

Introduction: The wisdom of God revealed in The Bible is full of contrasts. Today's passages powerfully illustrate this. *** A complication of the book of Proverbs is that it is all poetry, and poets have big vocabularies. Our passage this morning contains many rare words, of which even the best lexicons (dictionaries) admit uncertainty as to what some words mean. *** English translations sometimes use the same English word for two different Hebrew words. This also happens in our passage. *** But, even with these complications, a general theme emerges. One thousand years later the church fathers summed it up with these words: there are two ways people may go, walk or live. By this they meant: people can either go God's way, putting aside personal preferences and desires to trust that God's way is best – both now and in the long run; or, people can go their own way, and disregard God's loving fatherly instruction. Those trusting God, not themselves, find peace, refreshment and provision from Father God. Bottom line: *it is wisdom to trust in Yahweh and not ourselves.* *** Now, let's look at our passages. I will point out some of the translation uncertainties, but will suggest likely interpretations and applications. Let's endeavor to learn and get God's wisdom together.

I. Solomon instructs his son to remember Torah for a long life of peace; and, while not forsaking love and truth, he must find grace. (*Proverbs 3:1-4*)

A. Solomon tells his son that he will not forget his instruction because this will lead to a long life of peace. (*Verses 1-2*)

1. My son, my instruction not thou will forget, and my commandments, will keep, thy heart. (*Verse 1*)

Torah: Instruction is one way to translate *torah*. Another word is teaching, as in God instructing His people, or a wise man instructing his son, as here. This is not a true command, but takes the form of eight of the 'Big Ten' words God gave Moses: 'not thou will'. Here, Solomon is instructing his son from the Torah given by God to Moses in the book of Deuteronomy: thou have diligently taught thy sons and thou have spoken them when thou sit in thy house, walk in the way, lie down and rise up (6:7). All the pronouns are masculine, meaning the father is to play a primary role in diligently teaching his children of God and His ways, especially his sons. This is an appropriate Proverb for Father's Day.

Keep: Solomon uses a rare word for keep, meaning also to observe. The more common word is used over seven times more often in Scripture.

2. Because, long days and years of life and peace (*shalom*) they will cause to be added to thee. (*Verse 2*)

Result: The expected result of children learning to remember (God's *torah*) instruction, and keeping His commandments, including, 'Thou must honor thy father ...', is long life and peace.

B. The son will not forsake love and truth, and he must find grace in God's eyes. (*Verses 3-4*)

1. Steadfast love and faithfulness, not thou will forsake, thou must bind them about thy neck, thou must write them on the tablet of thy heart. (*Verse 3*)

Love and truth: For the second time Solomon uses the 'Big Ten' form so his son will never leave or forsake steadfast love and truth. This is God's strong love that BOTH gives life that is eternal, abundant and purposeful (John 3, 10, 15) AND has the power to change people to be re-conformed to God's image (Romans 8:28-39). Then he gives two straight commands about binding these qualities around his neck (a word only used four times in all Scripture, although in the kosher foods list its root is used for chewing the cud), and writing them on his heart.

2. Thou must find favor (grace) and good understanding in the eyes of God and man (adam). (*Verse 4*)

Paradoxical command: Grace is a gift, so it is a paradox to understand how a person would be responsible to find it. This is one reason why people must meditate prayerfully on the words of Proverbs. Also, the common word for understanding is used over fifteen times more frequently than the word Solomon uses. Again, this illustrates the power of poetry.

II. Trusting and knowing God leads to uprightness; the fear of God results in refreshment; and, Jesus teaches that putting His Father's Kingdom first, by faith, results in His provision. (*Proverbs 3:5-8; Luke 12:29-31*)

A. The son must fully trust The Covenant God, and he will not be supported by his own understanding; then he must always know God will make him upright. (*Proverbs 3:5-6*)

1. Thou must trust to Yahweh with all thy heart, and to thy understanding not thou will lean. (*Verse 5*)

Yahweh: Directing all trust (in love) towards Yahweh is the first and greatest commandment (Deuteronomy 6:4-5; Matthew 22:34-40; Mark 12:28-31).

Self: Solomon uses the common (not poetic) word for understanding for human self-understanding. He used the 'Ten Words' form a third time to stress the danger of only leaning on oneself, as opposed to God. The order is important. Only those fully trusting in God are able to overcome self-reliance.

Application: Let us all seek God so we will be made aware of areas where we still lean on our own (flawed) understanding

2. In all thy ways, thou must know Him, and He will emphatically make upright thy paths. (*Verse 6*)

Always know God: It is essential for people to always be aware of God, and knowing Him and His ways, in order for Him to make their paths, and them, upright.

Typical pattern: This is the typical way God communicates with people. All His commands are given with the intention that, when people obey them, they may receive blessing from Him. There is no word for promise in Biblical Hebrew. God's Word is stronger than a promise because God always keeps His Word. It is like the old saying: 'his word is his bond'. So, *it is wisdom to trust in Yahweh and not ourselves.*

- B. The son must not be wise in his own eyes, but rather fear God; then, he will be healed and refreshed. (*Proverbs 3:7-8*)
1. Not thou will be wise in thy eyes, thou must fear Yahweh and thou must depart from evil. (*Verse 7*)
'Big Ten' format: This fourth admonition of 'not' followed by a future tense verb is parallel to not leaning (or relying) on one's own understanding; but, here the warning concerns one's own wisdom.
Two commands: The two 'straight' commands are to reverentially fear Yahweh-God and to depart from evil.
 2. Healing it will be to thy navel and refreshment to thy bones. (*Verse 8*)
Healing: Although this exact word is only used here in Scripture, its root always means healing. The word for navel means umbilical cord. And the word for refreshment comes from the word for drinking water.
 It carries the sense of one who is thirsting being refreshed.

Application: We must trust God for the refreshment we need, which may be different from what we want.

It is wisdom to trust in Yahweh and not ourselves

- C. Jesus' followers do not obsess over necessities; but, trust His Father will meet all the needs of those who seek His Kingdom first. (*Luke 12:29-31*)
1. [Jesus continued:] And you all, not you all must be seeking what you all may eat, and what you all may drink; and, neither you all must be being made worried. (*Verse 29*)
Necessities: First, Jesus commands His followers must not be overly seeking (obsessing) over the necessities of food and drink.
Worried: Then, He commands them that neither must they let themselves to be made to worry (be anxious. have a doubtful mind). This last word only occurs here in The Gospels and New Testament.
 2. Because these all, the nations of the world, they are seeking after; but, The Father of you all, He had known that you all are having need of these things. (*Verse 30*)
Ignorant nations: The nations of the world, because they are not knowing Jesus and His Father, they tend to obsessively seek after, fret about, the necessities of life. In this they are the opposite of what David is teaching through Psalm 37 (verses 1 to 9). They are still under the control of the adversary who accuses people (1 John 5:19).
Father God: But, Jesus says that Father God has known and still knows to this day exactly what needs His children are having.
 3. But rather, you all must be seeking The Kingdom of Him (The Father); and, (then) these things (the necessities of life) they will be made (by The Father) to be added unto you all. (*Verse 30*)
Command: The command to seek Father God and His Kingdom is actually the answer for God's people who are followers of Jesus so they will not obsessively worry about obtaining necessities.
Application: So let us all be motivated to always seek God and His Kingdom above everything else.
God's fatherly response: God will always meet all the necessities of all His children. So, on Father's Day it is especially important to understand what a perfect Father God is to all His children.
Application: So, the bottom line is that our faith in Yahweh must be increased because we are convinced of God's great and powerful Father LOVE for us. It starts with knowing ...

God's Kingdom is more important than worrying

Conclusion: Remembering God's instruction generally leads to a long life of peace. While not forsaking God's love and truth, people must find grace. Fully trusting and knowing God leads to being upright, and the fear of God results in being refreshed. Finally, putting Father God's Kingdom first, by faith, results in His fatherly provision of necessities.

It is wisdom to trust in Yahweh and not ourselves