

## Wisdom: A Matter of the Heart

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### Proverbs 3:1-35

Proverbs was written down as a record of wisdom to be passed on to the next generation. So very often the Bible commands us to “remember” and “not forget.” Humans are quite forgetful. Solomon offers his words as a corrective, highlighting God’s wisdom in contrast to the world’s. Due to sin we are quick to forget the wisdom of God and replace it with the wisdom of self or the wisdom of the world. This was true for Adam and Eve, the Israelites, the disciples, and for us. The consequences are grave.

In Chapter 3 God’s people are called to write God’s wisdom on the tablets of their hearts (vs.3). They are to put their full trust in the LORD and abandon self-trust and self-help (vs. 5-6). This is the daily work of the faithful disciple, laboring for God’s glory, for their own good, and the good of their neighbor (vs. 26-32).

The way of wisdom leads to success, security, and hope (vs. 4, 23). God’s wisdom is more precious than gold and recognition (vs. 14). Christian, do not lose sight of this - keep sound wisdom and discretion, and they will be life for your soul (vs. 21). Believe on the Lord Jesus, find salvation, and live the most blessed and abundant life, now and forever more (vs. 13, 35).

### 1. My son, do not forget my teaching (vv. 1-10)

Vs. 1-4

Let your heart keep my commandments. Notice he says it is the heart and not the hands that are to keep the commandments. It is a matter of the heart. Guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life. Your heart can be inscribed upon. Do so with discretion. The one who follows the commands of God will find favor and success.

- Consider, what do you write on the tablet of your heart? The words of God, or of man?

Vs. 5-8

Trust. What do you know about trust? Many of us have a mixed relationship with trust. It is a risky and unpredictable concept. The Hebrew word here implies putting yourself in a vulnerable, humble, submissive position. This verse presumes that trust is something you have the power to give away. It is a choice that you can make. With that choice, trust in the LORD.

**Vs. 5b** “do not lean on your own understanding.” Do not support yourself with your own understanding... with your own interpretation of your experience. Note how this is contrary to the messaging of our culture. We are taught that our experience, our interpretation of ourselves, is the most trusted source we have.

Proverbs 28:26 “Whoever trusts in his own mind is a fool, but he who walks in wisdom will be delivered.”

In all your ways, you are to acknowledge the LORD. To know the LORD and live in fellowship with him. Consider the totality all. All of your heart. All of your ways. That means everything. Nothing is off limits.

- With what level of totality do you trust the LORD? What hinders you from greater trust?

If you trust in God, he says he will make your path straight. His straight may look crooked to you, but we are the ones in need of corrective lenses.

Isaiah 45:2 “I will go before you and make the crooked places straight.”

**Vs. 7** “Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD, and turn away from evil.”

Here we have yet another, other worldly, worldly unpopular, call to humility. We are hardwired to think we are right. To trust how we feel. To believe our perspective must be true. We love to surround ourselves with people who will affirm what we think, feel and see.

Isaiah 5:21 “Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, and shrewd in their own sight!”

Fear God, not man. Turn from evil and from self. It will bring healing and refreshment to your flesh and bones.

Vs. 9-10

Honor the LORD with wealth and you will be blessed. Who changed the subject to money? Maybe money is one of the more difficult things with which to trust the LORD completely. No one can serve two masters. Honor God with your firstfruits. Money matters: how you make it, how you spend it, how you save it, and how you give it. Honor the LORD with the best of what you have and you will be blessed.

## **2. My son, do not despise the LORD's discipline (vv. 11-20)**

Vs. 11-12

Consider the subject of discipline and your posture towards it.

- What would cause you to despise discipline? To reject it, spurn it, disdain it?

Humanity hates discipline because of the fall. Since Genesis 3, mankind has sought to be their own god; "gods" do not receive discipline from others, for they are supreme over themselves. Yet we know we are frauds. When we are exposed to be lacking, when we are caught in sin, we feel shame and seek to hide. We buck against discipline from our parents, civil authorities, and from God. Yet to reject God's discipline is to reject his love and his blessing.

Proverbs 12:1 "Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but he who hates reproof is stupid."

Vs. 13-20

Blessed is the one who finds wisdom...

Nothing you can desire can compare with her. That is an extraordinary statement. The wisdom of God is greater than anything else of value in the world. Anything. At what level do you believe that?

Wisdom is a tree of life (vs.18). From Genesis to Revelation the tree of life is symbolic of God's presence and provision for spiritual and physical life. God's wisdom is this type of blessing. Yet we resist. Remember his love and provision. My son, do not despise the LORD's discipline.

## **3. My son, do not lose sight of wisdom (vv. 21-35)**

Vs. 21-23

Wisdom is life for your soul, an adornment for your neck, a secure way.

In the face of sudden disaster, and the disasters do come, we do not have to fear as those who do not know God. In the face of nightmares, and calamity: Let the LORD be your confidence. Run with confidence to God, he will keep you safe. His name is a strong tower.

Vs. 27-32

Four commands applying wisdom to our relationship with neighbors.

1. Do not withhold good from those whom it is due.
2. Do not plan evil against your neighbor.
3. Do not contend with someone who has done you no harm.
4. Do not envy a man of violence, or a devious person.

Consider:

- What is the attraction for God's people to doing these things?
- What would incline your heart toward them?

Vs. 35 "The wise will inherit honor, but fools get disgrace."

Inheritance. Something given to us. We did not create it, earn it, or even deserve it. The estate of another given to us. This inheritance of honor is only ours in Christ Jesus.

The person who chooses to be wise in his own eyes, trusting in self, is deemed a fool. The fool inherits disgrace. Hebrew is literally *shame*. Let all be warned from being a fool. Trust in Jesus Christ today, find salvation, and an eternal inheritance of honor.