

Day 367 - TUESDAY: February 13th

Proverbs 3

Proverbs 3:1-35 NKJV

My son, do not forget my law, But let your heart keep my commands; For length of days and long life And peace they will add to you. Let not mercy and truth forsake you; Bind them around your neck, Write them on the tablet of your heart, And so find favor and high esteem In the sight of God and man. 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. Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and depart from evil. It will be health to your flesh, And strength to your bones. Honor the LORD with your possessions, And with the firstfruits of all your increase; So your barns will be filled with plenty, And your vats will overflow with new wine. My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, Nor detest His correction; For whom the LORD loves He corrects, Just as a father the son in whom he delights. 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. Length of days is in her right hand, In her left hand riches and honor. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, And all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her, And happy are all who retain her. The LORD by wisdom founded the earth; By understanding He established the heavens; By His knowledge the depths were broken up, And clouds drop down the dew. My son, let them not

depart from your eyes—Keep sound wisdom and discretion; So they will be life to your soul And grace to your neck. Then you will walk safely in your way, And your foot will not stumble. When you lie down, you will not be afraid; Yes, you will lie down and your sleep will be sweet. Do not be afraid of sudden terror, Nor of trouble from the wicked when it comes; For the LORD will be your confidence, And will keep your foot from being caught. Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, When it is in the power of your hand to do so. Do not say to your neighbor, "Go, and come back, And tomorrow I will give it," When you have it with you. Do not devise evil against your neighbor, For he dwells by you for safety's sake. Do not strive with a man without cause, If he has done you no harm. Do not envy the oppressor, And choose none of his ways; For the perverse person is an abomination to the LORD, But His secret counsel is with the upright. The curse of the LORD is on the house of the wicked, But He blesses the home of the just. Surely He scorns the scornful, But gives grace to the humble. The wise shall inherit glory, But shame shall be the legacy of fools.

Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG reading program states: "The third exhortation of the book's prologue (Proverbs 3:1-35) begins with strong encouragement to obey God's commandments (verse 1) and adopt his character of "mercy and truth" (verse 3; compare Psalm 100:5)—the "grace and truth" that was also the character of Jesus Christ (John 1:14). "The command to 'bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart' [Proverbs 3:3; compare Proverbs 6:20-21] further indicates that the character of the student is in view rather than just his behavior. Some have

suggested that the binding of love to the neck means that it is here a kind of necklace that beautifies the individual. But the parallel between 'neck' and 'heart' here implies that fidelity is more than an ornament to the neck [as in Proverbs 1:9]. The neck houses the throat which, in Hebrew anthropology, is the very life of the person. Love and faithfulness are to become part of the student's heart and life" (*New American Commentary*, note on verses 1-4).

Verses 5-8 then give us crucial aspects of true wisdom. A person could know a lot on a human level and yet not truly "get it" in the whole scheme of things. Indeed, this characterizes the wisdom and understanding of the world in general. It is critical to not ultimately trust in oneself. Rather, we must look first and foremost to God for proper guidance in life. We must overcome the tendency to see ourselves as the final arbiter of what is right and instead develop a proper fear of God, which is the beginning of true knowledge and wisdom. This will be to our ultimate good. While verse 8 can be understood to include mental and spiritual health, it is interesting that it speaks specifically of physical health benefits, as does Proverbs 4:22.

Verses 9-10 tell us to put our money where our mouth is, so to speak. This is a real test of how much we are willing to put God first in our lives and look to Him to take care of us. How we choose to spend our money and our time tells a great deal about our character. If we do our part, God will richly bless us. This is not a promise of immediate material riches but of God providing us with all our needs. Of course, in His Kingdom we will inherit all things.

We are then told to accept correction or discipline from God in verses 11-12, a passage cited in Hebrews 12:5-6. "While the idea

of punishment is certainly present (cf. Job 5:17-18 and 2 Samuel 7:14), 'discipline' primarily involves teaching or training rather than punishment for wrongdoing. It is analogous to military training, in which, although the threat of punishment is present, even stern discipline is not necessarily retribution for offenses. Hardship and correction are involved, however, which are always hard to accept" (NAC, note on Proverbs 3:5-12).

Of course, God is not an uncaring drill sergeant. As these verses emphasize, discipline is "exercised in a family setting. The emotion conveyed is not anger or disgust, but love and active concern. A father disciplines his child to help her grow into a praiseworthy adult. Just so God disciplines those who trust Him to help us grow toward moral and spiritual maturity. Bible history and proverbs both demonstrate that at times punishment, a 'rod of correction' (Proverbs 29:15) is the best way to show love when people will not respond to verbal guidance. The important thing to remember, as these verses emphasize, is that when God disciplines it is because of, and with a continuing attitude of, love" (Lawrence Richards, *The Bible Reader's Companion*, 1991, note on Proverbs 3:11-12). Discipline here, it should be further noted, also has the sense of instruction—training, as mentioned above. In a hymn to wisdom in verses 13-18 it is stressed that wisdom is the true wealth to be sought after (compare Proverbs 2:4; Proverbs 8:10-11). Through taking hold of it and holding on to it, we experience "a tree of life" (Proverbs 3:18)—which some see as merely denoting enjoyment and sustenance but which probably harkens back to the original tree of life in the sense of a way to return to paradise and escape the curse of death on mankind. True wisdom from God will indeed lead to eternal life and bliss.

Verses 19-20, appended to the hymn to wisdom, present wisdom's role in creation, anticipating a fuller exposition in Proverbs 8:22-31. "The main point there and here is that whoever abandons wisdom runs against the very structure by which the world was made" (*NAC*, note on verses 19-20)—and by which it is ruled on a cosmic level, the breaking up of the depths referring to the great Flood. "The world is both nurturing and dangerous. Yet creation itself is under the hand of God, and he governs according to wisdom. Wisdom is therefore essential for survival" (same note).

Through God we can and should avoid living in fear (verses 23-26). We are to help others when we can and not seek to harm (verses 27-30). And we are to reject the ways of oppression and foolish scorn, being instead just and humble (verses 31-35).

Verse 34 is quoted in James 4:6.

The latter half of this chapter has parallels with the first half of the next chapter." [END]

Verses 5 & 6 – A scripture that has been a long-time memory scripture and well worth our time memorizing and meditating on. The NKJV translates this verse "In all your ways acknowledge Him" Out of the 947 times this Hebrew word is used, only 6 times in KJV is it translated "acknowledge" The vast majority of the time it's translated "know" (or "to know", or "known"). The Young's Literal translation says, "In all thy ways know thou Him..."

By spending time studying His word, meditating on it, we come to trust God, to put our way of thinking aside and to more and more really know God and allow Him to lead our lives.

Verse 24 – There is so much in this world and in our lives we can worry about, but if we truly work diligently to follow God and

pursue modeling ourselves after Jesus Christ, God desires that we put aside anxiety and stress and trust that He will help us in our lives and provide what we need. A whole sermon could be given on this topic, as it has many facets, but part of us having faith is believing that God desires for His faithful to have peace and rest, but we must do our part to focus on seeking the Kingdom with all our heart, body and mind and redirect our mind away from the stresses and anxieties of this world/life.

Verse 27 – I'm working toward starting a new sermon series in the next week or so on "Christian Boundaries". This scripture is another important scripture within what is our responsibility and what is not our responsibility as Christians. It caveats this responsibility to "do good" to others with what is within our "power" to do. This is not about giving when you don't have it to give, or giving in a situation that is not appropriate. However, there are times that God expects that we help someone in their time of need when it is within our ability, capacity and means, etc... to do so.