preserves a man from those distempers which proceed from unsubdued lusts, and diffuses over the mind that calm serenity and heartfelt joy, which even upon the body exercise a medicinal influence.

Proverbs 3:9 Honor the LORD from your wealth and from the first of all your produce;

KJV Proverbs 3:9 Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase:

- Proverbs 14:31. Ge. 14:18–21; 28:22. Ex. 22:29; 23:19; 34:26; 35:20–29. Nu. 7:2, etc.; 31:50, etc. De. 26:2, etc. Hag. 1:4–9. Mal. 3:8, 9. Mar. 14:7, 8, 10, etc. Lu. 14:13, 14. 1 Co. 16:2. 2 Co. 8:2, 3, 8, 9. Phi. 4:17, 18. 1 John. 3:17, 18.

A COMMAND TO HONOR GOD WITH THE FIRST AND THE BEST!

This is an admonition to see that one's financial ways honor God (cf. Luke 11:42). God's part is not what is left over but the "firstfruits," which consisted of the first of the produce of the land (Ex. 22:29; 23:19; 34:20; Lev. 23:10). The Israelite brought the "firstfruits" in order to acknowledge that God was the ultimate owner of Canaan (Lev. 25:23), thus honoring Yahweh with his substance and expressing gratitude and thanksgiving.

POSB - It has long been said that worship involves three books: God's book (the Bible), the hymn book, and the pocketbook. Trusting the Lord with all your heart includes trusting Him with your substance or wealth—your possessions. Fearing the Lord—submissively obeying Him—extends to His commands about finances and material things.

The experience of God's people through the years is distilled into a pithy proverb by the inspired writer. It shows that God's people can count on His blessings when we honor Him with our offerings. As with all proverbial wisdom, this is not an ironclad rule without exceptions. It is a principle proved through experience and inspired by God. 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. See Lk 6:38.

Higgins writes that "Faith moves beyond dependency for the pathway and now embraces a man's possessions. How are they held? To whom do they belong? A man's thinking on all these and more will be revealed by what he does with them." ([What the Bible Teaches](#))

The Hebrew word for honor is also the word for glorify! Honoring God with one's wealth is a way to glorify Him.

Guzik - This is another practical way to show that one does trust in the LORD with all your heart (Proverbs 3:5). When we truly trust Him, we can honor Him with generosity that realizes He is the great provider and God has inexhaustible resources.. Many commentators note that the word honor has a connection with sacrifice. "Commentaries note that this is the only place where Proverbs alludes to the ceremonial worship ... Proverbs is not so much concerning itself with ceremonial religion here as it is exhorting the reader to demonstrate gratitude toward and confidence in God (rather than in wealth)." (Garrett). "The third piece of advice is to give back to God some of one's wealth as a sacrifice in recognition that God gave it." (Ross)

Honor (03513)(**kabad**) is a verb which means to weigh heavily, to be heavy (weighty, burdensome), to be honored, to be wealthy, to get honor, to make dull, to make hard, to multiply or make numerous. There are 2 literal uses of **kabad** describing Eli as **heavy** (1Sa 4:18) and Absalom's hair as **heavy** (2Sa 14:26). Most of the uses of **kabad** are figurative and most of these figurative uses in turn convey the sense of **honor** or **glory** (e.g., a "weighty" person in society is one who is honored or worthy of respect ["respected" = Ge

24:19].)

Kabad is recognizing the worth which another deserves.

Kabad in Proverbs -Prov. 3:9; Prov. 4:8; Prov. 8:24; Prov. 12:9; Prov. 13:18; Prov. 14:31; Prov. 27:18;

Bridges - This is the rule of sacrifice—a costly precept to the worldling and the formalist. But to the servant of God, is it not a privilege to lay aside a portion of substance with this sacred stamp, “This is for God?” (1 Cor. 16:2) **The first fruits of the increase** were the acknowledgment of redemption from Egypt. (Ex. 13:11–16, Deut. 26:1–10) And shall we—redeemed from sin, Satan, death, and hell—deny the claim? (1 Cor. 6:19, 20) Nay, could we be happy in spending that **substance** on ourselves, which he has given us, wherewith **to honor** him? (Mt. 25:14, 15, Luke 19:13, Contrast Pr 12:16–21) What a value—what a dignity—does it give to the talent, that he should condescend to employ it for his grand eternal purposes! This sacred devotedness is moreover the true road to riches. (Pr 11:24.) God challenges us to “prove him now herewith,” if the abundant harvest, and the overflowing vintage shall not put unbelief and covetousness to shame. (Neh. 3:10, 2 Chr 31:5–10) A niggardly spirit, is therefore narrow policy, contracting the harvest, by sparing the seed corn. (Pr 11:24, 2 Cor. 9:6. Cp Hag. 1:4–6) There is no presumption or enthusiasm in looking for the literal fulfilment of the promise. If we doubt the temporal, should we not suspect our assumed confidence, in the spiritual engagements? If the Lord’s word be insufficient security for **our substance**; much more must it be for the infinitely weightier deposit of our soul! The rule and obligation, are therefore clear. Only let us carefully prove our motives, that we beware of bye-ends and selfish principles; that we **honor the Lord**, not ourselves. Let there be a self-renouncing spirit, implicit faith, (1 Kings 17:12–16) constraining love (Rom. 12:1, 2 Cor. 5:14, 15), special regard to his own people. (Mt. 10:42, 25:40, Gal. 6:10.) And doubt not, but he will affix his own seal—“Them that honor me, I will honor.” (1 Sa 2:30. Cp. Chap. 11:25, 22:9, Heb. 6:10.)

Higgins - Giving is not a duty or obligation. It is the response of hearts touched by grace (2 Cor 8 & 9) and recognizing that all belongs to the Lord. “Of thine own have we given thee”, said David (1 Chr 29:14). Practical questions thrust themselves forth for our consciences to answer. What do we do with the pay rise we have just received? How do we handle the bonus at the end of the year? Does God receive the firstfruit of the increase? Is it from a worshipping heart which is owning His “weight”? ([What the Bible Teaches](#))

Wiersbe wrote that “If we don’t faithfully give to the Lord, we don’t really trust the Lord. Of course, our tithes and offerings aren’t “payment” for His blessings; rather, they’re evidence of our faith and obedience. Christian industrialist R.G. LeTourneau used to say, “If you give because it pays, it won’t pay.” Giving is heart preparation for what God wants to say to us and do for us. “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Matt. 6:21, NKJV).” (Be Skillful)

From the first of all your produce- The first and the best, not the last and the leftovers!

Wiersbe - The Old Testament Jews brought the Lord the firstlings of their flocks (Exodus 13:1–2) and the firstfruits of their fields (Leviticus 23:9–14), and in this way acknowledged His goodness and sovereignty.”

Waltke on first ““It takes on the technical sense of offering the best of material things.”

Guzik - The principle of firstfruits also means that we give to God in active anticipation that He will provide more. We honor Him by thinking, “I can give You the first and the best because I know You can and will give much more.”

POSB - God is honored when people give Him their first and their best, what the Bible calls the firstfruits. To give Him what is left over and less than the best does not glorify Him and is not worthy of His great name. The principle of the firstfruits is one of God’s greatest laws. Early in Israel’s history, God commanded them to bring Him the first of all their crops and their livestock and all else with which He had blessed them. They were instructed to dedicate their firstborn children to the Lord as well (Ex.13:11-16; 22:29-30; 23:19; Le.23:9-11; Nu.18:12-13; De.26:1-10). Notice carefully the significance of the firstfruits: (1) It was a token of their gratitude to the Lord for His blessings. (2) It proclaimed their acknowledgement of God as the source of all good things. (3) It represented the rest of the harvest, the fact that all belonged to God. He was the owner of it all. (4) It acknowledged one of the greatest spiritual truths of all: that God had redeemed them from Egypt. All that they had was because of His gracious deliverance from the bondage of Egypt. Even in the New Testament, Paul reminded the church that this is the ultimate reason for giving to God today. We give to Him because He gave His Son for us. We give our best because He gave His best. He has redeemed and delivered us from the bondage of sin. (2 Co.8:9, 2 Co.9:15).

Arnot - Capital and Profit

“Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase.”—Pr 3:9.

THE two terms, “substance” and “increase,” exist, and are understood in all nations and all times. They correspond to capital and profit in a commercial community, or land and crop in an agricultural district. Although the direct and chief lesson of this verse be

another thing, we take occasion, from the occurrence of these terms, first of all, to indicate and estimate a grievous malady that infests mercantile life in the present day. It manifests itself in these two kindred features: 1. A morbid forwardness to commence business without capital; that is an effort to reap an increase while you have no substance to reap it from; and, 2. A morbid forwardness to prosecute business to an enormous extent, upon a very limited capital; that is an effort to reap more increase than your substance can fairly bear.

In former, and, commercially speaking, healthier times, those who had no money were content to work for wages until they had saved some, and then they laid out to the best advantage the money which they had. That method was honourable to the individual, and safe to society; but in our day an unfair and unsafe standard of estimating men has been surreptitiously foisted upon the community. Practically by all classes, the chief honour should be given, not to the great merchant, but to the honest man. A man who has only five pounds in the world, and carries all his merchandise in a pack on his shoulder, is more worthy of honour than the man who, having as little money of his own, drives his carriage, and drinks champagne at the risk of other people. A full discussion of mercantile morality under this text would be unsuitable and therefore we now refrain; but a note of warning was demanded here on the one point which has been brought up We must have truth and righteousness at the bottom as a foundation, if we would have a permanently successful commerce. Let men exert all their ingenuity in extracting the largest possible increase from their substance; but let them beware of galvanic efforts to extract annual returns at other people's risk, from shadows which have no body of substance behind. This is the epidemic disease of commerce: this is the chief cause of its disastrous fluctuations: this is the foul humour in its veins that bursts out periodically in wide-spread bankruptcy. If all merchants would conscientiously, as in God's sight, confine their gains to a legitimate increase of their realized substance, the commerce of the nation would circulate in perennial health.

When the increase is honestly obtained, honour the Lord with its first fruits. To devote a portion of our substance directly to the worship of God, and the good of men, is a duty strictly binding, and plainly enjoined in the Scriptures: it is not a thing that a man may do or not do as he pleases. There is this difference, however, between it and the common relative duties of life, that whereas for these we are under law to man, for that we are accountable to God only. For the neglect of it no infliction comes from a human hand. God will not have the dregs that are squeezed out by pressure poured into his treasury. He depends not, like earthly rulers, on the magnitude of the tribute. He loveth a cheerful giver; he can work without our wealth, but He does not work without our willing service. The silver and the gold are His already; what He claims and cares for is the cheerfulness of the giver's heart.

George Lawson - Earthly substance is necessary for the use of our bodies, but we are called to make a nobler use of it than the mere service of the outward man. We are to honour the Lord with it, making no use of any part of our increase, till we have set apart a reasonable proportion of it for the service of God. God needs nothing at our hands; but for our own benefit, he will have us to render back a part of all he gives us for the decent support of his worship, and for the maintenance of the poor. Is it any hardship to give a part to him from whom we have received all? Can we make a better use of our wealth, which is often a snare and a trap to men, than by serving God, and thus making to ourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness?

By this means we honour the Lord. He is the Creator and Redeemer of our souls and bodies, and therefore we are to glorify him with our bodies and our spirits, which are his. Our substance is his also, and we must honour him with it by a liberality in his service, proportioned to the extent of his bounty. By the practice of this duty, we shew our faith in his providence and promises, our love to God, our gratitude for his goodness, and our preference of his service to that of mammon. In this manner we justify our profession of the gospel of Christ, and others are made to glorify God, while they enjoy the benefit of our ministrations to this purpose.

By the neglect of this duty, we are guilty of robbing God himself of that rent which he requires from us as his tenants. We dishonour him by shewing that we love the world better than his service, and that we trust more to our chests, or to our bonds upon our fellow-creatures, than to his promises; for has he not assured us, that instead of being losers, we shall be great gainers by what we bestow upon him? Liberality on God's account brings down the blessing of providence to such a degree, that our barns shall be filled, and our presses need enlargement. God has the sun, and winds, and rain, and creatures of every description, in his hand; and these he manages in such a manner, as that none shall be a loser by him, nor a gainer by withholding from him. Robbers of God are visited with a curse, which like a moth wastes, or like a fire destroys, their substance*. Liberality opens the windows of heaven, destroys the devouring locust, and turns the barren field into a delightful land†.

Health and riches are the advantages that attend the fear of the Lord, and liberality in his service; but we must not imagine that these blessings are promised without a reservation of the cross, when God sees it needful for us, nor suppose that God is unfaithful when he administers correction to his children. This truth is inculcated in the next instruction of the wise king, which teaches us how to behave under afflictive providences.

Proverbs 3:10 So your barns will be filled with plenty And your vats will overflow with new wine.

KJV Proverbs 3:10 So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.

- Proverbs 11:24, 25; 19:17; 22:9. Le. 26:2–5. De. 28:8. Ec. 11:1, 2. Hag. 2:19. Mal. 3:10, 11. Mat. 10:42. 2 Co. 9:6–11.

GOD'S PROMISE TO GIVE

This is not a health, wealth and prosperity gospel! This promise was given to Israel, but is applicable to NT believers.

Higgins explains "that Israel's **blessings** were linked with the earth and with the land. The principle is that righteousness is the pathway to blessing—but in our case **spiritual** and not material (ED: IT MIGHT BE BUT IS NOT NECESSARILY SO). There is a corollary to this and it is the danger of God being viewed as a "good investment" policy. When the prosperity does not come, then disillusionment and doubt surface and can cause bitterness. But the teaching of the New Testament is that the man who honours God with his firstfruits will have treasure in heaven (Mt 6:19-21). The Philippian assembly sought opportunity and sent Epaphroditus to bring their gift to Paul. Their fellowship included, but was not limited to, material practical support. As Paul expressed his appreciation to them, he closed by reminding them that "My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Phil 4:19). This was not so much a promise of material remuneration as that God would supply whatever the assembly needed: gift, guidance, spiritual blessing, as well as the means to continue giving. ([What the Bible Teaches](#))

Henry Morris on new wine - Since this is "new wine," fresh from the winepresses—healthful grape juice, still unfermented—there is no conflict with Proverbs 23:29-35, which severely warns against intoxicating wine.

POSB - when we honor God by giving Him the first and best, He will do for us what only He can do. The farmer can plow, sow, water, and weed, but he cannot make the seed grow—only God can produce the harvest (1 Co.3:7). The gardener can dress and prune the vines, but he cannot put grapes on them. He cannot make those grapes juicy—only God can. The order of this process is clear in this passage and throughout Scripture: give to God first, and He will give back to you. Give the firstfruits to God, not what is left after all the bills are paid. "Such giving is the supreme act of faith." So many, many believers fail to honor God in this way—and thereby miss His abundant blessings—because they do not trust Him to do what He promises to do.

Waltke on new wine - "New wine, according to F. S. Fitzsimmonds, 'represents wine made from the first drippings of the juice before the winepress was trodden. As such it would be particularly potent.'" But there is a principle here - Even more wine would be collected from the grapes when they were pressed.

Proverbs 3:11 My son, do not reject the discipline of the LORD Or loathe His reproof,

KJV Proverbs 3:11 My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; neither be weary of his correction:

Septuagint - huie me oligorei (2SPAM: regard God's discipline to be of little value Heb12.5) paideias kuriou mede eklouo (2SAPPM: become weary; lose heart, faint, get discouraged Ga6.9) up autou elegchomenos (PMPMSN: showing someone that he has done someth. wrong and summoning him to repent bring to light, expose Jn3.20; convince, convict Ja2.9; in sense of setting right reprove, correct 1Ti 5.20; in an intensified sense rebuke, discipline, punish Heb12.5)

- My. Job 5:17. Ps. 94:12. 1 Co. 11:32. He. 12:5, 6. Re. 3:19.
- neither. Proverbs 24:10. Job 4:5. Is. 40:30, 31. 2 Co. 4:1, 16, 17. He. 12:3, 7–12.

MY SON DO NOT REJECT THE DISCIPLINE OF THE LORD (Heb 12:5-6): The LXX translation is quoted by the NT writer of Hebrews to encourage the Jewish believers (Heb 12:5,6). This TRUTH is so important to NOT FORGET (like the recipients of the epistle to the Hebrews 12:5) when you are going through the trial. You must remember that God's chastening is always MOTIVATED by PERFECT LOVE & is given for instruction & education (Dt 8:2, 3) to grow us in GRACE & the KNOWLEDGE of our Lord Jesus Christ (2Pe 3:18) (1Pe 1:6,7 Jas 1:2,3,12 for value of discipline) God's DISCIPLINE should not be ignored, resented, or resisted.

God's chastening ALWAYS flows from His loving heart! Satan the liar will try to get us to doubt (DOUBT = UNBELIEF) God's character & His goodness in the midst of the DISCIPLINE. But that is when we must choose to see the end result BY FAITH (1Pe 1:7). We must take God at His Word for He Who promised is faithful. His Word here clearly says God's discipline is not to be DESPISED. See Ps 119:67, 71 94:12 tells us the TRUTH about God's DISCIPLINE and the trials He allows or sends into our life. FAITH hears that TRUTH & acts on that TRUTH, not on how it FEELS...discipline may (will) make us feel sorrowful (Heb 12:11 1Pe1:6).

Bridges - Prosperity and adversity in their wise mixture and proportion form the present condition of man. Each is equally fruitful in opportunity of honoring the Lord; in prosperity—by the full consecration of our substance; in adversity—by a humble and cheerful submission to his dispensations. In prosperity it is well to expect the rod; 'and suppose it be his pleasure let it not disatisfy thee, nor make thee either doubt of his gracious Providence, or out of impatience take any unlawful course to remove it from thee.'² His "exhortation"—the Apostle reminds us—"speaketh to us as unto children." And indeed, under no character does he approach so near to us, and endear himself so closely to us, as that of a Father. Most precious at all times, especially under correction, is the privilege of adoption—My son.

This is a most important exhortation. Nowhere are our corruptions so manifest, or our grace so shining, as under the rod. We need it as much as our daily bread. If we be children of God, we are still children of Adam—with Adam's will, pride, independence, and waywardness. And nothing more distinctly requires Divine teaching and grace, than how to preserve in our behavior the just mean between hardness and despondency—neither despising the chastening of the Lord, nor being weary of his correction. We are left to infer the rules from the evils mentioned, which will ever be the exercise of prayer, watchfulness, and conflict.

Too often, while we guard against an error on the right hand, we forget one not less hurtful on the left; like the man who feels he cannot go too far from the precipice on the one side, and rushes into some fearful hazard on the other. The middle path is the right path. Doubtless the Lord means his chastening to be felt. A leviathian iron-heartedness⁶ is the stubbornness of the flesh, not the triumph of the spirit; a frame most offensive to him, and most unseemly for the reception of his gracious discipline. To be as though no pain was felt or cared for; sullenly to "kick against the pricks," and to dare God to do his worst—this is indeed to despise his chastening. But pride will lift up the head, stiff and unbending: many a stroke does it require to bring it down.

Yet alas! this is not the sin only of the ungodly. Do we not often see the child of God in an undutiful spirit? He then cares little whether his father smiles or frowns. The chastening is lightly passed over. He considers only second causes, or immediate instruments. He is irritated by looking at the rod, rather than at the hand that inflicts it.² He shrinks from searching into the cause. He disregards his Father's loving voice and purpose. Hence there is no softening humiliation, no "acceptance of the punishment of iniquity;"⁴ no child-like submission; no exercise of faith in looking for support. Is not this to despise the chastening of the Lord?

But while some despise the hand of God as light, others "faint" under it as heavy. They are weary of his correction. Beware of yielding to heartless despondency or fretful impatience. Resist hard and dishonorable thoughts of God.⁷ Their very admission spreads destruction. Very apt are we to judge amiss of our Father's dealings; to neglect present duty;⁹ to cherish a morbid brooding over our sorrows; to forget our title and privilege of adoption;¹¹ or in obstinate grief to "refuse to be comforted" with the "hope of the end." And is not this to be weary of his correction?

We must here remark, that the rules imply much more than their negative meaning. Instead of despising—reverence—the chastening of the Lord. Let it be a solemn remembrance to thee, that thou art under thy Father's correction. Instead of being weary of it, hang upon his chastening hand, and pour thy very soul into his bosom. Kiss the rod.¹⁵ Acknowledge its humbling, but enriching, benefit. Expect a richer blessing from sustaining grace, than from the removal of the deprecated affliction.¹⁷

After all we must add, that chastening is a trial to the flesh; yet overruled by wonder-working wisdom and faithfulness to an end above and contrary to its nature. So that eyeing God in it, we see it to be love, not wrath; "receiving,"¹⁹ not casting out. We are thus better with it than without it; nay—we could not be without it for our soul's salvation. Faith understands the reasons of the discipline;²¹ acknowledges it as a part of his gracious Providence, and the provision of his everlasting covenant;²³ waits to see the end of the Lord; and meanwhile draws its main support from the seal of adoption. He corrects whom he loves, and because he loves—the son in whom he delighteth. He "rejoiceth over his child to do him good," and as a wise and affectionate father, he would not suffer him to be ruined for want of correction. It is correction—this is for our humbling. It is only correction—this is our consolation, the intolerable sting of penal infliction is removed. Here then the child has rest indeed!³ The rod is now meekly—yea—thankfully borne, because it is in the hand of One, supreme in wisdom as in love, who knows the time, the measure, and the effectual working of his own discipline.⁵ The child compares his affliction with his sin, and marvels not that it is so heavy, but that it is so light. He knows that he more than deserves—that he needs it—all. 'O God, I have made an ill use of thy mercies, if I have not learnt to be content with thy correction.'

Should then he, at any dark season ask—"If it be so, why am I thus?"—you are thus, because this is your Father's school—his training discipline for heaven.⁹ He loves thee so well, that he will bestow all pains upon thee. He will melt thee in his furnace, that he may stamp thee with his image. He would make thee "partake of his holiness,"¹¹ that thou mightest partake of his happiness. But unless thou enter into his mind thou wilt—so far as thou canst—defeat his purpose and lose the benefit—a loss never to be told! Look then well into the dispensation.¹³ Every rod is thy Father's messenger, and he will not bear to have his messenger despised. Be anxious to "hear the rod, and who hath appointed it;" well "knowing that the Lord hath not done without cause all that he hath done."¹⁵ Be more concerned to have it sanctified than removed; yea, above all things deprecate its removal, until it has fully wrought its appointed work. We can but admire that considerate dispensation, which uses these "light afflictions" as the means of

deliverance from the most deadly evil. And should flesh and blood rebel—should the earthly tabernacle shake with “the blow of his hand”—yet shalt thou bless him throughout eternity, that even by this crushing discipline he should accomplish his most merciful purpose. Meanwhile, give him unlimited confidence, and if some steps of the way are hid, wait and “see the end.”¹⁸ Watch for the first whispers of his will—the first intimation of his Providence—the guidance of his eye. Many a stroke will thus be saved to thy peace and quietness. Never forget that this is a golden opportunity, requiring for its due improvement much study, prayer, and retirement; that no communion is so close—so endearing—so fruitful—as with a chastening God; that we delight in a sense of his love in the midst, yea in the very form, of his chastening, that never have we such a full manifestation of his character and perfections; that what we have before learnt in theory, we here learn experimentally; and what we have before imperfectly understood, is here more fully revealed.²

OR LOATHE HIS REPROOF (Pr 6:23 Ps 94:12 Rev 3:19 Job 5:17 2Ti 3:16):

William Arnot - A Fatherly Word on Fatherly Correction

“My son, despise not thou 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.”—3:11, 12.

THIS passage is taken entire out of the Old Testament, and inserted in the New (Heb. 12:5, 6).

I have seen the crown of our present Sovereign. It is studded all over with jewels, bright jewels of various hue. The eye can scarcely rest upon it for radiance. Some of these jewels have been found and fashioned in our own day; others have been taken from the crowns which English monarchs wore in ancient times; but the gems that have been taken from an ancient crown, and inserted in the newest, are as bright and as precious as those that were never used before. Jewels are neither dimmed by time, nor superseded by fashion. A prince will wear an old one as proudly as a new.

Such are these words, these tried and pure words, spoken of old by the Spirit in Solomon, and recalled for use by the same Spirit in Paul. This word of God liveth and abideth for ever. The king who uttered it at first has passed away with all his glory like the grass. The kingdom which he swayed is blotted out from the map of the nations. The temple where they may have been read to the great congregation has been cast down. Jerusalem became a heap. But these words of Solomon remain at this day bright and pure like the jewels on the crown he wore. The very gems that sparkled in the diadem of David's son, appear again reset in a circlet of glory round the head of David's Lord. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but none of these precious words shall fail.

In quoting the words from the Old Testament, Paul perceived, and pointed out a tender meaning in the form of the expression, “my son.” That formula occurs often in the Proverbs, and a careless reader would pass it as a thing of course. Not so this inspired student of the Scripture: he gathers a meaning from the form of the word before he begins to deal with its substance; the exhortation, he says, “speaketh unto you as unto children.” Incidentally we obtain here a lesson on the interpretation of Scripture. Some would confine themselves to the leading facts and principles, setting aside, as unimportant, whatever pertains merely to the manner of the communication. By this method much is lost. It is not a thrifty way of managing the bread that cometh down from heaven. Gather up the fragments, that none of them be lost. We give no license to the practice of building precious doctrines upon conceits and fancies, while there are solid foundations at hand laid there for the purpose of bearing them. We do not want any of your word; but we must have all that is the Lord's, great and small alike. We need every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God to live upon. Take and use all that is in the word, but nothing more.

“My son.” The Spirit in Paul recognised this as a mark of God's paternal tenderness, and used it as a ground of glad encouragement to desponding believers. Of design, and not by accident, was the word thrown into that form, as it issued at first from the lips of Solomon. God intended thereby to reveal Himself as a Father, and to grave that view of his character in the Scripture as with a pen of iron and the point of a diamond, that the most distant nations and the latest times might know that as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him.

Some men raise a debate about inspiration, whether every word be inspired, or only some; but there was no such idea in Paul's mind. Not only the main propositions, but the incidental tone and cast of the language is understood to express the mind of God. We should not allow one jot or tittle of this word to pass away through our hands as we are using it.

Turning now to the matter of this text, understand by chastening, in the meantime, any affliction, whatever its form or measure may be. The stroke may fall upon your own person,—your body, your spirit, or your good name; it may fall on those who are dearest to you, and so wound you in the tenderest spot; it may fall upon your substance to sweep it away, or on your country to waste it. Whatever the providence may be that turns your joy into grief, it is a chastening from the Lord. Taking, in the first place, this more general view of chastening or rebuke, we observe that the command regarding it is twofold: 1. Do not despise it; 2. Do not faint under it. There are two opposite extremes of error in this thing, as in most others; and these two commands are set like hedges, one on the right hand, and another on the left, to keep the traveller from wandering out of the way. The Lord from heaven beholds all the children of men. He sees that some, when afflicted, err on this side, and some on that; the stroke affects those too little, and these too much.

1. “Despise not.” It means to make light of anything; to cast it aside as if it had no meaning and no power. The affliction comes on,

and the sufferer looks to the immediate cause only. He refuses to look up to the higher links of the chain; he refuses to make it the occasion of communion with God. The disease comes upon him: it is a cold or a bruise; it has been neglected, and so aggravated; but the doctor has prescribed such a remedy, and he expects it will soon give way. The loss in business comes: he feels the uneasiness—it may be, the affront. He has grief for his own loss, and indignation against others; but he was in a fair way, and might have succeeded, if such an article had not suddenly fallen in price, or such a man had not become bankrupt. The bereavement comes: nature sheds bitter tears a while, and nature by degrees grows easy again. All this, what is it, and what is the degree of its guilt? It is specifically atheism: it is to be “without God in the world.” The Father of our spirits touches us by certain instruments which are at his command; and we refuse to look up and learn from the signs on his countenance.

We forbid not the consideration of instruments and secondary causes. Let them be observed, and the remedies which they suggest applied; but do not stop there. Do not finish off with these dumb messengers whom the Lord sends; they are sent for the very purpose of inviting you to a conference, secret and personal, with himself. When you smart under the chastening, acknowledge the Lord. He is not far from every one of us. He speaks to us as to children. He means thereby to represent himself as a Father. In that character he alternately visits us with mercy and judgment. He gives us life, and breath, and all things; he also at other times rebukes and bereaves. He takes it ill to be overlooked in either capacity. He is a jealous God. He will not allow idols to intercept the homage of his creatures; so also he is jealous, and his jealousy will burn like fire, if you give to his servants, whether diseases, or stormy winds, or mercantile convulsions, the regard which is due to himself—your regard when success makes you happy, or when grief weighs you down. Do not meet sorrow by a mere hardihood of nature. Let your heart flow down under trouble, for this is human: let it rise up also to God, for this is divine.

2. “Faint not.” This is the opposite extreme. Do not be dissolved, as it were—taken down and taken to pieces by the stroke. Do not sink into despondency and despair. You should retain presence of mind, and exercise all your faculties. Both extremes, when traced to their fountain-head, spring from the same cause—a want of looking to God in the time of trouble. If the bold would see God in his afflictions, he would not despise; if the timid would see God in them, he would not faint. As in other cases, the two opposite errors branch off originally from the same path, and converge upon it again. Truth goes straight over the hill Difficulty between. Godliness is profitable unto all things: it humbles the proud, and lifts up the lowly: it softens the hard, and gives firmness to the feeble.

The middle way is the path of safety. Be impressed by the stroke of the Lord’s hand, but not crushed under it. Let your own confidence go, but lay hold on the arm of the Lord, that you may be kept from falling. Let the affliction shut you out from other helps, and up to the help that is laid on the Mighty One.

“Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth.” We must not suppose from this that the trouble which a man endures on earth is the mark and measure of God’s love. It is not a law of the kingdom of heaven that those who suffer most from God’s hand are furthest advanced in his favour. Hitherto we have considered the afflictive stroke simply as a suffering; but it is specifically in “chastening” that the love lies, and all suffering is not chastening. It means fatherly correction for the child’s good; the word indeed signifies “education.”

God, the ruler of the universe, permits suffering to fall on all men indiscriminately: but the God of mercy stands by to make the suffering love’s instrument in training every dear child. The same stroke may fall on two men, and be in one case judgment, in the other love. “In vain have I smitten your children: they received no correction” (Jer. 2:30). All were “smitten,” but they only obtained paternal correction who in the spirit of adoption “received” it as such. You may prune branches lying withered on the ground, and also branches living in the vine. In the two cases the operation and instrument are precisely alike; but the operation on this branch has no result, and the operation on that branch produces fruitfulness, because of a difference in the place and condition of the branches on which the operation was performed.

In his comment on this text, Paul charges the Hebrew Christians with having “forgotten” it. He lays it expressly at their door as a fault, that this word of God was not hidden in their hearts, and ready in their memories. It is expected of Christians, in New Testament times, that they know, and remember, and apply the lesson of the Old Testament. When they forgot it, He who spoke it at first, repeated it again, accompanied with a complaint that their forgetfulness made the repetition necessary.

The warning has often been given, and it is needed yet, that terror in time of trouble may be no true repentance. The profligate, the vain, or the worldly has been laid low on a sick-bed. So near has death come, that the very shadow of the judgment-seat fell cold and dark over his heart, and took all the light out of his former joys. He grieves now that he has sinned so much. He resolves that if he recover he will fear God, and seek a Saviour. After quivering for a time between death and life, he gets the turn toward the side of time, and enters on another lease of life. The breezes of summer, and the exercise of returning strength, refresh again his pallid cheek, and rekindle his sunken eye. The affliction is over. The fear of death departs, and with it the repentance which it had brought. He returns to his pleasures again. He brings disgrace upon the holy name of Jesus, and provokes God to give him over. He deals by the Almighty as little children do by ghosts—cower down in breathless terror of them at night, and laugh at them when the daylight returns. He “will mock when their fear cometh!”

But unspeakably precious to dear children are the corrections of a Father’s love, all these abuses notwithstanding. It is one of the finest triumphs of faith, when, in time of affliction, a Christian gets fresh confidence in a Saviour’s love. How sweet it is to lay your besetting sins and characteristic shortcomings beneath the descending stroke, and count it so much gain when they are crushed! It may well encourage a believer to be patient in the furnace, to see that some of the dross is separating, and coming away. Not a drop

too much will fall into the cup of the redeemed, and it will all be over soon. Lord, pity our weakness! Lord, increase our faith!

George Lawson - [Proverbs 3:11](#). This exhortation, like many of the others, speaks to us as unto children; and it is a piece of ingratitude in the children of wisdom to forget it, by suffering it to be obliterated from their memories, or to produce no practical influence‡.

We are here warned against despising divine rebukes, or fainting under them. The rebukes of providence are despised, when persons regard not the supreme hand that afflicts; when they consider not the design of God in afflicting; or when, through stupidity of mind or hardness of heart, they neglect to comply with it. This is a great affront to God. It is as if a child should say to his father when he strikes him, 'I do not care, do with me what you will, I shall behave no better than I have done.' Ahaz was a very wicked man, but nothing shewed the stubbornness of his heart so much, as his walking contrary to God, when he sent sore distress upon him*.

God's people may fall into this sin, sleeping like Jonah amidst the storm that God sends to testify his displeasure with them. But those whom he loves, he will awaken out of their sleep; and this he sometimes does by terrible tempests of outward calamity or of inward terror, sufficient to rouse them from the deepest slumber. As the lively Christian is thankful for the least mercy, so the afflictions which others despise are improved by him as calls to serious thought.

Afflictions may be despised in another sense, which seems to agree better with the argument used in the following verse. Men despise them, when they do not value them as necessary and useful. We need afflictions, and yet we are ready to think that they might be very well spared, and the work designed by them effected by gentler means. This notion is to be rejected by us with abhorrence, because it implies a reflection upon the wisdom and love of our heavenly Father, who does not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men; though now for a season, if need be, he afflicts them, because the beneficial consequences are far more than sufficient to counterbalance the pain of it. The original word often signifies to abhor.

Weariness under the divine correction is another common fault, which we must avoid with care. Our hearts must not fret against the Lord, nor suffer reflecting thoughts to spring up, for God never exceeds the due measure in distressing us. No ingredient is poured into the cup of affliction, but by infinite wisdom and grace; nor shall the rod of Jehovah rest upon the lot of the righteous, longer than need requires. Weariness will make the heart to sink like a stone, and produce harsh suspicions of the divine goodness. It will disqualify the mind for relishing the consolations of God, and answering the designs of the Almighty.

To keep our minds from fainting, let us consider who it is that corrects us. It is the Lord, and all flesh must be silent before him, and receive what evils he is pleased to appoint, with reverence and resignation. It is the Lord, let him do unto us what seemeth good in his sight. He is excellent in judgment, and in plenty of justice, and cannot do wrong to any of his creatures. But it is a sweeter consideration, that he is a Father, and chastens us in love.

Attending God's School Proverbs 3:11, 12 C R Wood

Introduction: These verses are an expanded quote of Job 5:17, and they summarize and explain the whole book of Job. Verse 11 traces Job's problem, and verse 12 has his answer to it. These verses, however, explain far more than Job. They explain the whole realm of problems, afflictions, etc., and show us how God wants us to handle them.

- I. Attitude
 - A. The proper understanding of chastening
 1. Its nature is schooling
 2. This involves chastening and all problems, etc., that come our way
 - B. The proper response to chastening
 1. Despise not the chastening of the Lord
 - a. Do not view it resentfully
 - b. Do not fail to pay it heed
 - c. Do not fail to learn from it
 - d. Do not dread God and His dealings
 2. Be not weary of His correction (Hebrews 12:5, 6) (?faint?)
 - a. Do not judge amiss the Father's dealings
 - b. Do not neglect present duty
 - c. Do not cherish morbid brooding over sorrows
 - d. Do not refuse to be comforted

Summary: No matter what comes in God's school, we are not to despise it nor faint under it.

II. Assurance

A. Chastening is correction

1. God is not necessarily punishing us; He is trying to correct us
2. It is the correction of the family, not the school or prison

B. Chastening (correction) is a sign of God's love

1. It is a sign of sonship
 - a. There can be no closer relationship ? correction is an integral part
 - b. He that escapes affliction may well question his adoption
2. He only corrects those whom He loves

C. Chastening (correction) is for our good

1. It is designed to ?straighten us out?
 - a. To make us like what He wants us to be
 - b. To keep us from the harm of evil
2. It has specific purposes
 - a. It is individual ? to show us our corruption
 - b. It is educational
 - c. It is tailored to our needs ? Adam's self-will, pride, independence, waywardness ? and designed to break our negative traits
3. It is handled perfectly by God
 - a. The fittest time
 - b. The surest, gentlest means
 - c. The most considerate measure
 - d. The most effective instruments

Summary: We can bear up properly under chastening because we have these three great assurances: it is correction; it is a sign of God's love; it is for our good

III. Applications

A. Honor God with everything

1. Honor prosperity by giving of your substance (vv. 9, 10)
2. Honor chastening and affliction by giving your submission

B. Seek to avoid the necessity of chastening

1. Watch for first whispers of His will
2. Look for intimations of His providence
3. Seek the guidance of His eye

C. When it comes, accept it as part of the relationship

1. Reverence it as a sign you are under His hand
2. Expect a rich experience of His sustaining grace
3. Do not look at the rod; look at the hand that wields it

D. Examine every trial to see if there is correction in it

1. Not all His classes are corrective
2. Each should be examined
3. Seek to determine what is being corrected
4. Act upon it immediately so it can stop the pressure

E. Keep faith in time of affliction

1. Understand why He chastens ? to correct
2. Acknowledge it as part of His gracious dealings with you

Conclusion: The pain of suffering sometimes keeps us from seeing what God is doing in our lives. Sometimes He melts us in the furnace so He can stamp us with His own image. He wants us to partake of His holiness so we can partake of His happiness. If we compare our chastening with our sin, is it not a marvel that it is not heavier?

When God Corrects Us

Read: Proverbs 3:5-18

Do not despise the chastening of the Lord, nor detest His correction. —Proverbs 3:11

Solomon warned us not to lean on our own understanding (Prov. 3:5). That implies we are prone to make mistakes in judgment. And how we hate having our mistakes corrected!

Some people detest correction so much that their main goal in life seems to be attempting to avoid or hide all their mistakes. But let's be practical. Correction, if well received, can save us a lot of grief.

A personal experience told by Eugene Peterson illustrates the value of correction. With his lawn mower tipped on its side, Eugene struggled to remove the blade so he could sharpen it. When his biggest wrench wouldn't budge the nut, he slipped a 4-foot length of pipe over the wrench handle for more leverage. When that failed, he started banging on the pipe with a huge rock. Finally his neighbor pointed out that the threads on the bolt went the other way. When Eugene reversed his exertions, the nut turned easily. He said, "I was saved from frustration and failure."

Are you forcing your life in the wrong direction? Welcome the correction of your heavenly Father, who delights in you. Trust His wisdom instead of your own, and He will redirect your life. That's a promise! (Prov. 3:6).

THINKING IT THROUGH

What are some practical ways Proverbs 3 gives us to learn God's wisdom? What rewards are promised if we heed this advice?

The only way to be right is to agree with God when He says we're wrong. By Joanie Yoder (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Proverbs 3:12 For whom the LORD loves He reproveth, Even as a father corrects the son in whom he delights.

KJV Proverbs 3:12 For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.

Septuagint - on gar agapa kurios paideuei (3SPAI) mastigoi (3SPAI: lit. as beating w. a lash or whip flog, scourge, whip Mt10.17; fig. of God's corrective punishment chastise, punish severely QUOTED IN Heb12.6) de panta huion on paradechetai (3SPMI:accept, acknowledge (as correct) Ac16.21; w. a pers. as obj. receive, welcome, accept Ac15.4).

LXE for whom the Lord loves, he rebukes, and scourges every son whom he receives.

- Proverbs 29:17. De. 8:5. Ps. 103:13.

George Lawson - Proverbs 3:12. For whom the LORD loves He reproveth, Even as a father, the son in whom he delights.

He intends, not to destroy but to reform, and correction is one of those privileges that belong to the family of God. Christ himself, though a Son in an infinitely higher sense than we, though altogether free from the need of correction, yet learned obedience by the things which he suffered. Christ was the first-born among many brethren, and we are predestinated to be conformed to him in sufferings and in holiness, and the sorrows which we endure are means appointed for making us partakers of God's holiness. Earthly fathers correct their children, in order to drive away folly from them; and that misguided lenity which withholds the rod, is but cruelty in disguise. Now, we yield reverence and submission to earthly parents; how much more do we owe it to that heavenly Father, who exercises love infinitely wiser and greater than theirs! He knows the greatest afflictions have not so much bitterness as the least sin, and he loves his children too well to spare correction, when it is requisite to purge away their sin.

The best commentary we can have on this text, is that given by Paul in his epistle to the Hebrews*. Did we understand it aright, we should bless God for correction, as well as for smiles; and the wormwood and the gall of our miseries would be turned into honey and the honey-comb.

Whatever corrections the children of God suffer, they are still happy, and it is our duty to believe them so. Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth! Nothing can make that person unhappy who is possessed of wisdom, as the inspired philosopher tells us in the next part of this chapter. In it he again recommends wisdom to our esteem and pursuit, Proverbs 2:13–26.

Proverbs 3:13 How blessed is the man who finds wisdom And the man who gains understanding.

KJV Proverbs 3:13 Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding.

- is the. Proverbs 4:5–9; 8:32–35. 1 Ki. 10:1–9, 23, 24. Ec. 9:15–18.
- getteth. Heb. draweth out. Proverbs 2:4; 18:1.

How ironic that this verse was composed into a hymn to be sang at the funeral of Charles Darwin, one who did inestimable damage to the "WISDOM" of God & whose "understanding" led to the deception of millions who bought into (by faith) the myth of evolution to the denigration of the omnipotence and grandeur of the Creator of all. Irony indeed. (see story under "wisdom")

BENEFITS OF BIBLE STUDY: Pr 3:13-26:

- 1). Blessed (makarios --fully satisfied: happiness depends on what "happens"; blessedness depends on Jesus!)
- 2). Wisdom (sophia)
- 3). Understanding (phronesis- purpose, intent, prudence)
- 4). Nothing one desires compares (Profit & gain & precious 2 Pet 1:4)
- 5). Long life
- 6). Riches & honor
- 7). Pleasant ways, peaceful paths
- 8). Tree of life (man's part = must be taken hold of)
- 9). Happiness (man's part = must be held fast)
- 10). Life to one's soul (man's part = not to let them depart from our sight, keep- or guard-- them)
- 11). Adornment to one's neck
- 12). Enabled to walk securely w/o stumbling (2 Pet 1:10)
- 13). No FEAR of things that cause others to FEAR including increasing wickedness

Bridges - Who does not admire this glowing picture of happiness? Yet cold and barren is admiration without an interest in the blessing. The happy man has found a treasure—possibly when he least expected it—under the chastening of the Lord. David and Manasseh⁵ found—as who hath not found?—‘God’s house of correction to be a school of instruction.’ Under all circumstances, however, prayerful diligence in the heart of wisdom ensures success. The naturally wise man is a fool in heavenly wisdom. The man of prayer getteth understanding, drawing it out to light, as out of the hid treasure. We wonder not at the merchantman’s concentrated interest, at his untiring toil.⁹ But here the wise man, though himself enriched with the merchandise of fine gold—points out to us a better merchandise. It is the search for “the pearl of great price”—more precious than rubies, yea, than all things that could be desired. So the apostle judged. So upon a trial he found it. All the world’s shew—all his former valuable “gain he counted as dung and dross” for “the true wisdom”—“the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord.” Never will solid happiness be known without this singleness of judgment and purpose. This inestimable blessing must have the throne. The waverer—the half-seeker—falls short. Determined perseverance wins the prize.²

George Lawson - Proverbs 3:13. How blessed is the man who finds wisdom, And the man who gains understanding.

Where shall wisdom be found, and who is the man that getteth understanding? Wisdom is to be found in the Bible, and in Christ, who is revealed in it. The Scriptures are able to make us wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All the treasures of wisdom are hid in him, and he communicates this precious gift by his word and Spirit, to those who apply to him for this purpose. And while they diligently make use of the prescribed means, they increase in wisdom, and with it their happiness increases too.

None can tell how happy the man is that finds wisdom. They are accounted happy who possess large quantities of gold, or silver, or precious stones; but these lose all their value when brought into comparison with this heavenly treasure.

Emily loved the New York Times crossword puzzles. Her boyfriend Bill wanted a unique way to propose to her. So he enlisted the help of crossword composer Will Short. On the appointed day, Bill took Emily to breakfast. He read the sports section while she started filling in her puzzle. Soon she began to notice some amazing "coincidences." "Bill," she said, "My name is in here." Then, "Your name is in here too!" Soon phrases like "a modest proposal" and "Will you marry me?" emerged. Emily looked at Bill in astonishment. And she said yes. The Bible may seem like a puzzle to us. We struggle through it, hoping to find wisdom for life's questions. Solomon understood that struggle. But he knew the search for wisdom was well worth it. He wrote, "Happy is the man who finds wisdom, and the man who gains understanding; for her proceeds are better than the profits of silver, and her gain than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies, and all the things you may desire cannot compare with her" (Pr3:13-15). In the Bible, God talks to us—and about us. Persistent, prayerful study produces great personal rewards. So take time to search the Word. You'll discover the treasures of God's wisdom. —HWR

William Arnot - Making a Fortune

“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. She is more precious than rubies: and all the things thou

canst desire are not to be compared unto her.”—3:13–15.

WISDOM and understanding should be received here in the same sense as that in which they occurred and were expounded in the second chapter. It is wisdom in its highest view; wisdom in regard to all the parts of man's being, and all the periods of his destiny. This wisdom is embodied in the person of Christ, as light is treasured in the sun, but thence it streams forth in all directions, and glances back from every object on which it falls. He is the wisdom of God, and by the Spirit in the Scriptures, he is made unto us wisdom. In him the glory that excellet is; and when our eyes are opened we shall behold it there, as the glory of the Only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

Saving wisdom is a thing to be “found” and “gotten:” it is not required of us that we create it. We could not plan, we could not execute a way of righteous redemption for sinners. We could not bring God's favour down to compass men about, and yet leave his holiness untainted as it is in heaven. This is all his own doing; and it is all done. All things are now ready. When we are saved, it is by “finding” a salvation, already complete, and being ourselves “complete in him.” But while we are not required to make a salvation, we are expected to seek the salvation which has been provided and brought near. The command of God is attached to his promise, and together they constitute his blessed invitation, “Seek, and ye shall find.” It will be a fearful thing to come short of eternal life, thus completed and offered, from sheer want of willingness to seek. “How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?”

Understanding is a thing to be gotten. It comes not in sparks from our own intellect in collision with other human minds. It is a light from heaven, above the brightness of this world's sun. The gift is free, and an unspeakable gift it is. Bear in mind that religion is not all and only an anxious fearful seeking: it is a getting too, and a glad enjoying. It is blessed even to hunger for righteousness; but a greater blessing awaits the hungerer, he shall be filled. The seeker may be anxious, but the finder is glad. “Happy is the man that findeth.” It is a great glory to God, and a great benefit to a careless world, when a follower of Christ so finds salvation, as to rejoice in the treasure. When the new song comes from the mouth of the delighted possessor, many shall observe the change, and shall fear, and trust in the Lord (Psalm 40:3). The joy of the Lord becomes a disciple's strength, both to resist evil and to do good. Those who, by finding a Saviour, have been themselves admitted into peace and joy, have the firmest foothold, and the strongest arm, to “save with fear” when it becomes needful to pull a neighbour out of the fire (Jude 23).

Wisdom is compared and contrasted with other possessions; it is “merchandise.” There is a most pleasant excitement in the prosecution of mercantile enterprise; it gives full play to all the faculties. Those who prosecute it as a class have their wits more sharpened than other sections of the community. The plans are contrived, and the calculations made; the goods are selected, purchased, loaded, and dispatched; and then there is a watching for favourable winds. After all is clear at the custom-house, and the ship beyond his view, the owner left on shore may be seen to turn frequently round as he walks leisurely in the evening from his counting-house to his dwelling. He is looking at the vane on the steeple, or the smoke from the chimneys, or any object that will indicate the direction of the wind. His mind is fixed on the probable position of the ship, and his imagination vividly pictures its progress down the channel. He strains mentally after it, as if he could thereby aid its speed. If a photograph of his soul could be taken at the moment, it would be found that his spirit bent towards the distant ship, as the keen curler seems by his attitude to direct the course of the stone that he has launched until it reach the mark. Next day he scans the newspapers to learn whether similar exports are flowing to the same market. Every succeeding day some new aspect of the object presents itself, until the result of the adventure is known. He makes much of it, and so he should; whatever a man does, he should do well.

But meantime, what of the merchandise for a more distant country than that to which his goods are going—what of the traffic for eternity? Are there no careful calculations, no instinctive longings, no vivid imaginings, as to its condition and progress? Are your minds never filled with glad anticipations of its success, or anxious fear of its miscarriage! Do you watch those symptoms which indicate its prosperity or decay? This merchandise is better and more gainful than any other. The world contains not any such promising field for speculation. It opens up a richer and surer market than any port of time. In that region there is never any glut. He to whom you make consignment is ever faithful. What you commit to him he will keep until that day. He is wise that winneth souls; his own first, and then others. There is no gain to be compared with this: it is a treasure that cannot be taken away. Thieves cannot penetrate its storehouse; moth and rust do not corrupt the goods of those who are rich towards God.

It often happens that a merchant amasses a large fortune by the labour of many years, and then loses all by a single unfortunate speculation. Some dark tales hang on these catastrophes—too dark for telling here. When such a crash comes, the wonder of the neighbourhood, passing from mouth to mouth, is, why did he not lay up his fortune, when it was realized, in some place of safety? But, alas, where is that place? It lies not within the horizon of time. All the riches that can be laid up here will soon take wings and fly away. If we do not invest in heaven, we shall soon be poor; for the earth, and the things therein, will be burnt up. The prosperous merchant must soon put on “the robe which is made without pockets;” and he is destitute indeed, if he have not the true riches in eternity before him, for all other possessions he must leave behind.

By our own lips, and our own deeds shall we be condemned; if, being all energy for time, we be all indolence for eternity—if we fill our memory with mammon, and forget God.

Wisdom Seekers

Read: Proverbs 3:1-18

Blessed are those who find wisdom. —Proverbs 3:13 niv

Every spring colleges and universities hold commencement ceremonies to celebrate the success of students who have completed their studies and earned their degrees. After the students cross the stage, these graduates will enter a world that will challenge them. Just having academic knowledge won't be good enough. The key to success in life will be in wisely applying everything they have learned. Throughout Scripture, wisdom is celebrated as a treasure that is worth seeking. It is better than riches (Prov. 3:13-18). Its source is God, who alone is perfectly wise (Rom. 16:27). And it is found in the actions and attitude of Jesus, in whom "all the treasures of wisdom" are found (Col. 2:3). Wisdom comes from reading and applying the Scripture. We have an example of this in the way Jesus applied His knowledge when He was tempted (Luke 4:1-13). In other words, the truly wise person tries to see life from God's point of view and chooses to live according to His wisdom. What's the payoff for this kind of life? Proverbs tells us that wisdom is like sweetness of honey on the tongue (Prov. 24:13-14). "Blessed are those who find wisdom" (Pr 3:13 niv).

So seek wisdom, for it is more profitable than silver or gold! Lord, strengthen my resolve to live by the wisdom that comes only from You. Give me the discernment to live all of life from Your point of view that I might know the blessings of a life lived wisely.

Blessing comes from seeking wisdom and living by it. By Joe Stowell (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Proverbs 3:14 For her profit is better than the profit of silver And her gain better than fine gold.

KJV Proverbs 3:14 For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold.

- Proverbs 2:4; 8:10, 11, 19; 16:16. 2 Chr 1:11, 12. Job 28:13–19. Ps. 119:72, 111, 162. Mat. 16:26. Phi. 3:8, 9. Re. 3:18.

George Lawson - Proverbs 3:14. For its profit is better than the profit of silver, And its gain than fine gold. 15 She is more precious than jewels; And nothing you desire compares with her.

Silver is much esteemed by men, and gold is almost adored by them. Rubies are still more precious, and perhaps there are some things still preferred to these shining stones. But none of them all are to be named in one day with wisdom; and he has no true judgment of the real value of things, who would give a grain of true wisdom for a mountain of diamonds.

Earthly riches are for the body, wisdom is for the soul; the former may enrich a man for the space of threescore and ten years, the latter for numberless millions of ages. Gold and rubies are the true riches in the eyes of erring mortals, wisdom and grace in the eyes of Christ; and if we follow his judgment, the diseased beggar Lazarus was incomparably happier than the rich man who was clothed with purple, and who fared sumptuously every day.

A venerable father, when he saw Rome in its splendour, took occasion to contemplate the ineffable glories of the celestial city, compared with which Rome itself was but a pitiful village. The Scripture teaches us, when we are charmed with the lustre of earthly riches, to consider how incomparably these are surpassed by the excellency of wisdom.

He is not a true Christian who would not wish to be rich in faith rather than in silver and gold; for every one that partakes of heavenly wisdom is enlightened by the Spirit of God, and disposed, in his judgment of the value of things, to listen to the instructions of God in his word.

The excellency of wisdom further appears in the gifts she bestows. She is a munificent princess, holding in both hands the richest presents, to be given to her servants.

Proverbs 3:15 She is more precious than jewels; And nothing you desire compares with her.

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

- more. Proverbs 8:11; 20:15; 31:10. Mat. 13:44–46.
- all. Ps. 63:3; 73:25, 26. Ro. 8:18.

Willaim Arnot - A Lengthened Day, and a Pleasant Path

“Length of days is in her right hand.... Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.”—3:16, 17.

IT is certainly not a uniform experience, that a man lives long in proportion as he lives well. Such a rule would obviously not be suitable to the present dispensation. It is true that all wickedness acts as a shortener of life, and all goodness as its lengthener; but other elements enter, and complicate the result, and slightly veil the interior law. If the law were according to a simple calculation in arithmetic, “the holiest liver the longest liver,” and conversely, “the more wicked the life the earlier its close;” if this, unmixed, unmodified, were the law, the moral government of God would be greatly impeded, if not altogether subverted. Wickedness shortens life; but God’s government is moral—it is not a lump of mere materialism. He will have men to choose goodness for his sake and its own; therefore a slight veil is cast over its present profitableness. Some apparent anomalies are permitted to try them that are upon the earth. Here is an example that often occurs. A stray drunkard lives to a great age: all the neighbourhood know it: it is trumpeted at every carousal: the hoary debauchee, who has survived all the saints of a parish, is triumphantly pointed to by younger bacchanals as evidence that a merry life will keep death long at bay. On the supposition that a certain measure of power were conceded to Satan, he could not lay it out in any way that would secure a greater revenue to his kingdom, than to give a long term of life to one profligate in every county. By means of that one decoy, he might lure a hundred youths to an early grave and a lost eternity. Individual cases of long life in wickedness are observed, and fastened on, and exaggerated by the vicious, to prove to themselves that their course is not a shorter road to the grave; and yet it is a law—a law of God—in constant operation, that every violation of moral law saps, so far, the foundations of the natural life.

It is most interesting, and at the same time unspeakably sad, to observe how much more easily satisfied men are with evidence when they are about to risk their souls, than when they propose to risk their money. Investigations have been made of late years into the effect of intemperate habits on the length of life, not with a view to moral lessons at all, but simply in search of a basis for pecuniary transactions. It is expressly intimated that occasional drinkers are included in the calculations as well as habitual drunkards, and the tables exhibit among them a frightfully high rate of mortality. Out of a given number of persons, and in a given number of years, where 110 of the general population would have died, there died of the drinkers 357. Of persons between the ages of twenty-one and thirty, the mortality among drinkers was five times greater than that of the general community.* Life Assurance Societies proceed upon these facts and laws. A young man will risk his life and his soul on the lie that his fast life is consistent with a long life; but let him try to effect a life assurance on himself, and he will find that the capitalist will not intrust his money on such a frail security.

Drunkenness is selected by the agents of assurance societies for their calculations, and mentioned here for illustration, not that it is more sinful before God, or more hurtful to life than other vices, but simply because it is of such a palpable character that it can be more easily observed and accurately estimated. Others, if human eyes could trace them, would give the same result; but they are trackless, like a serpent on the rock, or an eagle in the air.

We are accustomed to the idea that the end of a good man’s course is happy. We are well aware that when the pilgrim gets home he will have no more sorrow; but does not the journey lie through a wilderness from the moment when the captive bursts his bonds till he reach the overflowing Jordan, and, in the track of the High Priest, passing through the parted flood, plant his foot firmly on the promised land? It does; it traverses the desert all its length, and yet the path is pleasant notwithstanding. To the honour of the Lord be it spoken, and for the comfort of his people, not the home only, but also the way thither, is pleasantness and peace. Those who have not trod it count it dreary. Those who see what it wants, and have not tasted what it is, naturally think that however safe the home to which it leads the traveller at last, it must make him in the meantime of all men most miserable. Those who abide in Egypt, by its flesh-pots and its river, may pity the host of Israel marching through a land not sown; but Israel, in the desert though they be, get their bread and their water sure from day to day; all the more sweet to their taste that the water leaps in their sight at the Father’s bidding from a barren rock, and the bread is rained from heaven around their tents. The pilgrim who flees from Egypt at God’s command, and closely follows then the guiding pillar, will go safe and sweetly over. The young lion may suffer hunger, but they who wait upon the Lord shall not lack any good. In the keeping of his commandments there is great reward. The path is peace, although storms rage all around it, if there be peace in the heart of the traveller. The peace of God keeping the heart within will beam out on the untrodden way, and gild its jagged sides with gladness. The path of the justified is like the shining light: from the first struggling twilight it grows in beauty until it culminate in day. The path is peace: eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, what the home will be.

George Lawson - Proverbs 3:16. Long life is in her right hand; In her left hand are riches and honor.

A happy life extended to old age is given to the lovers of wisdom; or if cut off in the midst of their days, they are no losers. They cannot even in this case complain that God is unfaithful to his promise, for in another world they enter on a state of life which excels the present as much in value as in duration. If a man promises to give us threescore and ten acres of ground in a barren country, and instead of them gives us ten thousand in a fruitful soil, watered by the river of God, and blessed by the smiles of heaven, he is not worse, but a great deal better than his word.

Riches and honour are given in the same sense as length of days. When Solomon testified his high regard for wisdom, God

bestowed upon him the riches and glory of this world. But experience taught Solomon that these things did not make him wiser, or better, or happier. Let us, from the history of the wise man, learn to implore the accomplishment of this promise in a spiritual sense. There are eternal treasures and unfading diadems reserved for the wise in another world. There they will be so rich, that the streets of their city of habitation are paved with pure gold,—so honourable, that they shall sit with Christ himself on his throne.

But great as are the advantages, splendid as are the honours which wisdom confers, the world is generally prejudiced against it, and prepossessed with the idea of its being burdensome and unpleasant. Worldly pleasure appears so desirable, so essential indeed to human happiness, that for this sole reason multitudes abhor the thoughts of becoming religious. In order to remove this mischievous prejudice, Solomon assures us, that religion is not less conducive to pleasure than it is to honour and wealth.

Proverbs 3:16 Long life is in her right hand; In her left hand are riches and honor.

KJV Proverbs 3:16 Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honour.

- Length. ver. 2; Proverbs 4:10. Ps. 21:4; 71:9. 1 Ti. 4:8.
- and. Proverbs 4:6–9; 8.
- and. Proverbs 4:6–9; 8:18–21. 1 Ki. 3:13. Mar. 10:30. 1 Co. 3:21–23. 2 Co. 6:10.

Bridges - Behold this heavenly Queen dispensing her blessings on the right hand and on the left! Her right hand presents the promise of both worlds—the rich enjoyment of this world’s lawful comforts⁴ and the yet higher joy of serving the Lord and his church—a privilege, for which the apostle was content for a while to be detained from heaven. Add eternity to the balance—length of days, without end—and the amount sets at naught all computation. Her left hand offers riches and honor, so far as may be for her children’s good; yet, in their highest splendor, only a feeble picture of her more “durable riches” and of the honor of a heavenly crown.

But what say we of her ways? Often is she described ‘as a sullen matron, who entertains her followers only on sighs and tears; so that to obtain the joys of the next life, we must bid eternal adieu to the contents of this life; that we must never more expect a cheerful hour, a clear day, a bright thought to shine upon us.’ This is the world’s creed. And hence their wish—“Torment me not before the time.” But this must be a slander of the great forger of lies to deter us from wisdom’s ways. They must be ways of pleasantness, because—“Thus saith the Lord.” And if we feel them not to be so, we know them not.

The man of pleasure utterly mistakes both his object and his pursuit. The only happiness worth seeking is found here; that which will live in all circumstances, and abide the ceaseless changes of this mortal life. The ways may be thorny, painful, dark and lonely. Yet how does the sunshine of reconciliation beam upon their entrance! Every step is lighted from above; strewed with promises; a step in happiness; a step to heaven. Wisdom’s work is its own reward—strictness without bondage.⁹ God rules children, not slaves. They work neither from compulsion, nor for hire; but from an ingenuous principle of love and gratitude to their Benefactor; filial delight in their Father. Pleasant therefore must be the labor—yea—the sacrifices, of love; short the path, cheerful the way, when the heart goes freely in it.

It is saying far too little, that the trials of these ways are not inconsistent with their pleasantness. They are the very principles of the most elevated pleasure. ‘The verdict of Christ,’ says Dr. South, ‘makes the discipline of self-denial and the cross—those terrible blows to flesh and blood—the indispensable requisite to the being his disciples.’ And yet, paradoxical as it may appear, in this deep gloom is the sunshine of joy. For if our natural will be “enmity to God,”² it must be the enemy to our own happiness. Our pleasure, therefore, must be to deny, not to indulge, it. Never are we more happy, than in the mortification of sinful appetites, that only “bring forth fruit unto death.” Even what may be called the austerities of godliness are more joyous than “the pleasures of sin.” Far better to cross the will, than to wound the conscience. The very chains of Christ are glorious.⁴ Moses endured not “his reproach” as a trial. He “esteemed it as a treasure—greater riches than the treasures of Egypt.” Never do we so enjoy the comfort of our principles as when we are making a sacrifice for them. Hannah yielded up her dearest earthly joy. But did she sink under the trial? Did she grudge the sacrifice? She took up her song, and prayed, and said—“My heart rejoiceth in the Lord;” while—to shew that none serve him for naught—for one child that was resigned, five were added.⁷ In fact, the world see only half the prospect. They see what religion takes away. But they see not what it gives. They cannot discern that, while it denies sinful, it abounds in spiritual, pleasure. We drudge in the ways of sin. But we “shall sing in the ways of the Lord.”

But ways of pleasantness are not always safe. Yet all wisdom’s paths are peace. The deadly breach is healed. The cloud vanishes. Heaven smiles. And peace, the Saviour’s last bequest, is realized even in the heat of “this world’s tribulation.” “The feet are shod” for the rugged path “with the preparation of the Gospel of peace.”¹⁰ The subjugation of the will—the sorrow of contrition—the weariness of the cross—all end in peace.

Yet nothing can make wisdom’s ways palatable to a carnal mind. “They that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh;” so that—as “they cannot please God,” God’s ways cannot please them. Nor again—though wisdom’s ways are ways of pleasantness—

are wisdom's children always happy. Sometimes a naturally morose temper gives a gloomy tinge to religion. Professors forget, that it is no matter of option, whether they should be happy or not; that it is their obligation, no less than their privilege to be so; that the commands of God on this duty carry weight, and demand obedience. The prophets in the burst of their rapture search heaven and earth, bring forth the most beautiful objects of nature; nay—call the inanimate creation into glowing sympathy with the joys of the Gospel.² The character of the servants of God—especially in affliction⁴—sets a seal to this rejoicing spirit. Is then thy happiness clouded? Has there not been some deviation from wisdom's paths? Does not thy God call thee to search—to humble thyself—to return?

Lastly—to the glory, beauty, and fruitfulness of wisdom, the Paradise of God alone can furnish the full counterpart. 'The tree of life was the means ordained of God for the preservation of lasting life and continual vigor and health, before man sinned. So true wisdom maintains man in the spiritual life of God's grace, and the communion of his Spirit.' Once our way was barred up, and none could touch her.⁸ Now our way is open to her in a better paradise. We "sit down under her shadow with great delight." Her branches bend down upon this world of sin and misery. Her clusters hang within the reach of the youngest child, and "the fruit is sweet to the taste."¹⁰ For what is so refreshing as near communion with God; access to him; boldness in his presence; admission to his most holy delight? And if the earthly shadow and fruit be so rich, what will be "on the other side of the river"—her monthly fruits—her healing leaves! And yet only the weeping, wrestling soul can lay hold upon the beloved object, and embrace it in despite of all the enemy's struggle to loosen the grasp.¹³ And even when Almighty power has enabled us to lay hold; the same continual miracle of grace—the same continually renewed effort of faith—is needed to retain it. There must be "continuance in the ways"¹⁵—"settled—rooted and grounded." "Keeping the works" holding the beginning of our confidence steadfast "unto the end."¹⁷ Happy is every one that retaineth her. The promises are "to him that overcometh." God honors perseverance in the weakest saint.

What think we of this lovely description of wisdom's blessings? It is no fancy picture, but Divine reality. Rest not, till thy heart is filled with its substance. Take it to the Lord in prayer, and ere long, thou shalt rejoice in thy portion.

Proverbs 3:17 Her ways are pleasant ways And all her paths are peace.

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

- ways of. Proverbs 2:10; 22:18. Ps. 19:10, 11; 63:3–5; 112:1; 119:14, 47, 103, 174. Mat. 11:28–30.
- all. Ps. 25:10; 37:11; 119:165. Is. 26:3; 57:19. Lu. 1:79. Ro. 5:1. Phi. 4:8, 9.

George Lawson - Proverbs 3:17. Her ways are pleasant ways, And all her paths are peace.

Call not religion Marah, but call her Naomi, for she is in every respect desirable. True, indeed, it is no rare occurrence to find a religious man leading an unpleasant life, but this is to be ascribed to his own mistakes and dispositions, and not to religion, than which nothing tends so much to render the present life a scene of happiness.

It is pleasant to enter into wisdom's ways by believing on Christ. It is pleasant to go on in these paths, by walking in him who is the new and living way. In God's presence is that fulness of joy into which those travellers shall enter at the termination of their journey. Even now some drops of those rivers of pleasure that are with him enter into their souls, and give them more delight than the highest earthly enjoyments can impart to those whose portion is in this life.

It will readily be admitted, that some of wisdom's ways are pleasant; but are they all so? Yes, all her paths are peace itself, for the work of righteousness, as well as the effect of it, is peace.

There is peace and pleasure in repentance, which is sweetened by the apprehension of God's mercy in Christ; so that the true penitent enjoys more satisfaction in one hour's mourning, than the votary of worldly pleasure in twenty years' carnal gratification. There is pleasure in self-denial, for he that practises it knows that he is the true self-seeker; and of this he is assured by the word of Christ*. There is pleasure and peace in bearing the cross of Christ, for it is made light by the Spirit of Christ, and the prospect of sharing with him in his glory†. There is pleasure and peace in tribulations, because when they abound, consolations abound much more by Christ‡. There is peace in fighting the Lord's battles against the mightiest enemies, for the Christian soldier fights under the banner of the Prince of Peace. His feet are shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. The God of peace will bruise every enemy under his feet. More exquisite is that pleasure which the subjugation of one sinful affection produces, than that which results from the gratification of a thousand.—Should the Christian be called to die a violent death, there is peace in his latter end, as we find there was in the death of the good Josiah when he fell in battle.

The pleasures of the world are like the gleams of a wintry sun, faint, and feeble, and transient. The pleasures of religion are satisfying and eternal. The calamities of this life are not able to interrupt, far less to destroy them. This is verified in the experience of every one whose soul is under the lively influence of that faith which constitutes an essential part of religion. David, though in

deep waters, yielded not to desponding thoughts, believing that the Lord would yet command his loving-kindness; though about to walk through the valley of the shadow of death, he saw no ground for the fear of evil.

All the exercises, all the privileges, all the hopes of religion, are full of pleasure. Even the trials to which religious men are exposed afford pleasure, if not whilst they are felt, at the farthest when they come to a period|].

Such is the pleasure and peace with which wisdom is attended, that,

Proverbs 3:18 She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her, And happy are all who hold her fast.

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

LXE She is a tree of life to all that lay hold upon her; and she is a secure help to all that stay themselves on her, as on the Lord.

The "tree of life" in Eden (Ge2:9; 3:24) is used four times in Proverbs (Pr3:18; 11:30; 13:12; 15:4) as a symbol of spiritual blessing. The first and definitive figure calls it the divine wisdom--which in the final analysis, is none other than the Creator Himself, the Lord Jesus Christ.

George Lawson - Proverbs 3:18. She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her, And happy are all who hold her fast.

Nothing in the present state of the creation is sufficient to furnish out a proper emblem of the happiness that wisdom affords, and therefore the wise man goes back to the state of the world under innocent Adam, comparing the delights of religion to the fruits of the tree of life. For the sin of Adam we were driven from Paradise, and our approach to the tree of life in the midst of the garden for ever prevented. But a second Adam has opened our way to a better paradise, in which is the tree of life that bears every month twelve manner of fruits. The branches of this wide-spreading tree bend down to this lower world, and those that are wise unto salvation sit under its shadow with great delight, while its fruit is sweet to their taste.

If we wish to eat of these delicious and soul-reviving fruits, we must take fast hold of wisdom, and keep that hold against all the enemies that would tear it from us. To wisdom we must cleave with purpose of heart, when the devil and the world would persuade us to forego some part of truth or duty, or to make some small compliance with sin, in order to serve some worldly end*. "To him that overcometh, [i.e. to him that keepeth Christ's works unto the end,] will he give to eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God†."

To all the great things that have been said of wisdom, let us add the glory which belongs to wisdom, as it appears in creation and providence.

Proverbs 3:19 The LORD by wisdom founded the earth, By understanding He established the heavens. Proverbs 11:30; 13:12. Ge. 2:9; 3:22. Re. 22:2.

KJV Proverbs 3:19 The LORD by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding hath he established the heavens.

Septuagint - ho theos te sophia ethemeliosen (themelioo: 3SAAInd: Heb 1:10) ten gen hetoimasen (hetoimazo: 3SAAI: He prepared the world even as Christ is even now preparing a place in Heaven for His followers: Jn14:2-3) de ouranous en phronesei (phronesis: Lu1:17: ability to govern one's own life wisely; a skill and carefulness in dealing with one's own resources.)

- Lord. Proverbs 8:27–29. Ps. 104:24; 136:5. Je. 10:12; 51:15. John. 1:3.
- established. or, prepared.

Henry Morris - Since Christ was the one by whom God founded the earth (Jn1:3; Col1:16), this verse makes it clear that in Proverbs, "wisdom" is actually personified and identified with Christ.

Charles Bridges - 19. The Lord by wisdom hath founded the earth: by understanding hath he established (Marg. prepared,) the heavens. 20. By his knowledge the depths are broken up, and the clouds drop down the dew.

We have seen wisdom, as it is in man, with all its enriching blessings. Here we behold its majesty, as it is in the bosom of God and

gloriously displayed in his works. 'Hereby he sheweth, that this wisdom, whereof he speaketh, was everlasting; because it was before all creatures, and that all things—even the whole world—were made by it.' Behold it founding the earth "upon nothing;" and yet "so sure, that it cannot be moved." See how this great architect hath established the heavens, fixing all their bright luminaries in their respective orbits—'such a glorious canopy set with such sparkling diamonds.'⁴ Each of these departments declares his knowledge. In the earth—breaking up the depths—gathering them up into rivers and streams for the refreshment of man. In the heavens—collecting the moisture into dew—dropping down fatness upon the parched ground; each of these countless drops falling from this Fountain of life.⁷ Thus does every particle of the universe glitter with infinite skill. The earth—its pavement, and the heavens—its ceiling—"declare the glory of God." How beautiful is the uniformity of the two great systems of God! Both are the work of the same architect. Both display the wisdom and knowledge of God. The universe is a parable—a mirror of the gospel. Does not the manifestation of these Divine Perfections in the field of Creation open a rich provision for our happiness? And does not their more glorious exhibition in the great work of redemption, fill us with adoring praise? "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God."

George Lawson - Proverbs 3:19. The LORD by wisdom founded the earth; By understanding He established the heavens. 20 By His knowledge the deeps were broken up, And the skies drip with dew.

Knowledge and wisdom belong to God in their highest perfection, and shine forth in all his works. By his wisdom he established the world, and formed every creature beautiful in its kind. By his knowledge, the heavens and the earth, and all their inhabitants, were formed into one universe, which incessantly proclaims the greatness of its Creator's wisdom. The language of every creature when considered by itself, and especially when viewed as part of the grand system, is, "We come forth from the Lord of Hosts, who is wonderful in counsel and excellent in wisdom." The world could never have afforded us a convenient dwelling-place, had not the depths by the knowledge of God been broken up, and the waters separated from the dry land, to be laid up in the vast repository of the sea, or to flow along in rivers for our benefit. It is wisdom that draws up the moisture from the earth in waters, and exhales it in vapours, forming them into clouds, and again distilling them in dew, or pouring them down in rain, that food may spring out of the earth for man and beast.

This wisdom calls for our gratitude, and praise, and imitation. We cannot pretend to make or govern a world, but we are enjoined to manage our own concerns with wisdom. The God whose understanding is infinite, hath dignified us with rational powers, and directed us to that wisdom which is proper for us. When he displayed the wonders of his infinite understanding at the creation of all things, he said unto man, "The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding." He is the giver of wisdom, and he gives it from his own exhaustless stores. Every beam of wisdom in man is a ray from that eternal Sun; and the divine image, which we lost by our folly in departing from God, begins to be renewed in us when we attain that knowledge and wisdom so earnestly recommended by the royal teacher.

Is wisdom so incomparably useful and excellent? let us then listen with reverence to the instruction that again speaks to us as unto children.

William Arnot - Wisdom Making and Managing Worlds

"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."—3:19, 20.

THESE are specimens of Wisdom's mighty work on worlds,—these are the well-known tracks of God's goings in creation. There is a closer connection between creation and redemption than human philosophy is able to discover, or unbelieving philosophy is willing to own. The breach that sin has made in the moral hemisphere of the duplicate universe hides from our view the grand unity of the Creator's work. It is one plan from the beginning. The physical and the moral departments are the constituent parts of the completed whole. Throughout the present week (a thousand years is with the Lord as one day) creation labours painfully, by reason of a rent that runs through its spiritual side: provision has been made for healing it; and even now the process is going on. These labour days sprung from a preceding holy rest, and they will issue in another Sabbath soon. Creation is groaning now for its promised rest: when it comes, the material world will again be a perfect platform for the display of its Maker's goodness. When the earth is made new, it will be the dwelling-place of righteousness. The material and the spiritual, like body and soul, each fearfully made, and together wonderfully united, will be the perfect manifestation of divine wisdom and love.

A glance is gotten here into the circulation of the world. "The depths are broken up, and the clouds drop down dew!" He has instituted laws whereby the deep is divided. One portion rises to the sky, and thence drops down again to refresh the earth. "How wonderful, O Lord, are thy works; in wisdom hast thou made them all!"

By his knowledge, too, another depth is broken up. The wicked, a whole worldful, lie outspread beneath his eye, "like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest" (Isa. 57:20). What wisdom can separate the pure from the impure, and draw from that unholy mass a multitude, whom no man can number, to be fit inhabitants of heaven? God's wisdom has done this. Christ, set in the firmament of

revelation, pours his beams of love upon the lost, and thereby wins them out from their impurity, and upward unto himself. There is a double upbreking of these depths, and a double separation of the pure from the vile; the one is personal, the other public.

In an individual there is a great sea of sin. When the love of Christ comes in power, it dissolves the terrible cementing by which the soul and sin were run into one. Forthwith there is a breaking up and a separation. The man throws off himself; the new man puts off the old, and the old man puts on the new. The ransomed soul is severed from what seemed its very being, sin, and tends upward toward the Head. Sins trouble him still, and keep him low, but he is delivered from the law of sin.

In the whole community of the fallen there is a breaking up. The wisdom of God is rending asunder things that sin had pressed into one. The word of invitation is, "Come out of her, my people;" and there is power with the word. A separating process is going on over all the surface of sin's sea. This kingdom cometh not with observation. It is now an unseen thing within the separated; but a time is coming when the separation shall be as manifest, and the distance as wide, as that which now divides these raging waves of the sea from the white sunlit clouds of glory that have been lifted up, and now congregate and culminate in majestic beauty, as if around the throne of God. The white-robed multitude that do in very deed stand round it, were drawn from a sea of sorrow and sin; for they came out of great tribulation, and their robes were not white until they were washed in the blood of the Lamb.

Proverbs 3:20 By His knowledge the deeps were broken up And the skies drip with dew.

KJV Proverbs 3:20 By his knowledge the depths are broken up, and the clouds drop down the dew.

- the depths. Ge. 1:9; 7:11. Job 38:8–11. Ps. 104:8, 9.
- the clouds. Ge. 27:28, 37–39. De. 33:28. Job 36:27, 28; 38:26–28. Ps. 65:9–12. Je. 14:22. Joel 2:23.

Proverbs 3:21 My son, let them not vanish from your sight; Keep sound wisdom and discretion,

KJV Proverbs 3:21 My son, let not them depart from thine eyes: keep sound wisdom and discretion:

Septuagint - huie me pararrhues (pararrheo: 2SPASubj: don't let them drift away Heb 2:1) tereson (tereo: 2SAAImp:watch over, protect;give heed to, watch narrowly) de emen boulen (Lu 7:30: boule: intention as the result of reflection; denotes deliberation and reflection) kai ennoian (ennoia: What is in the mind, idea, notion, intention, purpose: Heb 4:12, 1 Pe 4:1)

- let. ver. 1–3. De. 4:9; 6:6–9. Jos. 1:8. John. 8:31; 15:6, 7. He. 2:1–3. 1 John. 2:24, 27.
- keep. Proverbs 2:7. De. 32:46, 47.

LET THEM: What is them? LORD by wisdom founded the earth, By understanding He established the heavens. By His knowledge the deeps were broken up, And the skies drip with dew.

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

Again we listen to wisdom's voice. Her repetitions are not "vain repetitions;" but well fitted to impress upon youth the weight of her instructions. As thy much loved treasure—as thy daily guide—let them not depart from thine eyes. Worse than valueless are they, if received as notions; of inestimable price, if kept as principles. Man's instructions reach only "the form of knowledge." God's teaching is sound wisdom—full of light and substance—transfiguring divine truth with heavenly glory. Therefore keep it close to thine heart. Exercise it in that practical discretion, which disciplines all our tempers and duties. Man's wisdom—how utterly devoid is it of all glow and energy! The soul, is "alienated from the life of God," is in a state of death, 'until the entrance of God's word giveth light and understanding,⁵—"the light of life." The excellency of this knowledge is, that "with this light and understanding,"—"it giveth life to them that have it." Every truth under its influence springs up into the new creature with heavenly glow, and with all the grace of "the beauty of the Lord," outshining, even in the most despised garb, the richest glory of an earthly crown.

George Lawson - Proverbs 3:21. My son, let them not depart from your sight; Keep sound wisdom and discretion,

There are some kinds of wisdom highly esteemed by the world, yet of these some are so far from being useful, that they are brutish folly. No wisdom is sound but that which is taught by the word of God, and approved by him who is the Author of wisdom, and who has given us plain marks for distinguishing it from that which is earthly, sensual, and devilish*. This sound wisdom makes us discreet and prudent, and guards us against that selfish cunning which has so often assumed its name.

This sound wisdom and discretion must be like frontlets before our eyes, that we may keep them always in our view. Then will our steps be ordered in God's word; for by what means shall we purify our way? By taking heed thereto, according to God's word.

There are many adversaries that would rob us of this treasure, and we are but too ready to let it slip. The curse of the LORD is on the house of the wicked, But He blesses the dwelling of the righteous. The curse of the LORD is on the house of the wicked, But He blesses the dwelling of the righteous. arts. For this reason, we need to be frequently reminded of our duty to keep it. If we retain it on our minds and hearts, if we uniformly exhibit it in our practice, we shall certainly find that our labour is not in vain in the Lord.

Proverbs 3:22 So they will be life to your soul And adornment to your neck.

KJV Proverbs 3:22 So shall they be life unto thy soul, and grace to thy neck.

Septuagint - hina zese e psuche sou kai charis e peri so trachelo estai de iasid tais sarxi sou kai epimeleia (see Lu 10:34: take care of involving forethought, concern for & provision) tois sois osteois

- life. Proverbs 4:22. Is. 38:16. John. 12:49, 50.
- grace. Proverbs 1:9.

George Lawson - Proverbs 3:22. Fools can scarcely be said to live; they neither glorify God nor enjoy him, so that they are dead whilst they live. But the excellency of knowledge is, that wisdom giveth life to them that have it. It imparts to life that happiness which alone renders it worthy of the name. True wisdom is real life, communicated from him who is the quickening Spirit, to them that were dead in trespasses and sins. It is an ornament of grace to the neck, which renders the meanest beggar who possesses it more noble than the mightiest monarch, who is acquainted with no brighter ornament than his regal crown.

Proverbs 3:23 Then you will walk in your way securely And your foot will not stumble.

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

Septuagint - hina poreue pepoithos en eirene pasas tas hodous sou o de pous sou ou me proskopse

- Proverbs 2:8; 4:12; 10:9. Ps. 37:23, 24, 31; 91:11; 121:3, 8. Zec. 10:12.

Charles Bridges - 23. Then shalt thou walk in thy way safely, and thy foot shall not stumble. 24. When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid: yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet. 25. Be not afraid of sudden fear, neither of the desolation of the wicked, when it cometh. 26. For the Lord shall be thy confidence, and shall keep thy foot from being taken.

The habitual eyeing of the word keeps the feet in a slippery path. David from inattention to wisdom's words "well nigh slipped."¹⁰ Peter from the same neglect fearfully stumbled. But our sleeping hours, no less than our waking steps, are divinely guarded. "So he giveth his beloved sleep."¹² "Underneath them are the everlasting arms." They enjoy a childlike repose, sleeping in his bosom without fear. Thus did David 'sleep in God, and in a state of salvation,' amid the tumultuous warfare with his undutiful son.¹⁴ Such was the sleep of Peter in prison—in chains—between two soldiers—on the eve of his probable execution—when "there seemed but a step between him and death." Yet in such a place—in such company—at such a moment—did he lie down so fearless, and sleep so sweetly, that an angel's stroke was needed to awaken him. What would not many in troublous times—waking at every stir—give for one night of this sweet sleep! And yet how many such nights have we enjoyed; waking, as Jacob on his stony—we might add—his downy pillow, in the consciousness of our Father's keeping! But where has been with us, as was with him, the renewed dedication to our God?

But sudden fear may come. Yet be not afraid. It is the desolation of the wicked. They must fear. But child of God—run you to your confidence, and "be safe." Surely he shall keep thy foot from being taken. Noah found this security in the flood of the ungodly—Lot in the destruction of Sodom⁶—the Christians in Pella in the desolation of the wicked city. Luther sung his song of confidence:—"God is our refuge and strength." In the consummating desolation when it cometh—what will then be the sudden fear—the undismayed confidence? "All the tribes of the earth will mourn" at the sight of their despised Saviour—then their Judge. But, "when ye see these things, then look up, and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh."⁹

George Lawson - Proverbs 3:23, 24. Then you will walk in your way securely, And your foot will not stumble. 24 When you

lie down, you will not be afraid; When you lie down, your sleep will be sweet.

hilst we keep wisdom and discretion, we are safe by the protection of the Almighty. We are safe whether we walk in the way, or sit in the house, or repose on the couch. There shall no evil happen to the just; even those events which are evil to others, are sanctified and blessed to them.

“He shall give his angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways, (says the scripture), lest thou shouldst dash thy foot against a stone.” Happy it is to be the care of angels, but happier far to be under his protecting eye who is the keeper of Israel.

We must remember, that this promise has a direction embodied with it, “Thou shalt walk in thy way.” Satan endeavoured to cheat our Saviour out of this important part of the promise, that he might cheat him out of the benefit of it altogether. But Jesus knew well the regard due to every jet and tittle of the word of God. We are required still to keep the way of the Lord, and in the affairs of life to attend to our own concerns, shunning the character of busy-bodies, by not meddling in the affairs of others. In the calling wherewith we are called, let us abide with God, and we shall dwell in safety under the shadow of the Almighty.

Sleep commonly flies from the victims of wretchedness and calamity; but quiet and peaceful are the slumbers of those who Can lie down in safety, because the Lord sustaineth them. Even in the prospect of danger and distress, they can repose in calm serenity, for Jehovah giveth his beloved sleep. Such were the calamitous circumstances of David, when exiled and pursued by the unnatural Absalom, that all the people who were witnesses of his banishment, wept for him. Yet what says David himself? “I laid me down and slept; I awaked, for the Lord sustained me.” When the most prosperous sinners lie down to rest, they want covenant protection, and know not but they may open their eyes in hell. The servant of God knows, that when buried in the arms of “Nature’s sweet restorer,” he is under that guardian eye which neither slumbers nor sleeps.

There may be seasons in which the good man cannot enjoy pleasant slumbers. But what does he lose, if, by the thoughts that Wisdom suggests, he enjoys a feast of holy contemplation, more refreshing to him than sleep is to others*!

In order to enjoy this tranquillity of mind, we must believe the promises of God, and by the exercise of holy confidence, banish those fears that would distress the soul.

Proverbs 3:24 When you lie down, you will not be afraid; When you lie down, your sleep will be sweet.

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

- liest. Proverbs 6:22. Le. 26:6. Ps. 3:5; 4:8; 121:4–7. Eze. 34:15.
- and. Ps. 127:2. Je. 31:26. Ac. 12:6. 1 Th. 4:13, 14.

Proverbs 3:25 Do not be afraid of sudden fear Nor of the onslaught of the wicked when it comes;

KJV Proverbs 3:25 Be not afraid of sudden fear, neither of the desolation of the wicked, when it cometh.

- Be. Job. 5:21, 22; 11:13–15. Ps. 27:1, 2; 46:1–3; 91:5; 112:7. Is. 8:12, 13; 41:10–14. Da. 3:17, 18. Mat. 8:24–26; 24:6. Mar. 4:40. Lu. 21:9. John. 14:1. 1 Pe. 3:14.
- neither. Proverbs 1:27. Ps. 73:19. Mat. 24:15. Lu. 21:18–28.

George Lawson - Proverbs 3:25. Do not be afraid of sudden fear, Nor of the onslaught of the wicked when it comes; 26 For the LORD will be your confidence, And will keep your foot from being caught.

Sudden fears are attended with a stupifying influence upon those that want faith, but far different is the fact with regard to the righteous. The righteous man is bold as a lion, for he knows, like the three children in Babylon, that the God whom he serves is able to deliver him, or to render him happy, though the desolation of others should involve the destruction, not only of all his outward comforts, but of his mortal life*.

The Lord is a sure ground of confidence in the worst of times. Our proper exercise in such seasons, is to trust in the Lord, and to pour out our hearts before him, knowing that he will be a refuge for us. This comfortable doctrine is illustrated and enforced in almost every Psalm.

May not one, then, exclaim with the royal philosopher, "Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding!" The way in which wisdom leads us, is attended with every blessing, and free from every evil; or if there be any evil in it, so wonderful is the providence of God, that it is turned into good. Thus is Sampson's riddle verified to every afflicted saint. May our lives be those of the righteous, and our last end their's!

The wise man next directs us, to make no unnecessary delay in the performance of any good work.

Proverbs 3:26 For the LORD will be your confidence And will keep your foot from being caught.

KJV Proverbs 3:26 For the LORD shall be thy confidence, and shall keep thy foot from being taken.

- Lord. Proverbs 14:26. Ps. 91:3, 9, 10. Hab. 3:17, 18.
- shall keep. 1 Sa. 2:9.

William Arnot - Confidence in God the True Safeguard from Temptation

"The Lord shall be thy confidence, and shall keep thy foot from being taken."—3:26.

BEWARE of mistakes here. Let us not deceive ourselves by words without meaning. Do not say God is your confidence, if he be only your dread. An appalling amount of hypocrisy exists in Christendom, and passes current for devotion. He who is in Himself most worthy, and has done most for us, is often more disliked than any other being; and, as if this ingratitude were not enough, men double the sin by professing that they have their confidence in Him.

I have observed that seagoing ships do not trust to themselves in the windings of a river. Where they are hemmed in between rock and quicksand, grazing now the one and now the other, they take care to have a steam-tug, both to bear them forward and guide them aright. They hang implicitly upon its power; they make no attempt at independent action. But I have also observed, that as soon as they get clear of the narrows—as soon as they have attained a good offing and an open sea, they heave off, and hoist their own sails. They never want a steamer until they come to narrow waters again.

Such is the trust in God which the unreconciled experience. In distress they are fain to lean on the Almighty. While they are in the narrows, death seeming near on every side, conscious that they have no power and no skill, they would hang on the help of a Deliverer. "My God, we know thee" (Hos. 8:2), is then their cry. Most devout they are, and most earnest. At every hour of their day and night they are exercised in spirit about pleasing God, and gaining his help in their need. The line of their dependence seems ever tight by their constant leaning. But when they begin to creep out of these shoals of life—when the path opens up wide and clear and safe again, they heave off, and throw themselves on their own resources. They become a God unto themselves, whenever dangers are out of sight. Forthwith and henceforth they live without God in the world, until they are driven into straits again. Then they remember God and pray, as a distressed ship makes signals for help when she is entering a tortuous channel (Isa. 26:16; Ps. 78:34–37). This is not to have confidence in God; this is to provoke Him to anger. He deserves a soul's confidence, and desires it.

Confidence in God is not to be attained by a wish whenever you please. You may, when you like, say, "Lord, I trust in Thee," but to make the just Judge his confidence, does not lie in the power of a sinner's will. There is a way of reaching it; and the way is open, and all are welcome, but no man can reach it except by that way. Coming through Christ, and being accepted in the beloved, you will indeed confide in God; but this is to be turned from darkness to light, to pass from death unto life. When any man enters by this way into favour, he will be ready to confess that it is the Lord's doing, and marvellous in his eyes.

It is this confidence that has power for good on the life. It is not terror, but trust, that becomes a safeguard from the dominion of sin. It is a peculiar and touching promise that God, when He becomes your confidence, "will keep your foot from being taken." Here incidentally the terrible truth glances out, that snares are laid for the traveller's feet in all the paths of life, in all the haunts of men. Our adversary, like a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour. Alas, multitudes are entrapped, like birds in the fowler's snare. Many who set forth hopefully in the morning of life are caught ere they have gone far in some of these pit-falls, and bound over unto the second death. It is a fearful thing to pass by and hear their screaming, and have no power to help.

In my childhood, I sometimes saw rabbits that damaged the corn-fields, caught in snares. My first experience of the process melted me, and the scene is not effaced from my memory yet. The creature was caught by the foot. It was a captive, but living. Oh the agonized look it cast on us when we approached it! The scared, helpless, despairing look of that living creature sank deep in the sensitive powers of my nature. As a child, I could not conceive of any more touching thrilling appeal than the soft rolling eyes of that dumb captive; but "when I became a man," and entered both on the experience of the world and the ministry of the word, I met with scenes that cast these earlier emotions down into the place of "childish things." Soon after I began to go my rounds as a watchman on my allotted field, I fell upon a youth (and the same experience has been several times repeated since) who but lately was bounding hopefully along, bidding fair for the better land, and seeming to lead others on, caught by the foot in a snare. I went up to him, surprised to find him halting so; but, ah, the look, the glare from his eyes, soon told that the immortal was fast in the devil's toils.

He lived; but he was held. All his companions passed on, and soon were out of sight, while he lay beating himself on the ground. He lives; but it is in chains. The chains have sunk into his flesh. They ran through the marrow of his bones, and are wrapped around his soul, filthy as firm, firm as filthy. Oh, wretched man, who shall deliver him? Not I; not any man. We must pass on, and leave him. The same voice that wrenched from Death his prisoner is needed to give liberty to this captive. Only one word can we utter in presence of such a case: "Nothing is impossible with God." Having uttered it, we pass on with a sigh.

Cure in such a case is difficult—is all but impossible; is there any method of prevention? Yes: the Lord thy confidence will keep thy foot from being taken; the Lord your dread will not do it, almighty though He be. Many who have an agonizing fear of a just God in their conscience, plunge deeper even than others into abominable sins. It is the peace of God in the heart that has power to keep the feet out of evil in the path of life. "He that hath this hope in Him, purifieth himself even as He is pure." "Sin shall not have dominion over you;" and the reason is added—"for ye are not under the law, but under grace" (Rom. 6:14). A son has wantonly offended an affectionate father, and fled from his face. After many days of sullen distance, the prodigal returns, and at nightfall approaches his father's dwelling. He is standing outside, shivering in the blast, yet afraid to enter, and meet the frown of an injured parent. Some abandoned youths, companions of his guilt, pass by, and hail him. By a little coaxing, they break his resolution of repentance, and carry him off to their haunts of vice. It was easy to sweep him off when they found him trembling in terror outside. He was like chaff; and iniquities, like the wind, carried him away. But if the youth had entered before the tempters came up, and the father, instead of frowning or upbraiding, had fallen on his neck and kissed him, setting him in the circle of brothers and sisters, and showering on him the manifold affections of a united family and a happy home—and if the same godless band had been passing then, and had beckoned him to join their revelry, they would not have succeeded so easily. The soul of this youth is like a ship at anchor now, and the current does not carry him away. Specifically, it is "the God of peace" who will bruise Satan under our feet (Rom. 16:20). Those who stand outside, with just as much religion as makes them afraid, are easily taken in the tempter's snare: the reconciled whom the Father has welcomed back with weeping, has now another joy, and that joy becomes his strength: "his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord" (Ps. 112:7).

Proverbs 3:27 Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, When it is in your power to do it.

KJV 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.

- Withhold. Ro. 13:7. Ga. 6:10. Tit. 2:14. Ja. 2:15, 16; 5:4.
- them to whom it is due. Heb. the owners thereof. in the. Ge. 31:29. Mi. 2:1.

Charles Bridges - 27. Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, (the owners thereof, Marg.) when it is in the power of thine hand to do it. 28. Say not unto thy neighbor, Go, and come again, and to-morrow I will give; when thou hast it by thee.

The wise man now comes to practical points. He strikes at the root of selfishness—withholding dues. Many are the forms of this dishonesty, borrowing without payment, evading the taxes,¹¹ "keeping back the laborers hire." But the rule probes deeper than this surface. If we have no legal debt to any, we have a Gospel debt to all.¹³ Even the poor is bound by this universal law to his poorer neighbor. Every one has a claim upon our love.¹⁵ Every opportunity of doing good, is our call to do so. Our neighbors are the real owners of our good. The Lord of all has transferred his right to them, with a special reference to "his own brethren."¹⁷ Kindness is therefore a matter—not of option, but of obligation; an act of justice, no less than of mercy. To withhold it will be our eternal condemnation.

Christian benevolence will also do good in the kindest manner. Delay is an offence against the law of love. Too often the cold repulse—Go, and come again—is a cover for selfishness. There is a secret hope, that the matter will be forgotten, dropped, or taken up by some other party. Often an application is put off from mere thoughtlessness. We have it by us: but it does not just now suit our convenience. This is a serious injury to the applicant. A little given in time of need, is more, than a larger sum, when the time is gone by. We should cultivate a quick sensibility of others; putting ourselves as much as possible in their place; not only "doing good," but "ready to every good work." If we are to "do justly"—which sometimes (as in the punishment of criminals) may be our sorrow; we are, after the example of our God, to love mercy; seizing the present, perhaps the only,⁴ opportunity; rather anticipating the need, than wantonly or thoughtlessly delaying to relieve it. The Gospel presents every neighbor before us, as a brother or sister needing our help, and to be loved and cared for "as ourselves."⁶ Why do we not more readily acknowledge this standard? The Lord raise us from our selfishness, and mould us to his own image of mercy and love!

George Lawson - Proverbs 3:27. Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, When it is in your power to do it.

To do justly, is one great point of religion; and we ought not unnecessarily to delay giving every man his due, for the delay of justice is temporary injustice. When we owe money to our neighbours, which they require from us at present, and we, though able, defer

payment till afterwards, we are plainly guilty of injustice; for a man has the same right to his property now, that he will have a year hence. We find men reprov'd and threaten'd for keeping in their own hands the hire of the labourer. The same censure may be applied to those who refuse to pay just debts, or to restore to its rightful owner any piece of lost property which they have found; for we are not to do what we will with that which is not ours, nor are we to owe to another any thing but love.

We owe love and the proper fruits of it to our fellow-creatures, according to their necessities and characters, and our connection with them; and we transgress the rule of righteousness, if we withhold even from our enemies that which is due to them by the law of Christ; for many things are to be reckon'd just debts from us on his account, which they have no title to claim for their own sakes. It may be difficult for us to render to others what is due to them by the laws of justice or charity; but the question is not, whether it is easy, but whether it is in the power of our hands, to render unto others that good which is due to them. The fruits of love are often labours, but they are not such labours of love as those which our Redeemer cheerfully performed for us, nor is any man a loser by them*.

What is in the power of our hands to-day, may not be in our power to-morrow, and therefore we ought not to delay the performance of any good work†.

William Arnot - The Right Thing Done at the Right Time

“Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it. Say not unto thy neighbour, Go, and come again, and to-morrow I will give; when thou hast it by thee.”—3:27, 28.

IT is in general the law of righteousness between man and man; do justly to all, and do so now; pay your debts, and pay them to-day, lest you should lack the means to-morrow.

But it is probable that the precept has special reference to the law of love. Every possessor of the good things, either of this life or the next, is bound by the command of the giver to distribute a portion to those who have none. To withhold from any one that which is due to him, is plainly dishonest. But here an interesting inquiry occurs; how far and in what sense the poor have a right to maintenance out of the labour and wealth of the community? The answer is, the really poor have a right to support by the law of God, and the debt is binding on the conscience of all who have the means; but it is not, and ought not to be, a right which the poor as such can make good at a human tribunal against the rich. The possessors of this world's good are not at liberty to withhold the portion of the poor: it is not left to their choice: it is a matter settled by law: disobedience is a direct offence against the great Law-giver. But the poor have not a right which they can plead and enforce at a human tribunal. The acknowledgment of such a right would tend to anarchy. The poor are placed in the power of the rich, and the rich are under law to God. It is true that in heathen and other degraded countries the poor perish, but it does not follow that any other principle would place them in a better condition. Whatever may be the law, the possessors in every country must administer it; and so there cannot, in the nature of things, be any other law laid upon them than the law of love. They are made answerable to God in their own conscience for their conduct to the poor; and if that do not prevail to secure kindness, nothing else will. If they make light of a duty that may be pleaded at the judgment-seat of God, much more will they make light of it as against the poor who cannot enforce their own demands. The assessment for the poor, in a highly artificial state of society, is not the concession of their right to maintenance exigible against the rich by the laws of men: it is a mere expedient by those who give to equalize and systematize the disbursement of charity.

It seems to be the purpose of God in the present dispensation to do good to his creatures, by the inequality of their condition. The design of the providential arrangement is to produce gentle, humble, contented thankfulness on the one side, and open-hearted, open-handed liberality on the other. If God had not intended to exercise these graces, he probably would have made and kept men, as to external comforts, all in a state of equality. But this would not have been the best condition for human beings, or for any portion of them. Absolute equality of condition may do for cattle, but not for men. It appears that the same all-wise Disposer has arranged that there shall be great and manifold diversities of elevation in the surface of the material earth, and in the condition of its intelligent inhabitants. For similar purposes of wisdom and goodness have both classes of inequalities been introduced and maintained. Levellers, who should propose to improve upon this globe, by bringing down every high place and exalting every low, so that no spot of all its surface should remain higher than another, would certainly destroy it as a habitation for man; the waters would cover it. In attempting to make a level earth, they would make a universal sea. But the mischief cannot be done; the mountains are too firmly rooted to be removed by any power but that of the world's Maker.

We suspect that the other class of levellers aim at a change as perilous; and our consolation is, that it is equally impossible. We believe that for the present dispensation, the inequalities in the condition of individuals and families is as needful to the general prosperity of the whole, as the diversity of hill and valley in the surface of the globe; and we believe, also, that the arrangement is as firmly fixed. It would be as easy to level the world as its inhabitants. What may be in store for the earth and man in the future we know not; there may be a time when the globe shall be smooth like an ivory ball, but then there must be no more sea: and if ever there come a time when all men shall be and abide equal, it must be that time when there shall be no more sea of sin to overflow them. If ever there come a time when there shall be no more masters and servants, it must be the time when all shall serve one Lord.

In many ways society is consolidated and strengthened by inequalities. He who made man, male and female, receptive weakness on one side and protecting strength on the other, welding both by the glow of love into a completer one, has thereby made the mass of humanity hold more firmly together. He has also provided diagonal girders running in a different direction—the relations of rich and poor, master and servant, in order to interlace the several portions of humanity more firmly into each other, and so make society as a whole strong enough to ride out the hurricanes of a tempestuous time.

“When it is in the power of thine hand to do it;” a touching memorial this. Many who have cherished sound principles, and desired to do good, have permitted the time irrevocably to pass. When they had it in their power to do good they procrastinated, and now the means have fled. This is a bitter reflection in old age. There is only one way by which any man may make sure that such a bitterness shall not be his, and that is by doing now what his hand finds to do. If it is in the power of your hand this year to do good, it may not be so next year. The abundance may be taken from you, or you taken from your abundance. The secret of a happy life is to set the house in order, and keep it in order. Above all, keep as few good intentions hovering about as possible. They are like ghosts haunting a dwelling. The way to lay them is to find bodies for them. When they are embodied in substantial deeds they are no longer dangerous.

But there is yet another way in which it may be beyond the power of thine hand to do a duty to-morrow which has been deferred to-day. The hand has much power and skill, but it cannot move except at the command of the will. If the willingness of the heart were conclusively frozen up within, the hand, which is merely the heart’s servant, can do nothing. When the rich refuse to do the duties of the day with their means, they are in danger of falling into the miser’s madness. When you have contracted a diseased love of money which you do not use, it is not in the power of the hand to do the plainest duty. The man who loves money cannot part with it: he has let his opportunity pass. On the one side, there may be lavishness without generosity—the mere habit of letting money run out like water: on the other hand, there may be close carefulness without the virtue of frugality—the mere habit of holding the grip. Both conditions are most dismal. There is a tendency to fall into the one snare or the other. The way in the midst is a strait way: it is not easy to walk in it. If we begin early, and keep going, the work will become easy at length.

Observe how remarkably specific is the command not to postpone a gift. We ought to make up our minds, and act. Those who have the means of doing good in the community at the present day, are much tried, and should look well to their path. There are many good objects pressing, and as in all such cases, the very multitude of the good notes suggests and makes room for the circulation of bad ones, caution and discrimination are not only permitted, they are peremptorily required. The injunction of the text is a most useful rule in one department of this difficulty. If we have not the means, or if the object be unworthy, there ought to be a distinct declinature. A clear, unambiguous negative is, in many transactions, of incalculable worth. It is no man’s duty to give to every one who asks, or to any all that he asks. There is such a thing as giving when you should not, from lack of courage to say No. Further, when the object is not worthy, and your mind is clear, and you determine to do nothing, it would be profitable both to yourself and others to say so at once. It is not altogether straightforward to another, or safe for yourself, to announce a postponement if you have resolved on a refusal. Softness may lead to sin. But the worst of all is when the cause is good, when you are convinced of its goodness, when the means are in your power, and yet you put the pleader off. Even though you should afterwards give, you have lost the blessing. God loves a cheerful giver; and though you have given, you gave with a grudge. When the fruit needs a violent pulling to wrench it from the tree, the tree itself is torn in the process.

Proverbs 3:28 Do not say to your neighbor, "Go, and come back, And tomorrow I will give it," When you have it with you.

KJV Proverbs 3:28 Say not unto thy neighbour, Go, and come again, and to morrow I will give; when thou hast it by thee.

- Proverbs 27:1. Le. 19:13. De. 24:12–15. Ec. 9:10; 11:6. 2 Co. 8:11; 9:3. 1 Ti. 6:18.

George Lawson - Proverbs 3:28. Do not say to your neighbor, “Go, and come back, And tomorrow I will give it,” When you have it with you.

Delays in any part of duty, furnish a strong presumption that we do not perform it cheerfully. We are commanded, not only to do good works, but to be ready to every good work; not only to shew mercy, but to shew it with cheerfulness. He that gives speedily, gives twice; but he that gives with slow reluctance, gives in part a denial. Much of the benefit is often lost to the receiver, and much of the gratitude to the giver, by telling our neighbour to go and come again.

There is a manner of giving that but ill accords with that humanity and mercy which should dispose us to give. Airs of superiority assumed even to the meanest of our fellow-creatures, are unbecoming; for however inferior to us in point of station, they are still our neighbours, and God commands us to love them as ourselves. God often delays answering our prayers, but he is infinitely and essentially superior to us; yet his delays are all in wisdom and love. When it is fit that his petitioners should receive what they ask, he

gives before they ask, or whilst they are yet speaking he hears.

In one case, the wise man allows us to defer giving. When we have it not by us, and when we cannot give at all in a consistency with more urgent duties, we may refuse to give; but still we must have hearts to give, were it in our power. And if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not.

The next direction is against doing evil to our neighbours.

Proverbs 3:29 Do not devise harm against your neighbor, While he lives securely beside you.

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

- Devise not evil. or, Practise no evil. Proverbs 6:14, 18; 16:29, 30. Ps. 35:20; 55:20; 59:3. Je. 18:18–20. Mi. 2:1, 2.

Charles Bridges - 29. Devise not evil against thy neighbor, seeing he dwelleth securely by thee. 30. Strive not with a man without cause, if he have done thee no harm.

The command—not to withhold good—is naturally followed by the forbidding to devise evil. The treachery here rebuked was a scandal even to a heathen. It is generally abhorred by the world, and should be doubly hated by a godly man. With him all should be clear and open as the day. An evil device against a neighbor, from whatever cause, is a cursed sin. But to take occasion from confidence reposed, betrays “the wisdom that descendeth not from above—devilish.”¹⁰ Such was the craft of Jacob’s sons against the unsuspecting Shechemites—Saul’s malice against David, when under his protection¹²—Joab’s murder of Abner and Amasa—Ishmael’s of Gedaliah.¹⁴ No trial cuts so keenly. This was one of the bitter in the Saviour’s cup of suffering.¹⁶ And many a wounded spirit has been cheered by his sympathy with their poignant sorrow.

Yet we must guard not only against secret malice, but against causeless strivings. A propensity to embroil ourselves in quarrels kindles strife, instead of following the rule of peace.

This spirit is a just hindrance to holiness, and inconsistent with a true servant of God.² Irritable persons strongly insist upon their rights, or what they conceive to be due to them from others—“Is there not”—say they—“a cause?” But impartial observers frequently judge it to be striving without cause; that no harm has been done—none at least to justify the breach of love; that more love on one hand, and more forbearance on the other, would have prevented the breach; that “there is utterly a fault—Why do ye not rather take wrong.” How valuable is a close application of the self-denying law of Christ!⁴ How earnestly should we seek from himself his meek and loving spirit! ‘O Lord, pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of charity, the very bond of peace, and of all virtues; without which, whosoever liveth is counted dead before thee.’⁶

George Lawson - Proverbs 3:29. Do not devise harm against your neighbor, While he lives in security beside you.

Our fellow-men are our neighbours, and we are destitute of the love of God if we feel no love to them. If the practice be an index of what passes within, we must conclude that man to be wholly destitute of love, who can wilfully hurt those whom he is required to love as himself. Such a man cannot surely pretend to religion; or if he does, he is at best like a tinkling brass, or a sounding cymbal, for his professions are emptiness and hypocrisy.

At the day of judgment, they shall be doomed to hell, who did not serve their neighbour in love; where, then, must those appear whose practice was quite the reverse?

All injurious persons are wicked, and the more contrivance there is in any evil that we do, it has so much the greater malignity in it*. It is criminal to devise evil against any person; but it is double iniquity to hurt those that dwell securely by us, for this in effect is a breach of trust, and an indication of a heart base and depraved beyond the common pitch of human wickedness. The meek and the quiet of the land are the persons who dread no injury from us, as they plot none against others; and the Lord Jesus, to whom all judgment is committed, is the Redeemer of all such persons. He hath pronounced a blessing on them, and will avenge them of their enemies; for with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth†.

We must not even contend with our neighbours by hard words, when they have done nothing to provoke us; otherwise we are volunteers in the devil’s service, sinning without putting him to the trouble of tempting us.

Proverbs 3:30 Do not contend with a man without cause, If he has done you no harm.

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

- Proverbs 17:14; 18:6; 25:8, 9; 29:22. Mat. 5:39–41. Ro. 12:18–21. 1 Co. 6:6–8. 2 Ti. 2:24.

George Lawson - Proverbs 3:30. Do not contend with a man without cause, If he has done you no harm.

If a man has injured us, we ought to forgive him. Do we believe that God for Christ's sake hath forgiven us ten thousand talents, and shall we reckon it a hard matter, at Christ's command, to forgive our brother a few pence?

If the unforgiving shall never enter into heaven, what curses shall for ever lie upon those who are guilty of unprovoked injuries? Railers and revilers stand excluded from the kingdom of God, and the admission of injurious persons, like Saul the Pharisee, into the kingdom of God, is to be regarded as a miracle of mercy.

It may possibly be alleged, that injurious persons are often prosperous in the world. It may be so in some circumstances, yet,

Proverbs 3:31 Do not envy a man of violence And do not choose any of his ways.

KJV Envy thou not the oppressor, and choose none of his ways.

- Envy. Proverbs 23:17; 24:1, 19, 20. Ps. 37:1, 7–9; 73:3. Ga. 5:21.
- the oppressor. Heb. a man of violence. Ec. 5:8.
- choose. Proverbs 1:15–18; 2:12–15; 12:12; 22:22–25.

Charles Bridges - 31. Envy thou not the oppressor (a man of violence, Marg.) and choose none of his ways. 32. For the froward is an abomination to the Lord; but his secret is with the righteous.

What is there—we might ask—to envy in the oppressor? The love of power is a ruling passion: and the slave of his own will enjoys a brutish pleasure in tyranny. Yet little reason have we to envy him—much less to choose his ways. Can he be happy—going froward (fromward) the Lord, in perverse contradiction to his will? with the frown of heaven? For 'he who hateth nothing that he hath made, abhors those who have thus marred themselves. They are not only abominable, but "an abomination" in his sight.' Really to be envied—or rather ardently to be desired—is the lot of the righteous—enriched with the secret of the Lord—'his covenant and fatherly affection, which is hid and secret from the world.' Sinners he hates, but saints he loves. The one is an abomination. The other is his delight. 'They are God's friends, to whom he familiarly imparts, as men use to do to their friends, his mind and counsels, or his secret favor and comforts, to which other men are strangers.' Communion with himself¹¹—peace—joy¹³—assurance—teaching¹⁵—confidence—an enlightened apprehension of Providence¹⁷—yea, all the blessings of his covenant, this is the secret between God and the soul—an enclosed portion, hidden from the world—sealed to his beloved people. Here then—child of God—"dwell in the secret place of the Most High." If he hath given to thee the knowledge of himself, and of thine interest in Him—and to the froward oppressor only worldly advantage—is it not the seal of his love to thee, and rejection of him? Is it not infinitely more to dwell on high with thy God, than in the vain pomp of an ungodly world?

George Lawson - Proverbs 3:31. Do not envy a man of violence, And do not choose any of his ways.

Imagine not that a man can be happy in the enjoyment of that which he has gained by dishonest means. Envy or admiration of his success, might lead us to imitate his unrighteous behaviour. Though his wine sparkle, let us remember that there is poison in the cup.

Proverbs 3:32 For the devious are an abomination to the LORD; But He is intimate with the upright

KJV For the froward is abomination to the LORD: but his secret is with the righteous.

- the froward. Proverbs 6:16–19; 8:13; 11:20; 17:15. Ps. 18:26. Lu. 16:15.
- his. Proverbs 14:10. Ps. 25:14. Mat. 11:25; 13:11. John. 14:21–24; 15:15. Re. 2:17.

George Lawson - Proverbs 3:32. For the crooked man is an abomination to the LORD; But He is intimate with the upright.

That man who is detested by the Lord, is so far from being happy, that he is miserable and accursed. Can he know true happiness, who is looked upon with an angry countenance by him whose smiles are heaven, and whose frowns are hell? Such is the situation of oppressors of every rank, from the mighty Nimrods of the world, who employ themselves in general massacres and desolations, down to the petty parish oppressors, who grind the faces of their poor neighbours, and by adding field to field, to the ruin of many families, endeavour to plant themselves alone in the countryside*.

“But his secret is with the righteous.” They enjoy a fellowship with God unknown to the world. He discovers to them the secret mysteries of grace, refreshes their souls with the manifestations of his special love, and blesses their substance by the unperceived workings of his gracious providence*. God not only enriches them with his goodness, but treats them as friends, and to them all his paths are mercy and truth.

The blessing of God upon his people, and his indignation toward his enemies, spread through their dwellings, rendering them happy or miserable. The cottage of the just is a quiet and pleasant habitation. The palace of the wicked is blasted by a secret curse.

Proverbs 3:33 The curse of the LORD is on the house of the wicked, But He blesses the dwelling of the righteous.

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

- curse. Proverbs 21:12. Le. 26:14, etc. De. 7:26; 28:15, etc.; 29:19, etc. Jos. 6:18; 7:13. Ps. 37:22. Zec. 5:3, 4. Mal. 2:2.
- he blesseth. De. 28:2, etc. 2 Sa. 6:11. Job 8:6, 7. Ps. 1:3; 91:10.

Charles Bridges - 33. The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked; but he blesseth the habitation of the just.

The contrast between the sinner and the saint affects us not only personally but relatively. The curse or blessing of the Lord follows us to our homes. Shall we then envy the wicked—with his cup of earthly joy filled to the brim? The curse of the Lord is in his house—a “curse that never cometh causeless.”⁴ It is my Maker’s curse—How awful, that my being and my curse should come from the same sacred source! It is not the impotent wishing of ill. Could we trace its deadly work, we should see the man wasting, withering, consuming under it. Observe “the roll in the house of the thief, and of the swearer—twenty cubits long”—a long catalogue of woes—“flying”—to mark its swiftness—“remaining in the midst of the house—consuming it, even with the timbers and stones thereof.” Is this an idle dream? Surely—but for the blindness of the heart—the wicked would see the naked sword hanging by a hair over his head, or the awful “handwriting upon the wall,” solemnly proclaiming—“There is no peace—saith my God—unto the wicked.” Vainly will the proud worm resist. Ahab multiplied his house beyond all human average, as if to set at defiance the curse pronounced against it. Yet at one stroke all were swept away. Similar instances⁸ abundantly prove, whose words shall stand—man’s or God’s. “Who hath hardened himself against him, and prospered. Who hath resisted his will?”¹⁰

But bright is the sunshine of the just. Not only is the secret of the Lord with their souls, but his blessing on their habitation. And when he blesseth, who can reverse it? Many a homely cottage, tenanted by a child of Abraham, shines more splendidly, than the princely palace of the ungodly.¹² An heir of glory dwells here. A family altar of prayer and praise consecrates it as the temple of Jehovah. Promises, like clouds of blessings, rest over it. God has been honored, and God will honor.¹⁴ “They that dwell under his shadow shall return.” Is then my house under the curse or blessing of the Lord? Let my God be honored in his own gifts: that I and mine may be manifestly sealed with the full tokens of his love.

George Lawson - Proverbs 3:33. The curse of the LORD is on the house of the wicked, But He blesses the dwelling of the righteous.

And happiness or misery lies in the blessing or curse of God†. When you behold the magnificent structures in which sinners dwell, let not your thoughts be lost in wonder, or your hearts rankle with envy. They are fabrics, stately indeed, but not solid. You may pronounce them cursed. Eliphaz saw the wicked taking root, but suddenly he cursed his habitation, for his children are far from safety. The curse of God has often destroyed the timber and the beams of the most towering palaces; often has it kindled a fire, by which they have been destroyed to the lowest foundation. Such dwellings as these are houses of infection, for the leprosy of sin has taken possession of them, and it can be ascribed only to wonderful mercy, if the children and servants in them escape the plagues prepared for their lords.

By the blessing of the Lord, the meanest cottage is converted into a dwelling of joy and praise. We read of whole houses that have been blessed for the sake of godly servants; how much more may the divine blessing be expected, where the masters are pious, and make their dwellings a little church, where the melody of thanksgiving and the voice of prayer are daily heard! The blessing of

God, that is daily asked, shall not be refused; and the members of the family are blessed with instructions and examples that must produce good effects on them, unless they harden their hearts like an adamant. The holy conversation of good wives may be a means of winning their husbands; and many children and servants have found the greatest reason to thank God for the appointment of their dwelling in a family of saints.

From among the wicked, we find that proud and haughty scorers are singled out as signal monuments of the vengeance of God.

William Arnot - The Curse and the Blessing upon the House

“The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked: but he blesseth the habitation of the just.”—3:33.

WE have often, in the course of these expositions, had occasion to point out the effects of sin upon the person who sins. Here is yet another of its bitter fruits: it brings a curse on the house. Our interests are more closely connected with each other than we are able to observe, or willing to allow. The welfare of one is largely dependent on the well-doing of another. Let every wicked man learn here, that over and above the ruin of his own soul, his sins bring a curse on his wife and children, his neighbours and friends. Such is God’s government, that you cannot live in sin, any more than in smallpox or the plague, without involving others in the danger. For wise purposes, it has been so ordained. This law is calculated to lay an additional restraint upon a wayward spirit. A man, reckless of his own character and fate, might be ready to act out the daring maxim, “Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.” When pity for himself did not arrest him, he might be arrested when he saw that his own abandoned life would curse his dwelling. Doubtless this law of the Lord has been bit and bridle to hold in a man, who would have burst through all other restraints. In blind, despairing rage, he might pull down the pillars upon his own unhappy head: yet when he feels his little ones clinging to his knees, and his wife leaning on his breast, he may stand in awe, and turn and live. “Fear and sin not:” the providence of God gives terrible momentum to that sharp word. In addition to the weight of divine authority upon the conscience, all the force of nature’s instincts is applied to drive it home. When the fear of perdition to himself has not power enough, the laws of Providence throw in all his house as a make-weight to increase the motive. He is held back from evil by all that he ever felt of tenderness in his youth, or feels of compassion still: and if, in the last resort, these weights avail not to keep him from sinning, they will be effectual in adding to his punishment.

This dark curse hanging over the dwelling of the wicked, is balanced by the blessing that falls on the habitation of the just. Here is pleasant work, and plenty of wages. Trust in Christ, and serve Him; besides the saving of your own soul, you will be a blessing to your habitation. How sweet the privilege of being the parents of your children both for this life and the life to come! And not only the parents—every one in the house may become the channel of blessing from on high. If God has a child in a family, he will have many an errand there. You who are fathers know how frequently you find occasion to visit the house where your own dear child is boarded out for education. Our Father in heaven so visits his own, in whatever habitation their education is going on; and all the house will get the benefit. The disciples of Jesus are a preserving salt, even when the mass preserved by their presence are unconscious of the boon. To be good is the shortest and surest way to do good. Jonathan in his lifetime was dear to David; and therefore Jonathan’s son, an orphan and a cripple, sat daily at the royal table. If you be the King’s friend, your children will get the benefit in some hour of need. It is a noble position, and should encourage one to bear trials with patience, to be the channel between a house and heaven, bearing them up to God, and getting down from him the blessing.

Proverbs 3:34 Though He scoffs at the scoffers, Yet He gives grace to the afflicted.

KJV Pr 3:34 Surely he scorneth the scorers: but he giveth grace unto the lowly.

Septuagint - kurios huperephnois (huperanos -- arrogant, proud, haughty, empty boaster who brags of his position and despises others 2Ti3.2: "arrogant"; proud people Ja4.6) antitassetai (3SPMI) tapeinois (1Pe5:5) de didosin (3SPAI) charin

LXE The Lord resists (3SPMI: set in array against; as setting oneself against oppose, resist, be hostile toward AC 18.6) the proud; but He gives (3SPAI) grace to the humble (TAPEINOS: poor, lowly, meek, weak, afflicted).

- he scorneth. Proverbs 9:7, 8, 12; 19:29; 21:24. Ps. 138:6.
- he giveth. Is. 57:15. Ja. 4:6. 1 Pe. 5:5.

THOUGH HE SCOFFS AT THE SCOFFERS: Quoted in Jas 4:6, 1Pe 5:5. Story of the young Scottish minister who walked proudly into the pulpit to preach his first sermon. He had a brilliant mind and a good education and was confident of himself as he faced his first congregation. But the longer he preached, the more conscious everyone was that “the Lord was not in the wind.” He finished his message quickly and came down from the pulpit with his head bowed, his pride now gone. Afterward, one of the members said to him, “If you had gone into the pulpit the way you came down, you might have come down from the pulpit the way you went up.”

Charles Bridges - 34. Surely he scorneth the scorers: but he giveth grace unto the lowly.

Two Apostles have combined with the wise man, to set out this rule of the Divine government. On no point is the mind of God more fully declared, than against pride—the spirit of scorning. It displaces man, and would—if possible—displace God himself. Jealous therefore of his own glory, he sets himself in battle array, as against the usurper of his prerogative—the rebel against his dominion. Witness the Babel-builders³—Pharaoh—Sennacherib⁵—the proud opposers of his Gospel—all the objects of his scorn. But most hateful to him is the sinner, that will not submit to his righteousness—that scorns the corner-stone of salvation. How fearfully does it then become “a rock of offence”—of eternal ruin! Surely without doubt—without way of escape from his frown—he scorneth the scorers.

A lowly spirit—a deep conviction of utter nothingness and guilt—is a most adorning grace. Nor is it an occasional or temporary feeling—the result of some unexpected hateful disclosure, but an habitual principle, “clothing” the man “from the sole of the foot to the head.” It combines the highest elevation of joy with the deepest abasement of spirit. And those who sink the lowest, stand nearest to the most, exalted advancement. For “he that scorneth the scorers, giveth grace to the lowly”—“more grace,” till his work is perfected in them. He pours it out plentifully upon humble hearts. His sweet dews and showers of grace slide off the mountains of pride, and fall on the low vallies of humble hearts, and make them pleasant and fertile.”¹⁰ The Centurion—the Canaanite¹²—the penitent—the publican¹⁴—such as these are the objects of his favor. Their hearts are his dwelling-place.¹⁶ Their inheritance is his kingdom. The soul swelling with its proud fancies has no room for his humbling grace. Blessed exchange of the little idol of self-esteem for Him, who alone has the right!—when even his own graces are only desired as instruments to set out his glory.

George Lawson - Proverbs 3:34. Though He scoffs at the scoffers, Yet He gives grace to the afflicted.

It is pride that makes men scorers. When men have an overweening conceit of themselves, they are likely to behave insolently to others, and contemptuously to God himself*. But on such arrogant worms of the dust, Jehovah looks down with contempt, and makes them objects of derision to all men. We read in scripture of many, whom the pride of their heart and countenance brought to the lowest disgrace. Nebuchadnezzar, and Haman, and Herod, and the proud Pharisee, are set forth for examples, to shew us that these men stand not on an even place, whose hearts are not kept low by that grace which cherishes humility. That God whose eye turns away with disdain from the splendour of haughty princes, and the diadems of imperious kings, looks with kindness upon the meanest of those who walk humbly with their God†. He visits them in mercy, and refreshes their spirits with his love‡. He gave them that grace which makes them humble, and he giveth more grace. God bestows grace on men, that he may be glorified; and the lowly, who are made sensible of their emptiness and guilt, are the persons who will ascribe praise to him, for the least of his favours: In them he will display the excellency of his love, and enrich them with his blessings in this, and in the everlasting world. “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” With the lowly is wisdom, and,

Proverbs 3:35 The wise will inherit honor, But fools display dishonor.

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

- wise. Proverbs 4:8. 1 Sa. 2:30. Ps. 73:24. but. Proverbs 13:8. Ps. 132:18. Is. 65:13–15. Da. 12:2, 3.
- shall be the promotion of fools. Heb. exalteth the fools.

Ryrie on fools display dishonor - Lit., "but fools raise up (elevate, exalt) shame (dishonor)." Whereas the wise inherit honor, fools promote the shame that is consistent with their character.

Charles Bridges - 35. The wise shall inherit glory: but shame shall be the promotion of fools; (exalteth the fools; Marg.)

This is the last contrast drawn to restrain our envy at the prosperity of the wicked. It carries us forward to eternity. The difference between these two classes is not always shown to man’s vision. But the day cometh, when all shall “discern” in the full light of eternity.² The wise—the heirs of glory—are identified with the lowly—the heirs of grace. Our self-knowledge—the principle of lowliness—is the very substance of wisdom. Their inheritance also is one—grace and glory. For what higher glory can there be, than the grace, which “hath redeemed” a vile worm of the earth, “and made him a king and priest unto God?” Oh! let the redeemed cherish honorable thoughts of their present glory. Be careful to clear it from the defilement and degradation of the world’s dust, and enjoy it in adoring praise to Him, who hath chosen thee to this so undeserved grace.

But who can tell the glory of the after inheritance—not like this world’s glory—the shadow of a name—but real—solid—‘an infinite gain in the exchange of dross for down-weight of pure gold.’ All occasion of sin and temptation are shut out forever. ‘The tree of knowledge shall be without enclosure. There shall be neither lust nor forbidden fruit; no withholding of desirable knowledge, nor affectation of undesirable. The glorified spirits touch nothing that can defile, and defile nothing they touch.’⁸ But after all, the glory of

this glory will be communion and likeness with our Lord—"to be with him—to behold his glory." We need not pry too minutely. Thus much is clear. The value of our inheritance is beyond all price—its happiness unspeakable—its security unchangeable—its duration eternity. The wise shall inherit glory. "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament forever and ever."

Oh! will not the fools then discover the vanity of this world's glory—too late to make a wise choice? Shame is their present fruit. Honor even now sits unseemly upon them.¹² But "what fruit will eternity bring" of those things, whereof they will "then be ashamed?" Truly shame will be their promotion. Their fame will be infamous; their disgrace conspicuous, lifting them up, like Haman upon his elevated gallows, 'a gazing-stock to the world.' How solemn and complete will be the great Separation for eternity! "Many that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake; some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."

George Lawson - Proverbs 3:35. Some by their birth and fortune inherit high sounding titles, and celebrated kingdoms. But if they are not wise, their lofty situation is the theatre of their dishonour. Those who are blessed with sound wisdom, have an inheritance of glory in reserve, compared with which the crowns and sceptres of the world deserve not a name. The prudent are even at present crowned with knowledge; but the happy day is coming when they that are wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that have turned others to the wisdom of the just, as the stars for ever and ever.

Fools are fond of honours, but all the honours they can enjoy are like bubbles when they glitter in the sun. They shall be promoted, indeed, but their exaltation shall be like that of Haman, who was exalted when he was hung upon a gallows fifty cubits high. Their shame shall be conspicuous to the world, when they shall be covered with everlasting disgrace, and become an abhorring to all flesh*.