

## **Proverbs 3:1-12**

### **Intro/Orientation to Proverbs:**

#### **Wisdom in the age of Folly.**

Proverbs chapter 26 warns us that a proverb is not automatically effective, as it can be misused. A proverb in the mouth of a fool can be as useless as a lame man's legs (26:7) Or as dangerous as a thorny branching the hand of a drunk (26:9). The key here is the phrase *in the mouth of fools*. Within chapters 1-9, fools are those who reject the starting point of the fear of the Lord (1:7), who keep choosing the path of folly not the way of wisdom (9:1-6, 13-18) and as we saw last week those who refuse to allow their character to be shaped wisdom (2:1-11). In other words, a proverb is not fully useful unless its hearer or reader has made the fundamental and ongoing choices called for in chapters 1-9.

Unlike some promises found in the Bible, like God will forgive the sins of those who trust in Jesus, which is always true and applies to all circumstances. A proverb is not intended to cover every situation and often needs to be fleshed out by other perspectives. A proverb is, however, still true, even if it does not always apply. It is up to the reader to balance the various perspectives of different proverbs on the same theme like money, speech or work.

Last week Andrew began to reveal the picture Proverbs paint of the good life in its daily patterns and activities. Proverbs assumes that people are free to choose their course of action in life and are being urged to choose the way of wisdom. While a moral code undergirds the book of Proverbs, its real intent is to train a person to actively form character, to show what life is really like and how best to cope with and manage it.

### **Outline**

#### **Proverbs 3:1-12 “Trusting To Become Trustworthy”**

##### **Intro:**

Proverbs 3 emphasizes a father's concern that his son live a life of trusting the Lord. Coupled with this is his desire that his son be trustworthy—both to man and God. The person who lives a life trusting the Lord will find much treasure in God's accompanying promises.

In short Proverbs 3:1-12 focuses our attention on love to God which is expressed in keeping his commands (3), trusting his leading (5-8), honoring him with gratitude for all of our possessions (9-10), and accepting his correction (11-12).” Let’s read it...

## **I. The Command to Trust Vs. 1-4 (Slide #1)**

A wise father exhorting his son to trust God. But as we will see, such a life of trust in God produces a life that’s trustworthy. One interesting note; in the odd numbered verses we find the outline of godly character, while the even numbered verses draw attention to the outcomes that will follow.

**Vs. 1**—The exhortation is straightforward: the son must not the commandments of God that the father has taught him. Commentators have noted the parallels between these four and opening four verses of Deuteronomy 6 (read 6:1-3).

-People are responsible for choosing to remember (to bring to mind the great truths about God and act accordingly), and held accountable for choosing to forget.

-A key to not forgetting is to internalize the teachers commands and put them into action. This a matter of the heart, the drive or inner workings of a person. This is a heart that is alive, fleshly, not made of stone. (Ezk. 36:26)

**Vs. 2**—If the son will not forget God’s commands, a glorious promise can be his (read vs 2).

-Length of days, years of life, and peace will be added to you. The phrase *years of life* is found only in Proverbs and refers life in the fullest sense, a life that is enjoyable and worthwhile. The word peace (shalom) is a rich and complex word in Hebrew thinking. It can refer to well-being, the absence of conflict, even material prosperity. In other words, rich in health and relationship to others—a picture of a life healthy in every way.

**Vs.3**—The very next command is to embrace steadfast love and faithfulness

-*Steadfast love* (hesed) speaks of loyal and merciful kindness, a strong commitment to the well-being of the other in relationship.

-*Faithfulness*, has a core sense of truth and here has sense of a firm, constant commitment to the truth of his commands.

-Perhaps the reference to hanging them on your neck speaks of an outward obedience, a public adopting of these characteristics, wearing them with boldness. Balanced with internalization as well, engraving them permanently on the tablets of your heart. They are to be made an enduring part of your character.

-These twin virtues are so crucial to a wisdom shaped character that the son is not to let them forsake you.

**Vs.4**—The result of adopting these virtues into your character is a life of favor/grace and good success.

-In the sight of God and man. The term success appears to mean reputation or regard in their eyes. Trusting in his commands you become a trustworthy person.

## **II. The Consequences of Trust (Slide #2)**

### **A) Trust God in your Trials vs. 5-6 (Slide #3)**

-These are some of the most well-known verses in scripture. We often find help here when we are faced with the trials of making decisions, that on the surface, are difficult to make (illustrate).

**Vs.5**—Urges the son to have a wholehearted trust in God rather than being self-reliant. Our trust must be entire. No double mindedness is permitted.

-This dependence on God is the obvious corollary to having your foundation built on the fear of the Lord, and again is an issue of character leading to action.

-To trust the Lord entirely means that we do not lean on our own understanding. In other words, Proverbs encourages understanding, but it must be informed and shaped by God's Word. Worldly understanding is excluded.

**Vs. 6**—Before outlining the consequence of trusting we have one more command/action to engage.

-We are to live out our relationship with God in our actions, to act consistently with trusting God in all things, no compartments, no boundaries. Desire his presence in all your ways.

-The second half of this verse says that he will make our paths straight, morally straight. His promise is one of guidance, of entrance onto the narrow road that leads to real life. It's not describing a smooth or easy path, or one free from obstacles and hardship, but rather a life that is righteous, morally straight and worthwhile.

## **B) Trust God in your Temptations vs. 7-8 (Slide #4)**

**Vs.7**—A call to humility

-In order to be humble, one must respect God as God. We must be dependent on God's eyes not our own, we must trust someone else.

-If humility is at least a prerequisite for the fear of the Lord, then rejecting evil is its necessary corollary. This is the flip side to fearing God—making a break with the alternative sources of loyalty. Here is your call to action...do something!

**Vs.8**—Sin and evil suck the life out of you, run from it and you be healed and refreshed.

-“Flesh” is, literally, a reference to the umbilical cord. It speaks of that which nourishes life. “Refreshment” could be translated “moisture”. Healthy bone are ones that have not dried up.

-The promise here is of a life that is healthy. Real life.

## **C) Trust God with your Wealth vs 9-10 (Slide #5)**

**Vs.9**—The faithful use of material possessions leads to further material blessing.

-Perhaps this is the area where many of us struggle the most, trusting God with our finances.

-Giving to the local church is honoring God. It is helpful to move from a mindset of ownership to one of stewardship. Are we being trustworthy with what he has entrusted to us?

-The besetting danger of wealth in any generation is that it can lead to self-sufficiency. Thee giving of first fruits is an antidote to that malady. This giving is a thankful acknowledgement to God for his provision, it is worship.

**Vs.10**—The material prosperity is not linked with the size of a monetary gift but with character—honoring the Lord.

-Is this really a promise for more wealth?

-Truly honoring God would entail keeping your life free from the love of money.

## **D) Trust God in your Training vs. 11-12 (Slide #6)**

**Vs.11** – These verses address the situation when the prosperity, life and success of verses 1-10 do not seem to be happening.

-Discipline and reproof, while both of these may refer to setbacks and obstacles, the focus is on using these sufferings to redirect or shape a person's life.

- Don't under react and don't over react. Despising and growing weary would prevent us from learning what we needed to.

-Honor God in the midst of adversity. David and Jesus.

**Vs.12** – This is purposeful correction with the goal of bringing about change. God loves you.

-Hebrews 12:11 and 5:8