

**Clippings from Proverbs 3**  
**Prepared for the 3C Sunday School Class**  
**Calvary Baptist Church**  
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**NOTE:** This material is exactly what the name implies. These are clippings from various sources, gathered on the run as I teach through the book. This is not intended for distribution or publication in the current form, since permissions have not been secured. The notes are provided to members of our Sunday School class, our church and students of the institutes, colleges and seminaries where I am called upon to teach. They are for personal use.

### **COMMENTS ON PROVERBS 3:1-12**

- In chapter one, we saw the introduction to the Proverbs and the summary in 1:7.
- The parents plead for a hearing.
- The pack of violent fools pleads for a hearing.
- Wisdom pleads for a hearing.
- As we opened chapter 2, the focus changed.
- Now the father reminds his son of the importance of SEEKING wisdom.
- In chapter one, wisdom cried aloud.
- Now, the son must seek wisdom.
- As we move into chapter 3, we find the longest of the exhortation discourses in the book.
- The theme is: The Blessings and Value of Wisdom

### **OUTLINE OF PROVERB 3 FROM THE BIBLE KNOWLEDGE COMMENTARY**

- I. The blessings of wisdom (3:1–12)
- II. The high value of wisdom (3:13–20)
- III. The value of wisdom in building relationships with others (3:21–35)

### **OVERVIEW OF PROVERBS 3:1-12 (BKC)**

After another strong encouragement to pursue his teaching (vv. 1–4) the father-teacher gave four commands (vv. 5–12). Each deals with a danger of misusing a gift of God. The son is told (a) to trust in God and not lean on his own understanding (vv. 5–6), (b) to fear God and not be wise in his own eyes (vv. 7–8), (c) to honor God and not fail to give to Him (vv. 9–10), and (d) to appreciate God and not misunderstand His discipline and its value (vv. 11–12).

These verses follow an alternating pattern of commands and rewards: commands (v. 1), reward (v. 2), commands (v. 3), reward (v. 4), commands (vv. 5–6a), reward (v. 6b), commands (v. 7), reward (v. 8), command (v. 9), reward (v. 10), commands (v. 11), reward (v. 12). The rewards include longevity and prosperity (v. 2), favor with God and people (v. 4), fewer problems (v. 6), health (v. 8), prosperity (v. 10), and awareness of God's love (v. 12). *BKC*

I. THE APPEAL TO PURSUE THE FATHER'S TEACHING (3:1-4)

A. LEARNING FROM GOOD ADVICE (3:1-2)

**Proverbs 3:1-2** My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments:  
2 For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee.

**PULLING PROVERBS TOGETHER**

Here are the passages in Proverbs that teach a similar concept: (3:1-2; 10:8; 12:15; 19:16,20,27; 19:27; 23:9; 27:17). We will not take a great deal of time to discuss these now since we will come across these later in our study.

**MAIN IDEA:** One of the key lessons of Proverbs is the truth that we cannot make it through life unaided. The sensible person seeks to learn from others, even if advice comes cloaked in the form of a correction. Anders, Max, *Holman O.T. Commentary*

**SUPPORTING IDEA:** The wise person never stops learning, reaping the benefits of being teachable. But the self-satisfied person who thinks he knows it all is destined to miss many blessings.

- As we have seen previously, the father pleads for the attention of the son.
- The word for "law" here is related to the Hebrew *torah*, and refers to the teaching that comes from God.
- God wants our **heart**, not a mere behavioral conformity.
- Note the two benefits of heeding parental advice:

1) **Long Life**

The fifth commandment makes this promise.  
Repeated in Proverbs 3:16; 4:10; 9:11.

**Proverbs 3:16** Length of days *is* in her right hand; *and* in her left hand riches and honour.

**Proverbs 4:10** Hear, O my son, and receive my sayings; and the years of thy life shall be many.

**Proverbs 9:11** For by me thy days shall be multiplied, and the years of thy life shall be increased.

2) **Peace**

**QUOTE:** This advice also leads to shalom, a word much deeper than mere peace or prosperity; it also includes wholeness, health, and harmony in all areas of life. *Holman OT Commentary*

**B. LOVE AND FRIENDSHIP (3:3-4)**

**Proverbs 3:3-4** Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart: 4 So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man.

**PULLING PROVERBS TOGETHER**

Here are the passages that share a similar theme. (3:3-4; 10:12; 11:16-17; 12:10,25; 15:17; 16:6; 17:5; 20:6; 21:10; 24:17-18; 25:19,21-22)

**SUPPORTING IDEA:** Some relationships are based on convenience, on shared goals, or on business interests. But the only way to have a truly satisfying relationship is to develop the qualities of love and faithfulness.

**MERCY** - *Chesed* can sometimes refer to kindness or mercy. It can also refer to faithfulness or loyalty. Most often it is translated as “steadfast love.” *Faithlife Study Bible*

<b>English Translation</b>	<b>Versions</b>
steadfast love (or love)	ESV; KJV LEB; NASB; NIV; NKJV; NRSV
mercy; favor	ESV; KJV; LEB; NASB; NIV; NKJV; NRSV
loyalty	ESV; LEB; NASB; NIV; NKJV; NRSV
goodness, kindness	ESV; KJV; LEB; NASB; NIV; NKJV; NRSV

**Old Testament Occurrences**

Pentateuch	20
Prophets	27
Psalms	127

Wisdom Literature	13
Historical Books	58
<b>Total OT Uses</b>	<b>245</b>

**QUOTE:** “Never let love or faithfulness leave you.” **Love** is chesed, the loyal love that keeps the covenant or commitment that has been made. And **faithfulness** refers to dependability. These two cardinal virtues of the Old Testament are linked in Proverbs 14:22; 16:6; and 20:28, and both are vital attributes of God himself.

**Proverbs 14:22** Do they not err that devise evil? but mercy and truth *shall be* to them that devise good.

**Proverbs 16:6** By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the LORD *men* depart from evil.

**Proverbs 20:28** Mercy and truth preserve the king: and his throne is upholden by mercy.

The next lines underscore the urgency of this command in figurative language. Like Deuteronomy 6:8-9, this verse calls on the reader to attach love and faithfulness permanently to his life, attaching them securely around the throat, engraving them on the heart like writing on a stone tablet.

**Deuteronomy 6:8-9** And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. 9 And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.

If love and faithfulness become permanent features of a person's life, the reward will be favor and a good name. Favor is sometimes translated as “grace” or “kindness,” and a good name is literally the word for shrewdness or competence. We will enjoy a good reputation among men, and God himself will recognize these character qualities.

*Holman OT Commentary*

## Friendly Paul

When we think about the apostle Paul, we usually think of him as hard-driving, no-nonsense, independent, and self-sufficient. Perhaps those are accurate qualities, but he was also a very good cultivator of friends. In his book *Restoring Your Spiritual Passion* (Nashville: Oliver-Nelson Books, 1986), Gordon MacDonald points out that Paul had a great capacity for friendship. He writes: The apostle Paul was clearly a man committed to raising up a band of special friends. He knew who they were, and he regularly recognized them for their contribution to his spiritual passion. His friends were a resource upon which he obviously depended and without which he would not have survived.

His address book of special friends would have included Aquila and Priscilla, with whom he occasionally worked and lived (Acts 18:3), Onesiphorus (“for he often refreshed me,” 2 Tim. 1:16 NASB), Philemon (“I have derived much joy and comfort from your love,” Phlm. 1:7), Luke, and a host of others. Paul's friends came in all ages and backgrounds, and he seems to have taken great care to cultivate them (MacDonald, 176-77).

To hear how affectionately Paul addresses his friends compared to how we address our friends reveals how stilted and reserved we often are about friends. Paul was generous with his praise, affirmation, and affection. The result was that he had a lot of good friends. If we would have many friends, we must take Paul's example to heart.

Anders, Max (2005-07-01). *Holman Old Testament Commentary - Proverbs: 13* (p. 171). B&H Publishing. Kindle Edition.

### C. **GIVE GOD CONTROL OF YOUR LIFE (PROV. 3:5-8)**

**Proverbs 3:5-8** Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. 6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. 7 Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil. 8 It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones.

**PULLING PROVERBS TOGETHER** (Here are the passages in Proverbs that are of a similar theme.) Trust in God or Self (3:5-8; 14:12; 16:3,20,25; 18:2,4,10; 19:3; 20:24; 21:22; 26:12; 28:26; 29:25)

**IN A NUTSHELL** God is Lord of creation, source of all laws. He has told us how to live, what to do, and what not to do. Blessing follows wisdom; trouble follows foolishness. The sooner we realize this and chose the path of wisdom, the better off we will be.  
*H.O.T.C.*

**MAIN IDEA:** God is in charge of the universe, and we are not. The sooner we realize this, the better.

**SUPPORTING IDEA:** The starting point for wisdom and blessing is to recognize that God is God and to treat him with the awe and respect he deserves.

**Proverbs 1:7** The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of knowledge: *but* fools despise wisdom and instruction.

**SUPPORTING IDEA #2:** We instinctively assume that we can figure out how to handle the issues of life, but we eventually discover that we must trust the Lord rather than our own resources.

**COMMENTARY ON 3:5-8**

**3:5-8.** The first twelve verses of Proverbs 3 form a series of commands and consequences. If we obey the command, we will receive the benefit.

And in these verses, the command is to trust God rather than our own wisdom. The word trust is used in Psalm 22:9 to describe a baby resting peacefully in its mother's bosom and in Jeremiah 12:5 for a person who has fallen helpless on the ground.

**Psalm 22:9** But thou *art* he that took me out of the womb: thou didst make me **hope** *when I was* upon my mother's breasts.

**Jeremiah 12:5** If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses? and *if* in the land of peace, *wherein* thou **trustedst**, *they wearied thee*, then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?

Obviously, it requires that we trust ourselves completely to the Lord, a concept reinforced by the phrase all your heart, including emotions, mind, and will. When we rely completely on God, we will not lean on our own intellect or sense of right and wrong. God's ways are often beyond our comprehension (Isa. 55:8-9; Rom. 11:33-34).

**Isaiah 55:8-9** For my thoughts *are* not your thoughts, neither *are* your ways my ways, saith the LORD. 9 For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

**Romans 11:33-34** O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable *are* his judgments, and his ways past finding out!  
34 For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?

Instead, we will acknowledge him by (literally) knowing him intimately and recognizing him in every aspect of life. When we do, his wisdom will clear the obstacles from our paths.

The second set of commands shows the contradiction between humility and arrogance. A person who fears the LORD will not be impressed with his own wisdom; he will avoid evil. And as a result he will enjoy the physical health that comes from a well-ordered life submitted to God. Living by God's wisdom brings health to your body (literally, the navel as a symbol of the entire body) and to the **bones** (a concept repeated in Prov. 12:4; 14:30; 15:30; 16:24; 17:22). *HOTC*

**Proverbs 12:4** A virtuous woman *is* a crown to her husband: but she that maketh ashamed *is* as rottenness in his **bones**.

**Proverbs 14:30** A sound heart *is* the life of the flesh: but envy the rottenness of the **bones**.

**Proverbs 15:30** The light of the eyes rejoiceth the heart: *and* a good report maketh the **bones** fat.

**Proverbs 16:24** Pleasant words *are as* an honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the **bones**.

**Proverbs 17:22** A merry heart doeth good *like* a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the **bone**.

#### APPLICATION OF PROVERBS 3:5-8

**QUOTE:** My Way or the Highway We are familiar with people who have the attitude “my way or the highway.” They are arbitrary and dictatorial—hard to work with and impossible to please. Yet that is not what God is like. God does not place whimsical demands on us. He only asks us to do those things that are good for us, and he asks us not to do those things that are bad for us. Knowing God's attitude usually makes all the difference for us. If we accept that his commands and instructions always come from a heart that loves us, we are much more open and responsive to him. So, must things be done God's way? Yes. Is he being arbitrary and unreasonable? No. He only requires what is best for us. *Holman OT Commentary*

- God's way is always best, regardless of whether it seems so to us at the time.
- God's character can be trusted. Bad advice does not come from a good heart and mind.
- To pay the price for righteousness is to save the price of sin.
- Trust God's wisdom. He created you. He surely knows what is best for you.
- Pay the price to do what is right. In the end, it's far cheaper than doing what is wrong.
- Don't put your own opinion above the Word of God. It is inspired. You aren't.

**ILLUSTRATION:** Garbage Mary “Woman in Rags Revealed as Heiress.” So read the headline of the San Francisco Chronicle I was reading one day while sitting in the San Francisco airport, waiting to fly back to Atlanta where I lived at the time. A lady who was picked up in a shopping mall in Delray Beach, Florida, appeared to be just another derelict whose mind had faded. Neighbors told of her scrounging around through garbage cans for food, which she hoarded in her car and her two-room apartment. There were mounds of stinking stuff packed in the refrigerator, the stove, the sink, the cabinets, the bathtub. Other than the kitchen, there were no chairs to sit on because stuff was piled up on everything else. Police finally identified her as the daughter of a well-to-do lawyer and bank director from Illinois who had died several years earlier. In

addition to the garbage, police found Mobil Oil stock worth more than \$400,000; documents indicating ownership of oil fields in Kansas; stock from such firms as U.S. Steel, Uniroyal, and Squibb; as well as passbooks for eight large bank accounts. Garbage Mary was a millionaire who lived like a pauper. And so are we: spiritual millionaires who ignore the wealth of the Word of God and scrounge around in the squalor of our own making, charting our own course while ignoring the wisdom and counsel of the Creator of the universe. How foolish. How much wiser to go to our riches and draw on them for a life of joy.

**PRAYER:** *Heavenly Father, help us to see that faith produces obedience, that if we truly believe your way is the right way, it will spur us to obedience, knowing that sin is self-destructive. May our faith in you and your truth run deep, and may our obedience, as a result, be complete. Amen.*

**D. Give God Control of Your Money (3:9-10)**

**Proverbs 3:9-10** Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: 10 So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.

**PULLING PROVERBS TOGETHER**

Proverbs 3:9-10; 10:15; 11:4,28; 13:8; 14:20; 15:16; 17:16; 18:11,23; 19:4,6-7; 22:2,7; 23:4-5; 27:7; 28:6,8,11,20-22

**NOTE:** Proverbs speaks much about money and possessions. It tells what money can do and what it cannot do. Today, we discover something amazing that money can do!

**COMMENTS 3:9-10.** Riches can also be used as a way to honor the LORD. These verses give the command, then provide the promise of reward for obedience. The godly person was to use his wealth to honor God by giving the first part of each harvest to him as an offering. This was prescribed in the law (Deut. 26:1-3,9-11), and this is the only place in Proverbs that mentions the ceremonial system of the Old Testament.

**Deuteronomy 26:1-3** And it shall be, when thou *art* come in unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee *for* an inheritance, and possessest it, and dwellest therein; 2 That thou shalt take of the first of all the fruit of the earth, which thou shalt bring of thy land that the LORD thy God giveth thee, and shalt put *it* in a basket, and shalt go unto the place which the LORD thy God shall choose to place his name there. 3 And thou shalt go unto the priest that shall be in those days, and say unto him, I profess this day unto the LORD thy God, that I am come unto the country which the LORD sware unto our fathers for to give us.

**Deuteronomy 26:9-11** And he hath brought us into this place, and hath given us this land, *even* a land that floweth with milk and honey. 10 And now, behold, I have brought the firstfruits of the land, which thou, O LORD, hast given me. And thou shalt set it before the LORD thy God, and worship before the LORD thy

God: 11 And thou shalt rejoice in every good *thing* which the LORD thy God hath given unto thee, and unto thine house, thou, and the Levite, and the stranger that *is* among you.

Giving God the firstfruits of the crops was an expression of faith as well as worship because it would certainly have been useful to keep it for oneself.

God promises that he will bless such a person with lavish harvests, to the point that his barns will be filled to overflowing and his wine vats will be filled with ample supplies of new (fresh) wine. In a similar vein, Philippians 4:19 promises that God will supply all the needs of those who are faithful in giving to God's purposes. *HOTC*

**Philippians 4:19** But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

### PRINCIPLES

- Money cannot buy the things that make life worthwhile.
- Money can serve you well if you keep it in perspective.
- If you live for money, it will harden your heart.

### APPLICATIONS

- Choose to live within the standard of living God makes possible for you.
- Cultivate gratitude for what God has given you rather than ingratitude for what he has not given you.
- Be generous with your money, giving to the needs of the ministry and others. "Giving" is the only antidote for selfishness.

### You Can't Take It with You

The old story is that you've never seen a hearse pulling a U-Haul. Why? Because you can't take it with you. But here's the Treasure Principle: you can't take it with you, but you can send it on ahead.

John D. Rockefeller was the Bill Gates of his day, one of the wealthiest men who ever lived. After he died, someone asked his accountant, "How much money did he leave?" The accountant said, "All of it." But Jesus' breathtaking revelation is, You can send it on ahead. And why not? Once your basic needs are met, money does not make you happy.

Benjamin Franklin once said, "Money never made a man happy yet, nor will it. There is nothing in its nature to produce happiness. The more a man has, the more he wants. Instead of its filling a vacuum, it makes one. If it satisfies one want, it doubles and triples that want another way."

Listen to these quotes from some of the wealthiest men in the twentieth century. W. H. Vanderbilt said, "The care of \$200 million [which would be equivalent to about \$200 billion today] ... is enough to kill a man. ... There is no pleasure in it."

John Jacob Astor, another of the world's wealthiest men, said, "I am the most miserable man on earth." John D. Rockefeller said, "I have made many millions, but they have brought me no happiness.

Andrew Carnegie said, "Millionaires seldom smile."

And Henry Ford said, "I was happier when doing a mechanic's job."

You've read the stories of lottery winners who are more miserable a few years after winning the lottery than before. The wealth they dreamed would bring them happiness didn't.

If we give instead of keep, if we invest in the eternal instead of the temporal, we store up treasures in heaven that we will never lose. Whatever treasures we store up on earth will be left behind. The money God entrusts to us here on earth is eternal investment capital. Every day is an opportunity to buy up more shares in his eternal kingdom. Surely, this is the perspective on money that Solomon wants us to take away from the Book of Proverbs. Anders, Max (2005-07-01). *Holman Old Testament Commentary - Proverbs*: 13 (p. 271). B&H Publishing. Kindle Edition.

#### E. Responding to God's Discipline (3:11-12)

**QUOTE:** The final couplet in the section urges the son to recognize the value of divine chastening. He should not despise it since the chastening shows Yahweh's love. The passage is significant since Hebrews 12:5-6 quotes it. Dean M. Weaver, *Pondering on the Proverbs*.

#### PULLING PROVERBS TOGETHER

The theme of these verses is "Growth through Discipline." Here are the verses in Proverbs that treat this subject. Proverbs 3:11-12; 10:17; 12:1; 13:18,24; 14:9; 15:5,10,12,32; 19:18; 20:30; 22:6,15; 23:13-14; 28:4,7,9,13; 29:15,17-19,21

**Proverbs 3:11** My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; neither be weary of his correction:

**DESPISE** – *ma'as* Means to spurn, abhor, reject, cast off.

#### EXAMPLE USAGE

**1 Samuel 15:23** For rebellion *is as* the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness *is as* iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast **rejected** the word of the LORD, he hath also **rejected** thee from *being* king.

**QUOTE:** The word means to resent. It is a spirit of defiance that refuses to give in. Weaver

**WEARY** – The word carries the idea of a sickening dread. It speaks of one who is worn out and wants to give in. The word expresses a spirit that is tired and does not want to go on. The word is rooted in the word thorn. When the time of discipline comes it should be treated as [an] irritating thorn. Weaver

**CHASTENING** – The word refers more to discipline than punishment. It is punishment with the purpose of discipline that brings a change of direction. Chastening shapes the character much like a lapidary cuts and polishes stones into gems of great beauty. Chastening is associated with happiness. Compare Job 5:17; Ps. 94:12; and Revelation 3:19.

**Job 5:17** Behold, happy *is* the man whom God correcteth: therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty:

**Psalms 94:12** Blessed *is* the man whom thou chastenest, O LORD, and teachest him out of thy law;

**Revelation 3:19** As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

**Proverbs 3:12** For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son *in whom* he delighteth.

**FATHER** – Father is an endearing term that points to an intimate relationship.

**CORRECTETH** – God’s discipline is for members of His family. With no correction there is reason to doubt childhood. Compare Hebrews 12:7-8.

**Hebrews 12:7-8** If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? 8 But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.

**QUOTE:** Correction is made for the faults that are found. It can be correction for what has been said or what has been done. The purpose in correction is to make things correct. It is the action that straightens out what is crooked.

When something is wrong men respond in one of two ways. They view what is said or done as stupidity and ignore it or that arrogantly look down at the one who is guilty. When God corrects He does it in loving concern for the one at fault. God’s correction proves His love. He loves us too much to let us go on in a wrong course of attitude and action.

When He corrects [we must not despise His correction]. Chastening or correction is painful. We do not like pain. It is unwelcome company and we want it to leave as soon as possible. If we are not careful we can despise or loathe the time of chastening and correction. The time of discipline can be loathed by complaint that sees no profit in what is experienced. The hand of God is not recognized and there is no change for the

better. The time of discipline can be loathed by a fretful, murmuring bitter and angry reaction to it.

The other reaction to discipline is weariness. This is when a person is worn out and sees no use to continue. It is an acceptance of defeat that brings depression. The chastisement and correction is for good and in order not to miss the point loathing must be shunned.

[So we must not despise God's chastening. But we must also remember that] the One Who corrects is God and He does it in the characteristic of fatherly concern. In the tenderness of a father who is supremely concerned for the character development of his child God chastises and corrects His children. His correction is not an impulsive outburst of irritation but a patient love that is stern but not cruel. Weaver

## II. **Wisdom More Valuable than Wealth (Proverbs 3:13-18)**

**PULLING PROVERBS TOGETHER:** See all of ch. 2, along with portions of chapters 4 and 8, especially 4:5-9 and 8:32-35.

**Open It Adult Questions for LESSONMaker**

1. What is one thing or person you can rely on?
2. What makes someone successful in life?
3. What is your most valuable possession?

**QUOTE:** The second division of chapter 3 consists of two poems. The first (verses 13–18) tells how fortunate the person is who finds the gift of wisdom. The second (verses 19–20) explains that creation is based on wisdom. *UBS Handbook on Proverbs*

**QUOTE:** In all the wealth of the world is not to be found a taste of that transcendent happiness which is gained in Christ, in whom are stored the treasures of wisdom, which consist in the knowledge and love of God. Brooks, *The Summarized Bible*

### **Proverbs 3:13–18**

<sup>13</sup> Happy *is* the man *that* findeth wisdom, And the man *that* getteth understanding. <sup>14</sup> For the merchandise of it *is* better than the merchandise of silver, And the gain thereof than fine gold. <sup>15</sup> She *is* more precious than rubies: And all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her. <sup>16</sup> Length of days *is* in her right hand; *And* in her left hand riches and honour. <sup>17</sup> Her ways *are* ways of pleasantness, And all her paths *are* peace. <sup>18</sup> She *is* a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her: And happy *is every one* that retaineth her.

### **COMMENTARY**

**Proverbs 3:13** Happy *is* the man *that* findeth wisdom, and the man *that* getteth understanding.

- The passage begins with a summary statement in verse 13.

- The “happy” is repeated in verse 18.

**QUOTE:** 3:13. This is the first of eight “beatitudes” in the Book of Proverbs (8:32,34; 14:21; 16:20; 20:7; 28:14; 29:18). The word blessed is plural (as in Pss. 1:1; 119:1) and might be rendered, “Oh the blessednesses!” The word appears again at the conclusion of the section in Proverbs 3:18. *Holman OT Commentary*

- Some have suggested that this is a hymn to wisdom.
- Unlike the exhortations from father to son, there are no imperatives here.
- The structure used is an *inclusio*, in which the same key word is used at the beginning and the end. *New American Commentary*
- Verses 14-18, in essence, are the commentary and proof for the opening verse (3:13).

**Proverbs 3:14-15** For the merchandise [Lit., profit] of it *is* better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. 15 She *is* more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her.

- Verse 14 tells us that wisdom is better than money.
- I laughed yesterday as I heard of HGTV a couple trying to “stay within their million dollar budget” to find a home.
- Each advancement in our financial state brings new challenges and the same old dissatisfaction.

#### **APPLY**

- Verse 15 tells us that wisdom is more valuable than the things that money can buy.
- Men delight in buying and displaying expensive and rare treasures.
- Solomon writes that whatever treasures you may find are not even to be compared with the great treasure of wisdom.

**Proverbs 3:16** Length of days *is* in her right hand; *and* in her left hand riches and honour.

- Wisdom is presented as having gifts in both hands.
- The ancient Egyptian goddess *Maatt* and other ancient goddesses were portrayed with objects in their hands.
- *Maatt* held a symbol of life in one hand and a scepter (symbol of power and wealth) in the other.
- Solomon is indicating that those finding God’s wisdom, not those following the idols, will be the true inheritors of blessing.

**Proverbs 3:17** Her ways *are* ways of pleasantness, and all her paths *are* peace.

- The way of wisdom (the life lived according to God’s principles), is pleasant.
- God’s way brings peace.
- He teaches us how to avoid strife with God and with man.
- That results in peace.
- This is a proverb, and gives no guarantee of an uninterrupted rosy path.

- But it is generally true that God's way is best, not only for God's glory, but for our own blessedness!

**QUOTE:** Unlike the confused darkness of the path to destruction in chapter 2, the paths of wisdom are pleasant and peaceful. Wisdom puts us on the path of highest pleasure, not boredom. Peace (Heb. shalom) stands for the joy and prosperity that accompany the full blessing of God, not merely the absence of conflict. *Holman OT Comm.*

**Proverbs 3:18** She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her: and happy is every one that retaineth her.

- "Tree of life" can mean that which gives life here on earth, or that which makes life better.
- But one cannot forget the comparison to the tree in the garden.
- Man lost his access to that tree.

**Genesis 3:24** So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

- We know that this tree reappears in Heaven.

**Revelation 2:7** He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

**Revelation 22:2** In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, *was there* the tree of life, which bare twelve *manner of* fruits, *and* yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree *were* for the healing of the nations.

- Thus wisdom provides eternal blessings.

**QUOTE:** The eschatological implications of "tree of life" cannot be denied. Genesis 3:24 states that separation from the tree means that man and woman have lost their chance for immortality. The Babylonian Epic of Gilgamesh speaks also of a plant of immortality (which Gilgamesh lost to a serpent). With such an image not only as part of the biblical text but also as part of the common inheritance of ancient Near Eastern literature, it is unlikely that the highly literate court of Solomon would conceive of the tree of life merely as a metaphor of happiness. The words hold the promise of escape from the curse of death. *New American Commentary*

#### **APPLICATION:**

What one thing can you do today to give wisdom its proper place in your life?

### III. Wisdom and Creation

**PULLING PROVERBS TOGETHER:** This theme (Creation by Wisdom) is treated more fully in Proverbs 8:22-31.

**Proverbs 3:19-20 (KJV)** 19 The LORD by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding hath he established the heavens. 20 By his knowledge the depths are broken up, and the clouds drop down the dew.

#### WORD STUDIES

**WISDOM** *chokmah* - "wisdom; experience; shrewdness."

- The technical sense of this word can be seen in the context of its first use in Scripture.

**Exodus 28:3** And thou shalt speak unto all *that are* wise hearted, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, that they may make Aaron's garments to consecrate him, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office.

*Chokmah* is the knowledge and the ability to make the right choices at the opportune time. The consistency of making the right choice is an indication of maturity and development. The prerequisite for "wisdom" is the fear of the Lord: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction" (Prov. 1:7). *T.W.O.T.*

#### UNDERSTANDING *těbûnâ* **understanding.**

Its main English usage is "understanding" or "insight." The background idea of the verb is to "discern," and this lies behind the derivative nouns and the close relation derived from the substantive *bayin* (see below) from which comes the preposition *bên* "between." The combination of these words, "discern between" is used in I Kgs 3:9, "That I may discern between good and evil." *bîn* includes the concept of distinguishment that leads to understanding.

The verb refers to knowledge which is superior to the mere gathering of data. It is necessary to know how to use knowledge one possesses (*Pirke Abot* 3:12).

While understanding is a gift of God, it does not come automatically. The possession of it requires a persistent diligence. It is more than IQ; it connotes character. One is at fault if he doesn't have it. *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*

- We may take in data through our senses and yet not perceive the implications of the data.

**Daniel 12:8** And I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what *shall be* the end of these *things*?

**KNOWLEDGE** *dah – ath* Strongs glosses this word as “cunning.”

*gnōsis* in the LXX, and *scientia* in the Vulgate. The Lord is a God of all knowledge (Job 36:4; I Sam 2:3).

**Job 36:4** For truly my words *shall not be* false: he that is perfect in knowledge *is* with thee.

**1 Samuel 2:3** Talk no more so exceeding proudly; let *not* arrogancy come out of your mouth: for the LORD *is* a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed.

The wicked question his knowledge (Ps 73:11).

**Psalms 73:11** And they say, How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the most High?

He is the object of man’s knowledge, and Isaiah envisions an earth full of the knowledge of the Lord (Isa 11:9).

**Isaiah 11:9** They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.

The prophet preaches knowledge (Isa 28:9) and the ideal ruler rules by it (Jer 3:15).  
*T.W.O.T.*

**Isaiah 28:9** Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? *them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts.*

**Jeremiah 3:15** And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.

#### COMMENTARY ON 3:19-20

**QUOTE:** Wisdom’s role in creation. It is a fitting appendix to the previous hymn. This section anticipates 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.

Verse 20, however, goes beyond this. The phrase “the deeps were divided” alludes to the bursting forth of the flood of Noah (Gen 7:11).

**Genesis 7:11** In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened.

It is a picture of the destructive power of nature. But the image of clouds dropping dew on the crops of the land shows the gentle, beneficent side of creation. 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. *The New American Commentary*

- We may allude to the role of God as covenant keeper and yet as the mighty God, judge of all men.

**Romans 11:22** Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in *his* goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.

- We see this imagery in the book of Revelation.
- He is the all-powerful Lion of the Tribe of Judah to His enemies.
- Yet He is the Lamb Slain to His saints!

#### APPLICATION

- By wisdom God created the world in which we live.
- If we are to be in sync with the processes set up by God Himself, we need His wisdom.
- This gift must be sought and developed. No osmosis here.

**QUOTE:** Obey these laws and creation will work with you; disobey them and creation will work against you. People in the so-called “New Age” movement try to be “at one” with creation, but they’re doomed to fail because they reject the wisdom of God. Christians who live by God’s wisdom will be good stewards of His creation and will use His gifts for His glory. Wiersbe, *Be Skillful*

#### IV. Wisdom Improves Our Quality of Life (Proverbs 3:21-26)

##### OPEN

1. Can you think of someone who knew better but ruined their life anyway?
2. When did an action that was against your godly training cost you dearly?
3. When has God preserved you from your own foolishness?
4. What are some reasons for insomnia?
5. Why is anxiety so prevalent in our society?

##### COMMENTS ON PROVERBS 3:21-26

- After the hymn to wisdom in 3:13-18 ...
- And the reminder that God Himself used wisdom in establishing the world ...
- We now return to the instructions of the father to his son.
- Notice the return of the imperatives, missing from 3:13-20.
- In this portion, Solomon emphasizes to his son that wisdom will improve one’s quality of life.
- In the 1960’s, Coke used the slogan, “Things go better with Coke.”



- In the 900's B.C., Solomon had a slogan. Things go better with wisdom, God's wisdom.

**A. The Plea to the Son**

**Proverbs 3:21–26 My son, let not them depart from thine eyes: Keep sound wisdom and discretion:**

**DEPART FROM THINE EYES** - literally to escape or slip away. *KJV Bible Commentary*

- Solomon knew about wisdom, studied wisdom, wrote about wisdom.
- We are reading his words today.
- Yet Solomon let them "depart from his eyes."
- He preached like a wise man but did not live like one!

**SOUND WISDOM**

- The word is the usual word for success, ongoing success or victory.

**DISCRETION**

- The basic idea of this word is that of a plan (negatively – a scheme)

**B. The Promise to the Son**

**22** So shall they be life unto thy soul, And grace to thy neck.

- This is the central phrase of the passage.
- Wisdom will keep your life!

**QUOTE:** They provide inward vitality (life to your soul) and outward beauty (grace to your neck). McDonald, *Believer's Bible Commentary*

**C. The Protection for the Son**

**QUOTE:** Every parent naturally desires his or her child to be safe, and the primary benefit of wisdom promised here is personal security and freedom from anxiety. *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of songs*. The New American Commentary

**1. Protection in the Way**

**23** Then shalt thou walk in thy way safely, And thy foot shall not stumble.

**STUMBLE** – To injure by striking.

- We must never forget the genre of the book we are studying.
- See the introduction of the Holman O.T. Commentary on Proverbs for more information on interpreting Proverbs.
- We do not find here a guarantee that we will never make a mistake.
- But in comparison to the wicked and those who ignore wisdom, our daily business and conduct will seem tranquil.

**Proverbs 4:12** When thou goest, thy steps shall not be straitened; And when thou runnest, thou shalt not stumble.

## 2. **Protection in the Night**

**24** When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid: Yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet.

**AFRAID** – To shiver, to tremble in fear.

**SWEET** – Lit., pleasant.

**Psalms 4:8** I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: For thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety.

**Psalms 91:5** Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; *Nor* for the arrow that flieth by day;

**Philippians 4:7** And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

## 3. **Protection from Anxiety**

**25** Be not afraid of sudden fear, Neither of the desolation of the wicked, when it cometh. **26** For the LORD shall be thy confidence, And shall keep thy foot from being taken.

- When the wicked get their due, we must not fear that this is about to happen to us.
- I am amazed at how logic goes out the window when we see a disaster.
- We do not need to live our lives in fear!
- PEACE – “Thy confidence”
- PROTECTION – “Shall keep thy foot”

**QUOTE:** The climax of the text is the promise that God will be beside the follower of wisdom (v. 26). Proverbs never implies that people can be safe through their own wisdom. “Common sense” and personal competence are soon exhausted if God’s protection is missing. **NAC**

**1 Peter 1:5** Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

- Kept by the peace of God (above) and by the power of God.

**NOTE:** Those who envy the prosperity of the wicked forget that the wicked have made their way to the top climbing on the backs of others. Somewhere along the way, revenge comes, payback comes and what goes around comes around.

**Proverbs 3:31** Envy thou not the oppressor, And choose none of his ways.

**Proverbs 23:17** Let not thine heart envy sinners: But *be thou* in the fear of the Lord all the day long.

- Solomon would have remembered the story of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas.
- It was his heart's desire that his son would not follow that path.

**1 Samuel 4:15–18** Now Eli was ninety and eight years old; and his eyes were dim, that he could not see. <sup>16</sup> And the man said unto Eli, *I am* he that came out of the army, and I fled to day out of the army. And he said, What is there done, my son? <sup>17</sup> And the messenger answered and said, Israel is fled before the Philistines, and there hath been also a great slaughter among the people, and thy two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the ark of God is taken. <sup>18</sup> And it came to pass, when he made mention of the ark of God, that he fell from off the seat backward by the side of the gate, and his neck brake, and he died: for he was an old man, and heavy. And he had judged Israel forty years.



#### APPLY

1. What fear do you need to turn over to the Lord?

2. What does Isaiah say about the way to a peaceful heart? (Isa. 26:3)
3. Why must we have a proper view of God before we can have peace?

**V. Wisdom in Our Relationships (Prov. 3:27-35)**

**Proverbs 3:27-35 (KJV)**

<sup>27</sup> Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do *it*.

<sup>28</sup> Say not unto thy neighbour, Go, and come again, and to morrow I will give; when thou hast it by thee.

<sup>29</sup> Devise not evil against thy neighbour, seeing he dwelleth securely by thee.

<sup>30</sup> Strive not with a man without cause, if he have done thee no harm.

<sup>31</sup> Envy thou not the oppressor, and choose none of his ways.

<sup>32</sup> For the froward *is* abomination to the LORD: but his secret *is* with the righteous.

<sup>33</sup> The curse of the LORD *is* in the house of the wicked: but he blesseth the habitation of the just.

<sup>34</sup> Surely he scorneth the scorers: but he giveth grace unto the lowly.

<sup>35</sup> The wise shall inherit glory: but shame shall be the promotion of fools.

**Proverbs 3:27-35 (KJV)**

**A. Our Relationship with Our Neighbor**

**1. In His Time of Need (3:27-28)**

<sup>27</sup> Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do *it*.

<sup>28</sup> Say not unto thy neighbour, Go, and come again, and to morrow I will give; when thou hast it by thee.

**Galatians 6:10** As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all *men*, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

**1 Timothy 6:18** They [the rich] are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share,

**2. In Our Heart (3:29)**

<sup>29</sup> Devise not evil against thy neighbour, seeing he dwelleth securely by thee.

**Proverbs 6:16-19 (KJV)**

<sup>16</sup> These six *things* doth the LORD hate: yea, seven *are* an abomination unto him: <sup>17</sup> A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood,

<sup>18</sup> An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, <sup>19</sup> A false witness *that* speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren.

3. In Our Actions (3:30)

<sup>30</sup> Strive not with a man without cause, if he have done thee no harm.

**Proverbs 29:22** An angry man stirreth up strife, and a furious man aboundeth in transgression.

**Romans 12:18-21** If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.

<sup>19</sup> Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but *rather* give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance *is* mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.

<sup>20</sup> Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.

<sup>21</sup> Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

4. In Our Emulation of Violent Men (3:31)

<sup>31</sup> Envy thou not the oppressor, and choose none of his ways.

**Proverbs 24:1 (KJV)**

<sup>1</sup> Be not thou envious against evil men, neither desire to be with them.

B. Our Relationship with God (3:32-35)

- Here Solomon gives a series of contrasts between the wise and unwise.
- Wisdom brings favor from God while the unwise are cursed.

1. The Froward vs. the Righteous (3:32)

<sup>32</sup> For the froward *is* abomination to the LORD: but his secret *is* with the righteous.

**Proverbs 11:20** They that are of a froward heart *are* abomination to the LORD: but *such as are* upright in *their way are* his delight.

2. The Wicked vs. the Just (5:33)

<sup>33</sup> The curse of the LORD *is* in the house of the wicked: but he blesseth the habitation of the just.

3. The Scorners vs. the Lowly (3:34)

<sup>34</sup> Surely he scorneth the scorners: but he giveth grace unto the lowly.

**SCORNER** – One who laughs, winks, mocks, makes faces.

**Proverbs 21:24** Proud *and* haughty scorners *is* his name, who dealeth in proud wrath.

4. The Wise vs. the Fool (3:35)

<sup>35</sup> The wise shall inherit glory: but shame shall be the promotion of fools.