

What Kind of Examples Are We?

International Bible Lessons

Proverbs 3:1-12

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

“Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD, and turn away from evil” (Proverbs 3:7—ESV).

“Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil” (Proverbs 3:7—KJV).

The Book of Proverbs contains the wisdom of God; divine insight that God gave to King Solomon in answer to his prayer for God’s guidance to lead God’s people rightly. God inspired King Solomon to record these wise sayings for the benefit of all who would read them throughout history. When King Solomon acted wisely, he followed the commandments of God and the wise counsel God gave him. When King Solomon made wise decisions, he did not rely on his own limited understanding, but trusted that keeping God’s law would lead to the highest happiness for his kingdom and family.

Unhappily, King Solomon left an example that all should avoid. He knew the truth and what he should do, but he did not always act based on what he knew to be right and true. As he became more famous for his wealth and wisdom, he must have become wise in his own eyes, for he ceased to obey God and the wise counsel God gave him. He did not follow God’s daily guidance or commands, but probably thought he was smart enough to live contrary

to God's will without suffering the consequences that others less wise than himself would no doubt suffer. Wisdom alone, without faith in God and trust in His word, will never give anyone sufficient strength to overcome powerful temptations. Solomon ceased to fear the LORD, so he married unbelieving wives, who led him and his kingdom into worshiping idols, that Solomon actually encouraged by setting up altars for them. Having ceased to fear the LORD, Solomon turned to evil, which resulted in the destruction of his family and nation.

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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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