

Wisdom: Proverbs 3:1-12

Over the next few weeks, we are going to spend some time looking at one of the great Old Testament books, *The Proverbs of Solomon*. Now you may be thinking... What is a proverb? The word itself means “to be like” and because of this, Proverbs offer us a series of simple comparisons that teach us fundamental truths about life. These short, popular sayings, when understood, communicate practical truths that can help us live a righteous life. The book of Proverbs is one of the books written as Old Testament Poetry, King Solomon is the author of three of these: Proverbs, which deals with “wisdom”, Ecclesiastes, which deals with “folly”, and Song of Solomon, which deals with “love”. What you’ll find is Proverbs filled with comparisons between wisdom and folly. Wisdom, of course being instruction, knowledge, understanding, discretion, and obedience. Folly, then is the opposite of all these things. If you spend some time doing in-depth study of this great book, you’ll discover also that Proverbs provides practical advice on how man deals with God, with himself, and with others.

The key verse of Proverbs is found immediately in the first chapter at the end of Solomon’s opening statement about his purposes in writing this book. Let’s look at this opening statement and see what that purpose is. **Read Proverbs 1:1-7**. The first six verses give us a list of valuable things that can be taken from Solomon’s instruction, and verse seven, the key verse, explains the reasoning behind our reading and attempting understanding of this book. In the Old Testament, “fear” was not used to convey the idea of being afraid of something but was used to indicate the idea of “awe” and “reverence.” To fear the Lord was an expression of loyalty to Him and faithfulness to His promises. To fear the Lord was to trust Him and to obey His commandments. If you observe how “fear of God” is conveyed throughout the entirety of the Old Testament, you find that those who “fear” God often enjoy God’s protection, His love, His wisdom, and His blessings.

Solomon is one of the wisest people to ever live. He asked God to give him great understanding about the things of life, and God granted that to him. We know this because it is recorded for us in **1 Kings 4:29-34**. Proverbs provide us with 513 of the 3,000 Solomon spoke. Therefore, we should know with confidence that his words can be trusted, and we should not be afraid to listen to their words and follow their advice.

Let me now draw your attention to Proverbs 3:1-12, where we’ll discover four points of emphasis on the value of wisdom. **Read Proverbs 3:1-12**.

Solomon wants us to understand the importance of seeking truth, remembering the truth we find, and being careful not to forsake those truths as we go through life. The key to all this is the heart. Not from a physical, blood pumping perspective, but from the parallel spiritual perspective. The Bible teaches us that the heart is the connector of the mind, the will, and understanding. If we leave God out of the heart, then we are destined to end up with a heart exactly as Jeremiah says, “*deceitful above all things, and desperately sick.*”

We are then called in verses 5-6 of our text to “trust” God with everything. Trust God as our Father. Trust Jesus as our Savior. Trust the Holy Spirit as our guide. Solomon says in these verses that we are to sincerely and fully surrender to God and trust Him to help us overcome the wickedness of the heart. We are to have a faith that doesn’t waver. We are to have unwavering faith in the salvation of His Son. We are without fail, to trust the Holy Spirit with every piece of our heart. Then in verses 7-8, we are reminded of the importance of avoiding sin. Has it occurred to you that there is a reason for the way men and women behave today? There is a reason why they rob, rape, and murder. There is a reason why they lie, cheat and steal. Let’s read what Paul

writes to the believers at Rome: **Read Romans 3:10-18** People live like the devil because they do not fear God! Second, there is the companion truth that says if men fear God like they ought then they will "...depart from evil..." like they ought. They are inseparable!

Solomon's next piece of advice is often skipped over quickly because it speaks of how we deal with our wealth, or how we deal with our possessions. Since he just spoke of our need to "trust" God, then we need to understand that everything we have, is a gift from God. And, whether we have little or a lot, all of it, Solomon says, is to be used in a manner that honors God. The Bible teaches us that we are to give our best to God, "the firstfruits", not the seconds, or the thirds. We are to give generously and with a cheerful heart. What is the result of this according to God, through Solomon? When we faithfully honor God through our cheerful and generous giving, then He will be faithful to bless us with abundance.

Finally, Solomon reminds us of the importance of discipline in our lives. We are going to sin. Remember, Jesus saves us from the punishment of being judged for our sin, but that doesn't give us permission to sin freely, as we feel like it. Solomon says the wise person learns to recognize their draw to sin and accepts it when the Father corrects that action. God's discipline in your life is for your heart. Think of it as Him installing a pacemaker. When the ole ticker isn't functioning as it should. When your heart is searching for that which pleases you instead of that which pleases the Father, then you must allow Him to perform the necessary shock it takes to get you back in rhythm. **Read Hebrews 12:7-13.**