

WALKING ON THE PATH OF PEACE (Fathers Day)

Morning! How do you greet people? What are some examples? Some greetings we use are morning, how are you, and what's up. Did you know that when greeting people in Hawaii, you need to make sure you don't laugh above certain decibels... You have to keep it to "a-low-ha"..... that one was for all the Dads in the room!

A popular Hebrew greeting was saying Shalom. But it is more than a greeting. Shalom is the Hebrew word for peace and prosperity. So when people greeted each other by saying Shalom, they were speaking peace and prosperity into each other's lives. When we usually greet people, we ask a question; but when they would greet people, they would be saying a statement. Even Jesus talks about this in Luke 10:5-6, "**5 'When you enter a house, first say, 'Peace to this house.' 6 If someone who promotes peace is there, your peace will rest on them; if not, it will return to you.'**" God wants us to have shalom in our lives.

Welcome to **Week 3 of KINGS AND KINGDOMS** as we are in our 4th section of our **Through The Bible Series**. We have been following God's Redemptive Plan as He has revealed it through His chosen people Israel and we have now entered the period in Israel's history where they will be ruled by a series of Kings. **By the time we are through with this section we are going to see why it is that God was hesitant to set a king over His people in the first place.** In fact, God's desire has been all along that Israel would look to Him as their king. That He would be their ultimate source of peace, ultimate source of shalom. And what makes this so relevant to us today is that God wants to be our ultimate source of peace as well.

So as we jump in this morning, **we'll be looking at some godly steps of wisdom from Proverbs that'll help us walk the path of peace that God desires for us.** So if you will turn to **Proverbs 3**, I am going to **PRAY** for us and then we will BEGIN.

The book of Proverbs is written by King Solomon and others. King Solomon is known as one of the wisest men to ever live. 1 King 4:29-31 says "**29 God gave Solomon wisdom and very great insight, and a breadth of understanding as measureless as the sand on the seashore. 30 Solomon's wisdom was greater than the wisdom of all the people of the East, and greater than all the wisdom of Egypt. 31 He was wiser than anyone else, including Ethan the Ezrahite—wiser than Heman, Kalkol and Darda, the sons of Mahol. And his fame spread to all the surrounding nations.**" Last week we had talked about how Solomon gained great wisdom from God and we briefly mentioned that Solomon wasn't perfect despite being the wisest man. This week we will look at that some more.

Solomon had experienced highs and lows with his relationship with the LORD. There were moments that he was faithful to God and moments he was unfaithful to God. He allowed himself to be swayed away from God in moments of unfaithfulness. He learned a lot about life as a result. In Proverbs, Solomon is passing on his wisdom from God and life experiences to his son and whoever else would read it.

Proverbs 3:1-2 says “My son, do not forget my teaching, but keep my commands in your heart, **2** for they will prolong your life many years and bring you peace and prosperity.” Keeping God’s commands in our heart will prolong our lives. Solomon remembers how God told him this truth in 1 Kings 3:14, “**14** And if you walk in obedience to me and keep my decrees and commands as David your father did, I will give you a long life.”

Also, by keeping these commands in our heart, they’ll bring us **shalom**. Remember that shalom is a type of peace and welfare that is complete and sound. In a world full of chaos, war, depression, anxiety, inflation, corruption, sickness, sin, evil, etc... Can we say that it’s this kind of peace and welfare that people in this world are trying to find? Is this the kind of peace and welfare that you are trying to find today?

According to Proverbs 3:1-2, the teaching we find in scripture will prolong our lives and bring us peace that is complete and sound. It is similar to what the Apostle Paul says in Philippians 4:9, “Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.” God’s peace will be with us if we keep His commands in our hearts and put them into practice. **Peace from God requires obedience.**

As we will see in more detail, there are benefits of following God’s plan for our lives from Proverbs 3. The earlier we understand this, the better our lives will be. For the individual that chooses God’s path, they have promised peace and prosperity. Not just monetarily, but physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

As we read through Proverbs 3:1-10, I want us to see there are 3 godly steps of wisdom to take, if we want to prolong our lives and have the peace of God.

The first step is this, **1. Walk on God’s Path**

Proverbs 3:3-4, “Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart. **4** Then you will win favor and a good name in the sight of God and man.” God desires for us to walk in love and faithfulness. To bind love and faithfulness around our necks and write them on our hearts, or in other words to be committed to love and faithfulness. We shouldn’t just be loving and faithful when it is convenient or when we feel like it. King Solomon understood this especially after experiencing the consequences of being unfaithful and still experiencing God’s grace.

We should live a lifestyle of love and faithfulness. Jesus tells us in Luke 16:10 (ESV), “One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much.” We are called to be faithful in the small things and the big things. Not to cut corners, but to be faithful. Not only are we to be faithful, but we are to be loving.

Jesus tells us that love is the greatest commandment in Matthew 22:34-40, “**34** Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. **35** One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: **36** “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the

Law?" **37** Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' **38** This is the first and greatest commandment. **39** And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' **40** All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments." Jesus said that all of God's Word and commands hang on loving God and loving people.

And if that wasn't enough, the Apostle Paul said this in Romans 13:10, "Love does no harm to a neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law." Love really is the fulfillment of the law. Jesus also tells us in John 13:34-35, "**34** 'A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. **35** By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.'" As followers of Jesus, we will be known as Jesus' followers by how we love. And He calls us to love one another as He loved us. If we aren't loving one another, it's as if we are telling the world around us that we don't belong to Jesus. But if we are loving one another, then we are showing the world that we do belong to Jesus.

However, did you see what scripture says will happen if we commit to love and faithfulness? Proverbs 3:4, "Then you will win favor and a good name in the sight of God and man." King Solomon had gained favor and good name in the sight of God, Israel, and the surrounding nations, so he saw for himself how important it was to commit to love and faithfulness.

We will gain favor and a good reputation before God and other people, if we commit to love and faithfulness. And we wonder why sometimes people reject the church or reject God. Sometimes it's because they haven't seen the love and faithfulness we are called to live out. I don't know about you, but I am more inclined to trust and respect people who are loving and faithful to me and others around me. We don't have to look over our backs if we commit to love and faithfulness. God will watch our backs. For a king, like Solomon, this was crucial, but for us this is crucial too. Could you imagine how things might be different if every Christian committed to love and faithfulness every single day, rather than getting caught up in the ways of this world?

But King Solomon had things competing for his attention and love. Things like money, power, and women. All these things competed with his love for God. Even with all the wisdom in the world, wisdom is useless if we don't have the love of God directing it. Also, wisdom without execution is not really wisdom, it's just knowledge. Jesus tells us in John 14:15, "If you love me, keep my commands." So if we truly love God, then we'll obey Him and execute wisdom.

Imagine if we were selfless and loyal to God. We would be more inclined to meet people's needs, whether spiritual, physical, mental, financial, etc. The Apostle Paul is quoted in Acts 20:35 saying, "In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" Jesus says it is better to give than to receive. Are you known as a giver or a taker? Let's be known as givers rather than takers. Let's be known as people who love and obey God.

However, we see Solomon lose sight of faithfulness and love towards God in 1 Kings 11:1-2, "King Solomon, however, loved many foreign women besides Pharaoh's daughter—Moabites,

Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians and Hittites. **2** They were from nations about which the Lord had told the Israelites, "You must not intermarry with them, because they will surely turn your hearts after their gods." Nevertheless, Solomon held fast to them in love." How many times do we have a "nevertheless" for what God tells us to do? We know what God is calling us to do, but nevertheless... we do what we want to do instead, and disobey God. (expound)

And we see the result of Solomon's disobedience and lack of love toward the LORD is more disobedience and lack of love in 1 Kings 11:4, "**4** As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods, and his heart was not fully devoted to the Lord his God, as the heart of David his father had been."

As a result, the LORD became angry and said because of Solomon's attitude and unfaithfulness that He would tear the kingdom away from Solomon during his son's lifetime. 1 Kings 11:11-13, "**11** So the Lord said to Solomon, "Since this is your attitude and you have not kept my covenant and my decrees, which I commanded you, I will most certainly tear the kingdom away from you and give it to one of your subordinates. **12** Nevertheless, for the sake of David your father, I will not do it during your lifetime. I will tear it out of the hand of your son. **13** Yet I will not tear the whole kingdom from him, but will give him one tribe for the sake of David my servant and for the sake of Jerusalem, which I have chosen." The LORD also raises up adversaries against Solomon and Israel during the rest of Solomon's life, but I want to point out that God gives some grace toward Solomon for the sake of David and the sake of Jerusalem. And God still keeps together the plan of bringing forth the Messiah through the line of David, despite Solomon's unfaithfulness and disobedience. It's important to also point out that our sin doesn't negate the promises God has already given us.

So the first step in Proverbs 3 we see is to **Walk on God's Path**. The second step we see in Proverbs 3 is **2. Trust in God's Providence**

The word **providence** means the protective care of God. We are called to trust in God and His protective care. Proverbs 3:5-6 says this, "**Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; 6 in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.**" Solomon understood this because he saw how trusting in the Lord led to the Lord making his paths straight, and how not trusting the Lord led to Solomon's paths becoming rocky.

Sometimes it can be scary trusting in the Lord rather than our own understanding because we often think we know better than God. The problem is we forget that God loves us, wants what's best for us, and knows all things. Oftentimes we operate based on what we see, think, and feel; rather than trust God. Now I am not saying we are to throw away our common sense or ignore what we see, think, or feel. What I am saying is that we should trust the Lord more, because sometimes what we see, think, or feel might not be the reality of our situations. Feelings are not facts. However, there are times we do need to be aware of what we see, think, and feel. However, scripture doesn't say to ignore our own understanding, but it says don't lean on our own understanding. Because we are human. We aren't perfect. God is. We are to lean on God and His understanding, not on ourselves and our own understanding.

Not only are we to trust the Lord, but we are to submit our ways to Him. The Hebrew word for submit here is **yada** which has a deeper meaning of submit as in to acknowledge. So when it says to submit to the Lord, it means to acknowledge Him as Lord. To accept the truth of who He is in all we do. Whether we are in a Sunday service, reading the Bible, at work, buying things, hanging out with friends or family, helping others, or whatever it is we are doing; we are to acknowledge the Lord. We are to submit to Him. There are a lot of people out there who call Him Lord, but aren't submitting to Him as Lord. Like a guy calling their girlfriend wifey, but without making the commitment to make her his actual wife.

How would your day to day life change if you acknowledged the Lord in all you do? Truth is, He is still the Almighty, all powerful, all knowing, all loving, Creator of the Heavens and the earth whether we acknowledge Him or not. If you were to acknowledge Him in all you do, would you remember to trust Him more? Would you better remember His promises? Would you commit more to love and faithfulness?

Sometimes the reason we struggle with trusting God and following Him is because we are forgetful. We forget who God is and get caught up in the busyness and struggles of life. This is why it is important to pray, read scripture, gather with other believers, and worship God. To stay connected with God and acknowledge Him even when life gets chaotic.

So, we are to trust the Lord and submit to Him. If we do, scripture says God will make our paths straight. Who is tired of their path being chaotic and all over the place? Who needs the Lord to make their paths straight? We can trust God with our lives because it's His name that's on the line. Psalm 23:3, "**he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake.**" The Lord will guide us along the right path, for His Name sake. For His glory. God deserves all the glory for our lives. **We can trust Him because we matter to Him.** Psalm 23:6, "**Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.**" God's goodness and love will follow us all the days of our life. We can trust Him. If we trust Him and submit to Him, then He will make our paths straight. He'll direct your path. And God's straight path does not always look like the path we choose on our own. We need to abide in Him and let Him guide us.

Continuing on in Proverbs 3:7-8, "**Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and shun evil. 8 This will bring health to your body and nourishment to your bones.**" Do not be wise in your own eyes, or in other words, be humble. You do not know everything. You are not all knowing like God is. We should all strive to learn and be wise, but a part of being wise is understanding that God knows more than we do.

Also, don't let what you already know make you become prideful in yourself. We are called to be humble and fear the Lord, and to shun evil. Do you have a healthy respect for the Lord? As Proverbs 1:7 says, "**The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction.**" The reason that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of both knowledge and wisdom is that the moral life begins with reverence and humility before the Maker and

Redeemer, the Lord. If you are truly humble before God and truly respect Him, then you'll be more inclined to trust Him and His care.

We are also called to shun evil. Solomon learned the importance of shunning evil, especially after he gave in a lot to his wives by going after other gods. We aren't supposed to play around with evil or even flirt with it. We are called to shun it. To depart from it. How often are we tempted to do evil things? Some of us in the room might say they aren't tempted to do evil. However if we acknowledge that sin is evil and wrong before God, then our answer might change. How often are we tempted to sin? Listen to what Charles Stanley says about getting close to sin: "Compromise is the precursor to entanglement and enslavement to sin. Compromise seems easy at first, but its long term consequences are severe. what starts as a minor concession can become a major problem later."

If you have sinned, let me remind you what 1 John 1:9 says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." Yes, the Lord is faithful and just to forgive us of our sins. And to purify us from all unrighteousness. Because of what Jesus did at the cross. He died for our sins and rose from the dead to bring us life. 1 John 2:1 says, "My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One." God calls us to not sin. But if we do, we have Jesus who died for our sins and rose from the dead. That's a great reason to get back up after committing sin. To turn to the Lord, confess our sin, and strive for holiness. God's grace isn't a license to sin, but rather is a safety net for when we do. We should be striving to shun sin in our lives. To shun evil. If we don't, then we will succumb to more sin and evil just like Solomon had in 1 Kings 11:4, "4 As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods, and his heart was not fully devoted to the Lord his God, as the heart of David his father had been."

Let's look at what scripture promises if we are humble, fear the Lord, and shun evil. Proverbs 3:8, "This will bring health to your body and nourishment to your bones." Scripture says there are physical benefits to being humble, fearing the Lord, and shunning evil. It says that doing these things will bring health to our bodies and nourishment to our bones. I just want to quickly make the point that God cares about our physical well-being just like He cares about our spiritual well-being. God cares about our well-being as a whole.

So far we have discussed how the first step in Proverbs 3:1-10 is to **Walk on God's Path**. The second step we see is **Trust in God's Providence**. And the third and final step we see is to **3. Trust God with all Your Possessions**

Proverbs 3:9-10 says, "9 Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops; 10 then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine." God calls us to honor Him with our wealth. This means we should use our wealth for righteous, just, and fair purposes. This also means that we should be honoring the Lord not only with what we tithe, but with the rest of what we have.

Would you say you honor the Lord with your wealth or do you honor yourself with your wealth? It can be tempting to use our wealth and resources for selfish gains. Especially in the materialistic culture we live in, where everyone is trying to impress everyone with what they make and what they have. As followers of Jesus, we should be using our finances and resources differently and for different purposes. Now there is nothing wrong with buying the essentials like food, housing, water, etc. Or even treating ourselves sometimes. But as followers of Jesus we should be using our finances, resources, and time to honor God and to bless others.

CS Lewis says this about generosity with our finances in his book, *Mere Christianity*: "I do not believe one can settle how much we ought to give. I am afraid the only safe rule is to give more than we can spare. In other words, if our expenditure on comforts, luxuries, amusements, etc, is up to the standard common among those with the same income as our own, we are probably giving away too little. If our charities do not at all pinch or hamper us, I should say they are too small. There ought to be things we should like to do and cannot do because our charitable expenditure excludes them."

Let me ask this. How do you use your time (usage, allotment), talent (giftedness), and treasure (finances, resources) for the Kingdom of God? One way is by serving on a Vteam on Sundays. The more volunteers the better! Another way is by giving to a missionary or Christian organization that strives to spread the gospel. Another way is making time to share the gospel with lost co-workers, friends, or family members. You could also pray for people when they open up to you about a struggling situation and speak life into the situation. You could look for opportunities that we as the church can meet needs in our communities. There are many ways we can use our time, talents, and treasures for the Kingdom of God. Remember the 5% challenge we mentioned?

5% Challenge

- 1% of your day invested in God time
 - (15 minutes a day in the Word and Prayer)
- 1% of your week invested in gather time
 - (1.5 hours a week in a worship gathering with other believers)
- 1% of your month invested in group time
 - (7 hours a month in community with other believers)
- 2% of your year invested in go time
 - (7 days a year in intentionally sharing in God's mission locally and globally)

If we honor the Lord with our wealth and resources, with our firstfruits, then Proverbs 3:10 says, **"10 then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine."** God will have us covered. We'll be prosperous if we honor the Lord with our wealth. I'm not saying that we should give to God so that God will give back to us. And I am not saying God is going to make you filthy rich. **What I am saying is, if we strive to honor God with our finances and resources, then He'll have us covered in all we need.** As Psalm 23:1 says, **"The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing."** With the Lord, we have all we need. Whether the Lord is giving you an overflowing amount of resources or not, we should be overflowing with our

generosity. Because God is with us and He has been so good to us. Also, don't think you need an overflowing vat, to have a never ending supply. Just like how the widow who fed the prophet Elijah with all she had left. She didn't have an overflowing vat, but she did have a never ending supply. Because of God. God will provide you with all you need to accomplish what He is calling you to do.

So as the **Worship Comes Back Up, let's go to the Lord in prayer and process through some questions.**

Invitation:

The real path to shalom, which again is peace, is paved through these 3 godly steps of wisdom. **Walk on God's Path, Trust in God's Providence, and Trust God with all Your Possessions.**

Are you walking on God's path? Are you committing to faithfulness and love? The more we walk on God's path, the more we will be like Him. More like Jesus.

Are you trusting in God's providence? In His protective care? Do you trust God and acknowledge Him in all you do?

Are you trusting God with all your possessions? Would you say you honor the Lord with your wealth or do you honor yourself with your wealth?

Remember what Proverbs 3:1-2 says, "My son, do not forget my teaching, but keep my commands in your heart, **2** for they will prolong your life many years and bring you peace and prosperity." Let's not forget what God has taught us and let us keep His commands in our hearts because that is the real path to peace. To true shalom.

Pray