

# SCRIPTURE LESSON TEXT

**PROV. 3:1** 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.

**3** 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.

**5** 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.

**9** 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.

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

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

## NOTES



# Trust the Lord

Lesson Text: Proverbs 3:1-12

Related Scriptures: Deuteronomy 18:1-5; 30:11-16;  
Psalms 25:4-10; 111:1-10; Hebrews 12:5-11

TIME: about 950 B.C.

PLACE: Jerusalem

---

**GOLDEN TEXT**—"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths" (Proverbs 3:5-6).

---

## *Lesson Exposition*

### **HONORING A FATHER'S TEACHING—Prov. 3:1-4**

**Keeping his commands (Prov. 3:1-2).** Righteousness and wisdom are intertwined. A son is exhorted to honor his father's instruction, first by keeping his commands. Here "law" likely refers to the father's teaching (cf. Deut. 6:3-9).

Living according to godly precepts brings benefits: "For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee" (Prov. 3:2). Godliness and wisdom are conducive to a full and satisfying life (cf. Deut. 5:33; Prov. 3:16). These rewards are promised for those who keep the fifth commandment (Ex. 20:12; cf. Eph. 6:1-3). These promises should not be taken as blanket statements without exceptions. Some obedient children die young. As a general principle, however, those who follow godly wisdom do not subject themselves to many influences that shorten and degrade life.

**Practicing mercy and truth (Prov. 3:3-4).** A son honors his father by keeping his commands and by exemplifying "mercy and truth." The faithful son is never to allow these virtues to leave him. They are to accompany him throughout life and are likened to a

necklace around his neck and a tablet on his heart.

Once again, a reward follows: "favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man" (vs. 4). In this context, both God and man favor the one who demonstrates this prudence.

Our motivation for godly conduct should not merely be a desire for a good reputation. But a person of integrity will be recognized as such. This does not imply the godly will always be popular. But even his enemies will have no grounds for bringing an accusation against him.

### **FOLLOWING THE LORD'S DIRECTION—Prov. 3:5-10**

**Trusting Him (Prov. 3:5-6).** Following a father's teaching implies both morality and trust: "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart," Solomon wrote. This involves resting on Him even when what He says does not make sense.

Solomon added, "lean not unto thine own understanding" (vs. 5). Insight is desirable, but our wisdom will always be less than God's. Instead, said Solomon, "In all thy ways acknowledge him" (vs. 6). This is a call to know and recognize God in all of life.



**Fearing Him (Prov. 3:7-8).** King Solomon called attention to a critical aspect of following the Lord: “Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the Lord, and depart from evil.” This parallels verse 5 and stresses human limits to understanding and God’s unlimited understanding.

Fear of God results in a changed life: “depart from evil” (vs. 7). Godly fear and righteous living are inseparable (Deut. 17:19). Reverential awe inspires accountability; by contrast, a small view of God encourages engaging in all kinds of sin (Rom. 3:10-18).

Fearing God and departing from evil “shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones” (Prov. 3:8). This speaks of the physical and mental well-being that comes to those who walk with God.

This promise does not guarantee good health to all godly people, but it does indicate the beneficial influence spiritual health has on one’s physical well-being. Obedience to God keeps young people away from influences and practices that harm body and mind. STDs severely impact the body, for example.

**Worshipping Him (Prov. 3:9-10).** Trust and fear of the Lord are expressed in proper worship. A key aspect of worship is to “honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the first-fruits of all thine increase.”

Giving is a way to honor the Lord. There is promise of reward for this generosity: “So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine” (vs. 10). Though we do not live under the old covenant, the principle of honoring God through giving is still important. God does not promise to make faithful givers rich, but He does commit Himself to supplying their needs. If we are generous in our giving, God will give us enough to continue to be generous (but cf. II Cor. 8:1-5).

## **PROFITING FROM THE LORD’S DISCIPLINE—Prov. 3:11-12**

Our passage ends with a plea not to despise discipline (Prov. 3:11). Nor are we to be “weary” of it. Those “whom the Lord loveth he correcteth” (vs. 12). God’s love for someone causes Him to refine that person.

Solomon likened God’s dealings to the discipline of a father. He deals with us as a “son in whom he delighteth.” The father loves his son and refuses to abandon him to his whims. God does not enjoy disciplining us, but He does so because He loves us.

—Robert E. Wenger

## **QUESTIONS**

1. How should a son respond to his father’s instruction?
2. How should we interpret the promise that obedient children will live a long and satisfying life?
3. Mercy and truth are to be written on the tablet of the heart. What does this mean?
4. Mercy and truth bring favor with men. Does this imply popularity?
5. If God gave us our minds, why can we not lean on our own understanding?
6. What does it mean to acknowledge God in all our ways?
7. What does it mean to fear God? How does this change our lives?
8. Does God promise to make generous saints rich? Explain.
9. What attitudes should we avoid when the Lord disciplines us?
10. If God loves us as much as the Bible says He does, why does He take us through hardships?

—Robert E. Wenger



## PRACTICAL POINTS

1. Obedience goes deeper than externals; true obedience must be from the heart (Prov. 3:1-2).
2. A Christian must cling to both mercy and truth (vss. 3-4).
3. God's understanding is infinite and perfect; a human's is limited and prone to error; therefore we should trust Him (vs. 5).
4. We cannot acknowledge God with only part of our lives (vss. 6-8).
5. Honoring God first shows not only gratitude but also faith that God will continue to provide (vss. 9-10).
6. God's discipline flows out of His love (vss. 11-12).

—Jason Ching

## RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION

1. How is it possible to keep God's commandments with one's heart (Prov. 3:1)?
2. Why is daily Bible reading important (vs. 2)?
3. In what ways are we called to show mercy toward Christians we disagree with? What about nonbelievers (vss. 3-4)?
4. In what ways are we tempted to trust our own opinion over God's Word?
5. How does one acknowledge God in entertainment, sports, school, work, relationships, and family (vs. 6)?
6. In what ways should we give to God (vs. 9)?
7. How might you thoughtfully convince someone going through serious discipline that he is experiencing God's love (vss. 11-12)?

—Jason Ching

## Golden Text Illuminated

**"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths" (Proverbs 3:5-6).**

These two verses are easy to memorize and repeat, but they are some of the most difficult to consistently live out. Christians are called away from self-centeredness and self-reliance.

When everything is going well, and when God's commands make sense, it is easy to trust Him.

When God's commands go against our natural inclinations, how much do we trust that God is wiser than we are?

One of the great values of Scripture is that it disagrees with us. God's unerring Word corrects us when we make such mistakes. The question is, will we trust ourselves or His Word?

It makes sense to distrust ourselves if we disagree with God's Word. It makes no sense to expect a finite creature to completely comprehend an infinite God.

God has not left us in the dark. He has given us His Word, which teaches us about both Him and the world.

Solomon urges us to follow God's ways. God will make our way straight. As we follow God's way, we will find it to be the best way.

This is all well and good in the abstract, and easy to nod along to while quietly reading. But the next time God commands something uncomfortable and hard, try to trust the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. It may not be easy or make sense to us. But God's way is always best for us in the long run.

—Tom Greene