

“Trust the Lord’s Wisdom, Not Your Own”  
(Proverbs 3:5-8)

I. Introduction.

A. Orientation.

We’ve been looking

At some of the many reasons

We should *obey* the Lord:

The idea of submitting and obeying anyone

Is one we all resist to one degree or another –

Even obeying the Lord.

That’s because

We’ve all been affected by the world;

We’ve all grown up in a culture

That resists authority;

We’re also influenced

By the sin that’s still in our hearts:

We like our *independence*,

We want to steer our own ship –

But we know as believers

How important it is that we obey God:

Our eternal happiness

Depended on obeying His command  
To repent and believe on the Lord Jesus.

If we had insisted on our independence,  
We would have lost our happiness forever.

That we obey now is the evidence  
That we really do believe in Jesus –

John tells us, “Little children, make sure no one deceives you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous” (1 John 3:7).

If we give ourselves to sin,  
It shows just the opposite:

Again John writes, “No one who is born of God practices sin” (1 John 3:9),  
And, “The one who practices sin is of the devil” (v. 8).

How much we obey determines  
How happy we will be in the future –

If we want a greater reward,  
We need to obey Him more.

And we know that our fellowship with God –

Our sense of nearness to Him,

And the joy and blessing

That comes from walking with Him –

Depends largely on how well we obey.

Obedience is important.

B. Preview.

This morning, let's consider

Another reason we should obey Him:

Because God *knows better* than we

How we should live.

When we want help

With something that's really important to us,

Where do we go?

We go to those who know

More about these things than we do:

When we're sick,

We go to the doctor –

To someone who's an expert

On how our bodies work –

When we have a legal problem,

We go to a lawyer –

One who knows the law –

Where should we go

When we want to learn

About how to live?

Some never go anywhere –

They just try to figure it out for themselves.

Some go to their friends –

To those with the same level of experience.

That's what Rehoboam did:

He went to his peers –

To those who knew as little or less than he,

And not to the experts/wise –

And he lost over half of his kingdom.

Solomon tells us,

We need to go to the Lord –

To the One with infinite knowledge and wisdom –

We need to go to His Word –

Because He gave it to us

To teach us how to live –

We need to *trust Him* to guide us.

## II. Sermon.

### A. In verses 5-8,

Solomon gives us six exhortations

To trust the Lord.

1. He gives us the first two in verses 5 and 6,

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart . . . In all your ways acknowledge Him.”

a. Notice first, whom Solomon tells us to trust: the Lord.

Just His name alone

Gives us at least four reasons to trust Him:

The first is perhaps the most obvious:

Since He is the Lord,

He has authority to command us.

Solomon wrote this by the inspiration of the Spirit.

This means this order

Doesn't ultimately come from him,

But from the Lord –

And so we should do it.

The second is that the Lord –

Being the Author of Creation –

In His unlimited knowledge and wisdom,

Made everything to work in a certain way –

He, above everyone else,

Knows how we should live for our wellbeing –

And so we should trust Him.

Third, the Lord is holy –  
He is the very definition of holiness;  
He above all others  
Knows what righteousness is –  
And so we should trust Him as He tells us.

And fourth, His name –  
The Lord or Yahweh –  
Reminds us  
That He has entered into covenant with us  
Through His Son Jesus:

When we were His enemies  
He loved us so much  
That He was willing to give  
The One who was most precious to Him  
To suffer and die  
So that we might become His;

And now that we are His people –  
His sons and daughters –  
He desires nothing but what is best for us –  
The instruction He gives us in His Word

Is that of a loving Father to His children –

We should trust that it is good for us.

His name is literally translated

“The One Who Is and Shall Be” –

This reminds us that He never changes:

Which means His love won’t change,

Nor His desire for our wellbeing and happiness:

And so we should trust

That He will show us the way to gain them.

b. What does it mean to trust the Lord?

It means to have *confidence* –

That He will show us the right way –

*To know* for certain –

What He tells us will be for our good –

*To rely* on what He says –

No matter what we will face.

*Trust* is the *sine qua non* of the Christian life –

That without which not –

That without which there is no life.

There is *no salvation* without trust:

Unless we trust His Son, Jesus,  
 To deliver us from judgment,  
 We won't be saved.

We won't receive anything from Him

Unless we trust He is true to His Word –

James writes, “But if any of you lacks wisdom [or anything else], let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, *being* a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways” (1:5-8).

Solomon tells us,

We won't make it safely through this world

Unless we trust Him to guide us

As He tells us in His Word.

c. How strong should our trust be?

He writes, “Trust in the Lord *with all your heart*” (Prov. 3:5).

He means with our whole inner man –

With all the faculties of our soul –

Our whole mind, will,

And particularly, our affections –

We call this implicit trust –

One that is complete and absolute.

This is what the Roman church tells its members

To have in their priests –

That because their priests are teaching them God's truth,

They should believe it, even if they don't understand it.

Solomon tells us,

This kind of trust is to be reserved for the Lord:

Even if we *don't understand*

Why He tells us to do what He does,

We still need to trust that it is for our good.

d. The second command –

“In all your ways acknowledge Him” –

Parallels the first.

We are to *acknowledge* –

Or *know* what the Lord directs,

And *accept* it as good –

In *all our ways* –

In all the decisions we make:

Life is a series of choices –

What direction we will go,

How to respond to what others do –

As we're faced with these choices,  
We need to acknowledge what the Lord says,  
And make choices consistent with His Word,  
Trusting that His way is best.

## 2. The second pair of commands

Is really implied by the first:

If we are to trust the Lord's wisdom,  
Then we are not to trust that of others –  
Not even our own.

Solomon writes in verses 5 and 7,

“Do not lean on your own understanding . . . Do not be wise in your own eyes.”

More often than not

That's exactly what we do:

What *we* think is right,  
Rather than acknowledging  
What God says is right.

Solomon tells us

This way of thinking may be engrained in us –

He writes in Proverbs 21:2, “Every man's way is right in his own eyes” –

But it doesn't have a good outcome –

He writes in 16:25, “There is a way *which seems* right to a man, but its end is the way of death.”

Our understanding –

Our experiences in life –

Are so limited:

That’s why we don’t trust ourselves

And turn to the experts

In virtually all other areas.

Our hearts can *also* deceive us –

There’s still so much sin in them:

We still want things we shouldn’t;

We can so easily talk ourselves into things

That aren’t good for us –

Which is why we shouldn’t trust our own judgment.

Our friends share the same problem:

Remember what happened to Rehoboam.

### 3. The final pair of commands

Points us back to the *foundation* of wisdom:

“Fear the LORD and turn away from evil” (3:7).

Solomon tells us in 1:7, “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge.”

This is where wisdom starts.

There are really only two kinds of people in the world:

Those who are wise –

Who fear/respect the Lord:

Who know who He is,

What He's like,

What pleases Him,

And take Him seriously –

And those who are foolish –

Who don't fear/respect Him:

Who really know little or nothing about Him,

What He's like,

What pleases Him,

And who don't take Him seriously.

What difference does it make?

Those who don't fear Him at all

Will eventually be destroyed –

Because they won't turn to His Son

To be saved.

And those who know Him,

But don't respect Him as they should,

And so don't listen to His Word,  
Will be disciplined.

B. This brings us to our last point:

What we can expect if we will trust Him  
And live by His Word,  
And what can we expect if we don't.

Solomon tells us in verses 6 and 8,

“He will make your paths straight . . .

It will be healing to your body and refreshment to your bones.”

1. First, He will make our paths straight (v. 6).

This is why we need His wisdom:

So that we can walk on the straight path –

So we can live the only right way.

Think Pilgrim's Progress.

As long as Pilgrim stayed

On the narrow and straight path,

He was safe;

But when he stepped off the path

He got into trouble.

This was Bunyan's main point:

As long as we live

According to God's Word –

By trusting Jesus,

And living as He calls us –

We will make it safely

From this world to the next.

God wants us to be safe.

That's why He sent His Son –

To keep us safe from hell –

That's why He gave us His Word –

*To show us the straight path;*

So that we'll be safe from sin.

That's why He gave us His Spirit –

So we would trust His Son,

And follow His Word.

If we trust the Lord

And live by His wisdom,

And not our own,

We will be safe.

2. But there is a second blessing:

Solomon writes in verse 8,

“It will be healing to your body and refreshment to your bones.”

Healing presupposes some disease or injury.

Refreshment presupposes some parching or dryness.

Solomon might have in mind here

The healing the Lord brings to our souls

When we come to Jesus:

David writes in Psalm 103:2-3, “Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget none of His benefits; Who pardons all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases.”

But he could also have in mind the healing

That turning from our own wisdom

And back to His brings.

Whenever we step off His path,

Because He cares about us,

He will bring correction

To turn us back into the way.

It can come in the form of conviction –

Depending on the sin,

Sometimes so strong

It can be felt in the bones:

David writes in Psalm 38:3, “There is no soundness in my flesh because of Your indignation; there is no health in my bones because of my sin.”

Sometimes it comes in the form of sickness:

Remember what Paul wrote to the Corinthians

Regarding their coming to the Lord's Table

With unrepentant sin:

He says in 1 Corinthians 11:27, "Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord."

And then in verse 30, "For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep."

When we turn off the path,

And the Lord brings discipline,

Getting back on the path

Will bring healing.

We'll explore this theme

A bit more fully this evening.

But for now, let's remember

We need to trust in the Lord's wisdom

And not our own

If we are to be safe.

We're about to come to the Lord's Table –

Let's make sure as we do,

That we don't approach it in our own wisdom –

Thinking that all we're doing

Is eating a bit of bread and drinking a bit of wine –

That it doesn't matter whether we've repented or not –

Let's approach it with God's wisdom:

This is His Table,

There is a blessing if we come believing and repenting,

But discipline or judgment if we don't. Amen.

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