

Commentary on Proverbs 3:1-12

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The **International Bible Lesson** (*Uniform Sunday School Series*) for **Sunday, September 4, 2011**, is from **Proverbs 3:1-12**. Five **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** follow the [*Bible Lesson Commentary*](#).

(Proverbs 3:1) My child, do not forget my teaching, but let your heart keep my commandments;

Though King Solomon wrote most of the Book of Proverbs (perhaps in the early years of his life), the Holy Spirit inspired his words; therefore, Solomon revealed the wisdom of God for living in the world God created. Toward the end of his life King Solomon suffered greatly (and so did his sons and later generations of Israelites), because he turned from following the wisdom God had imparted to him. After he married many unbelieving wives, King Solomon established the worship of idols in and around Jerusalem. Unlike King Solomon, as the children of God, let us not forget the Bible's teachings; and let us choose to obey God and His commandments. Let us learn from King Solomon's bad example: even the wisest person who disobeys God will suffer, as will those who follow his example.

(Proverbs 3:2) for length of days and years of life and abundant welfare they will give you.

By choosing to obey God in all things, we will be more likely to enjoy a healthy lifestyle and avoid companions who may tempt us into activities that may shorten our lives. By loving and following Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, we will enjoy eternity with God and all who love and serve Him. We can enjoy an abundant life throughout eternity no matter what hardships and suffering we may experience for our faith in this life. In general, those who love and serve God live in such a way that they will live longer and more joyfully than those who turn from God to do evil.

(Proverbs 3:3) Do not let loyalty and faithfulness forsake you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart.

Our first duty as the children of God must include loyalty and faithfulness to our heavenly Father. King Solomon forgot this truth when he married and helped his ungodly wives set up altars to their idols for all to worship. To write God's laws on the tablet of your heart means to make a firm commitment or decision to be loyal and faithful to God by keeping all of your promises to God and all of your promises to others that were truly consistent with the revealed will of God in the Bible so far as God enables you. You must learn God's law with your head and implant God's law deeply into your heart (or will) so you can rely on God through prayer to enable you to obey God in all things.

(Proverbs 3:4) So you will find favor and good repute in the sight of God and of people.

When we choose to follow God faithfully and remain loyal to God with the help of Jesus Christ no matter what our temptations or trials, God will look upon us with favor and care for our real needs—especially our mental and spiritual needs when we suffer afflictions or persecutions. We will have a good reputation in heaven among the great cloud of witnesses and among those who live godly today upon this earth.

(Proverbs 3:5) Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight.

Make a firm commitment to trust in the LORD at all times and in every situation. Make this firm commitment unwavering and total. When circumstances or situations beyond your control might tempt you to cease trusting in the LORD, keep on trusting and remember your commitment to God. Do not trust in your ability to figure out the solutions to your problems without reliance on God. Pray for God to give you the insight and wisdom you need to follow Him at all times.

(Proverbs 3:6) In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.

Acknowledge that all your ways are to follow God's ways; when tempted, resolve even more that with God's help you will follow the LORD's ways. Resolve that wherever Jesus leads, you will walk straight behind Him. Do not try to figure out ways to avoid obeying God or following Jesus when the going gets dangerous or difficult. Pray to God as you study the Bible, look for God's ways to get things done and commit yourself to His ways. By prayerful Bible study, you will find God's direction in the everyday, practical decisions you must make and He will reveal the specific path upon which He wants you to walk as you serve Him.

(Proverbs 3:7) Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD, and turn away from evil.

Being wise in your own eyes means judging yourself based upon your own subjective standards or the world's selfish standards instead of on the objective, absolute standards that God has revealed to people in the Bible. Do not think more highly or more lowly of yourself than you ought to think. Fear sometimes motivates people to do what needs to be done to escape danger. Fear can motivate people to make needed changes in their behavior or lifestyle. Fear of God should motivate the sinner to repent, change his or her behavior, turn from evil and turn to the LORD. The true children of God will manifest reverent respect for God, and their love for God will motivate them to serve God with all their heart, mind, soul, and strength.

(Proverbs 3:8) It will be a healing for your flesh and a refreshment for your body.

Fear, respect, reverence, trust with regard to the LORD can have a healing effect on the believer's body and mind. For one thing, trust in the LORD can overcome worry and fear and bring needed rest to the mind, body, and spirit of a believer. Trust in the LORD and place your life in His loving hands; trust placed in the right place can relieve anxiety and stress. Turning from the practice of evil will usually make your mind and body feel better; if not immediately, then eventually.

(Proverbs 3:9) Honor the LORD with your substance and with the first fruits of all your produce;

Some may give money to God thinking that they can then claim more money from God in the future or put God under an obligation to them—as though that were possible. Rather, our true motivation should be to honor God and want God honored because we love God and God is worthy to be praised and loved by all. Give to God first to show that God is first in your life and thoughts.

(Proverbs 3:10) then your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will be bursting with wine.

God does promise to bless us if we give, and we cannot give more to God than God has or will give to us. We cannot out-give God! If our motivation is true, to honor God because we love God, then God will care for us and meet our needs with joy in His heart too. If we live in an economically deprived area on earth, then we may need to wait until we get to heaven or until God creates a new earth before our barns are filled with plenty. No matter how long it may take, God will keep His promises to His children and give us more than we need.

(Proverbs 3:11) My child, do not despise the LORD's discipline or be weary of his reproof,

God's people are His children. In the Lord's Prayer, Jesus told us to pray to our Father. With parenthood comes tremendous responsibility for the family; for one's own children more than for the children of others. If we are a child of God through faith in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, then God will correct and discipline us when He needs to and we need it (for His happiness and well-being, for the happiness and well-being of others, and for our own happiness and well-being).

(Proverbs 3:12) for the LORD reproveth the one he loves, as a father the son in whom he delights.

When the LORD takes the time to correct us for a mistake, reprove us for a sin, or discipline us for continuing in sin or rebelliousness, He does so because He loves us as one of His children and He wants the best for us and others. God finds true

happiness in His relationship with us as His children, and our Father wants is to be happy with our way of life and receive all the blessings He wants to bestow upon us, rather than suffer from self-destructive sins and behaviors.

Five Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. The strongest man in the Old Testament, Samson, turned from following God, and the wisest man in the Old Testament, Solomon, turned from following God. What lessons do you think God wants us to learn from these two examples?
2. Why is knowing about God, or knowing the law of God, or knowing the will of God, insufficient for obeying God? What more do we need than knowledge to obey God?
3. What are some of the things God tells a wise person to do in these verses?
4. What are some of the promises God gives a wise person in these verses?
5. What does the word “discipline” mean? Who does the Bible say God will discipline? Why does God discipline these people?

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