SCRIPTURE LESSON TEXT

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

14 For the merchandise 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.

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

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

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

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.

21 My son, let not them depart from thine eyes: keep sound wisdom and discretion:

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

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

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

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.

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

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

29 Devise not evil against thy neighbour, seeing he dwelleth securely by thee.

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

31 Envy thou not the oppressor, and choose none of his ways.

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

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

34 Surely he scorneth the scorners: but he giveth grace unto the lowly.

35 The wise shall inherit glory: but shame shall be the promotion of fools.

NOTES

Wisdom Brings Blessing

Lesson Text: Proverbs 3:13-35

Related Scriptures: Proverbs 8:12-21; 16:16-22; Psalms 37:1-40; 112:1-10; 2 Corinthians 9:6-11

TIME: between 971 and 931 B.C. PLACE: Jerusalem

GOLDEN TEXT—"Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding" (Proverbs 3:13).

Lesson Exposition

THE INCOMPARABLE VALUE OF WISDOM—Prov. 3:13-18

The first half of Proverbs 3 consists of a series of exhortations from a father to a son. In verses 13-35, Solomon extolled the value of wisdom.

The blessing of finding wisdom (Prov. 3:13). Solomon began his exaltation of wisdom's value with comparisons and descriptions of the value of wisdom. He pronounced blessing on the one who finds wisdom. In Hebrew, the first word of verse 13 and the last word of verse 18 is the same root word for "blessed." The message is that true joy is found by those who attain wisdom. The happiest people on the planet are not those who win the lottery but those who find wisdom.

The immense value of wisdom is incalculable (Prov. 3:14). Because it is worth more than gold, wisdom is an immeasurable blessing. Wisdom brings the priceless joy of a holy life. The dividends of wisdom outweigh the treasures of earth.

The joy from wisdom is incomparable (Prov. 3:15). Wisdom more precious than rubies. Jewels can be stolen, lost, or lose value. This is not true with wisdom. Even the best of what we might desire cannot compare with wisdom. Solomon's aim was to motivate his son (cf. vs. 1) and all who read this chapter to seek wisdom with zeal.

The blessings of wisdom are invaluable (Prov. 3:16). Personifying wisdom as a generous woman (cf. 1:20-33; 8:1-36), Solomon noted that long life is in her right hand, while riches and glory are in her left. This points to wisdom as the source of these things and to her readiness to give. Nothing in wisdom's hands is withheld from those who seek her. A long life free from trouble is not guaranteed, but usually under the Mosaic covenant, wise people lived long, happy lives.

The benefits of wisdom are irreplaceable (Prov. 3:17). Solomon described the way of wisdom as pleasant and peaceful. The path of folly and sin is rough, but the ways of wisdom are pleasant, far surpassing the pleasures of sin. Wisdom leads to peace.

The spiritual rewards of wisdom are immeasurable (Prov. 3:18). To illustrate, Solomon referred to the Garden of Eden. The tree of life had associations of eternal life. The fruit and leaves of this tree could give healing, eternal joy, and everlasting blessed-

ness. To call wisdom "a tree of life" elevated the value of wisdom in the highest possible way.

THE INCREDIBLE POWER OF WISDOM—Prov. 3:19-26

The divine use of wisdom (Prov. 3:19-20). God created with absolute perfection in a way that clearly displayed His glory. Every detail was intentional and skillful. While some see a recounting of the Flood here, it is more likely this describes God's acts in shaping creation.

The divine deliverance of wisdom (Prov. 3:21-26). Solomon exhorted his son not to let wisdom depart from his sight but instead to keep wisdom and discretion. Since God is wise in all His ways (cf. vss. 19-20), His people should pursue wisdom. The effects of wisdom are life to the soul and grace around the neck. "Life to the soul" describes a life that overflows with joy, while "grace around the neck" pictures moral and spiritual beauty.

The wise have no terror when they lie down, and their sleep is sweet. Sin troubles the soul and can lead to restlessness. In contrast, wisdom often leads to sweet slumber. God's wisdom, which is found in Christ, preserves us from destruction at God's final judgment.

THE INEVITABLE MANIFESTATIONS OF WISDOM—Prov. 3:27-35

Activities that wisdom avoids (Prov. 3:27-31). Verses 27-31 contain five prohibitions. First, Solomon commanded not to withhold good from those who deserve it. Second, when wise people can, they do not hesitate to provide for the needy. Third, wise people are trustworthy and do not plan harm to a neighbor. Fourth, wise people do not provoke needless disagreements. Finally, verse 31 warns against envying violent people and imitating them.

Justification for the wise path (Prov. 3:32-35). Solomon provided four reasons why the truth of verse 31 should be embraced. First, violent people should not be envied because they are an abomination to the Lord (vs. 32). In contrast, God is close to the upright. Violent people are cursed by the Lord (vs. 33). If the wicked insist on setting themselves against the Lord, He will return the favor and set His face against them. In contrast, the blessing of God rests on the righteous.

Solomon referred to the violent as scoffers. The judgment of God on scoffers is the scoffing of God Himself. In contrast, God's blessings are on the lowly who receive the hostile scoffing of the mockers. This section of verses concludes by noting that the wise will inherit glory, whereas fools will receive shame.

—Jerod Gilcher

QUESTIONS

1. What word brackets Proverbs 3:13-18?
2. How did Solomon compare wisdom to treasure?
3. Why did Solomon compare wisdom to gold, silver, and rubies?
4. How did Solomon personify wisdom?
5. How did Solomon describe the way of wisdom?
6. What is the point of the reference to "a tree of life" (vs. 18)?
7. How and why does wisdom affect our sleep?
8. What final prohibition did Solomon give in this passage?
9. How does the Lord respond to the opposition of the wicked?
10. How does this section conclude?

—Tom Greene

PRACTICAL POINTS

1. Wisdom provides what riches cannot (Prov. 3:13-16).
2. The way of wisdom is pleasant and leads to blessing (vss. 17-18).
3. God's creation is founded on His use of wisdom (vss. 19-20).
4. Applied wisdom decorates your life and makes you look good (vss. 21-22).
5. Safety, security, and sound sleep are found with wisdom (vss. 23-24).
6. The Lord's wisdom can deliver you from fear (vss. 25-26).
7. Wise people care for the needs of their neighbors (vss. 27-29).
8. When you choose to do harm, you fight with God (vss. 30-32).
9. The Lord's blessing depends on one's pursuit of wisdom (vss. 33-34).
10. Honor does not come by accident. Disgrace comes easily (vs. 35).

—Glenn Weaver

RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION

1. How difficult is it to find wisdom?
2. How precious is wisdom to you?
3. What are some implications of the fact that God used His wisdom when creating the world?
4. How is it possible to take our eyes off wisdom?
5. What practical ways does wisdom provide security?
6. How can we prepare ourselves to avoid ruin that afflicts others?
7. What are some practical ways that we can be a help to our neighbors?
8. Why would someone create unprovoked conflict with another person?

—Glenn Weaver

Golden Text Illuminated

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

In a world that measures success by possessions and prestige, Proverbs presents a radically different perspective. Our golden text declares that true happiness and fulfillment come not from wealth but from wisdom.

Most of Proverbs 3 elaborates on our golden text, providing a myriad of examples of the ways wisdom brings happiness and blessing. Our passage reveals that wisdom not only brings material blessings (cf. 3:16) but also leads to righteousness, good judgment, and an inheritance that goes beyond mere physical wealth. The treasures of wisdom are lives rich in purpose and divine favor (vss. 13-18).

Wisdom yields profound benefits. Solomon painted a vivid picture of the life of the wise: "Then shalt thou walk in thy way safely, and thy foot shall not stumble. When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid . . . For the Lord shall be thy confidence" (vss. 23-26).

This sense of security is based not on circumstances but on a strong, unshakable trust in God's guidance and protection. It is peace that surpasses understanding (cf. Phil. 4:7). Therefore, we should trust in the Lord rather than fret about evildoers (cf. Ps. 37:1-7).

Beyond these benefits, wisdom also affects our character and reputation. Proverbs 3:27-35 lists practical applications of wisdom in dealing with others, promoting integrity, kindness, and peace. Living by these principles leads to happiness and favor with God and man, a form of wealth that far exceeds financial prosperity.

—Gene Kissinger