

Better Way Apostolic Church- Bible Class

Subject: Wisdom Directs Our Path: Proverbs 3:1-6

Trust- to confide in, so as to be secure and without fear. Rendered trust 107 times.

Trust in God

As D. L. Moody said, "Trust in yourself, and you are doomed to disappointment; trust in your friends, and they will die and leave you; trust in reputation, and some slanderous tongue may blast it; but trust in God, and you are never to be confounded in time or eternity." Luther gave a similar testimony when he said, "I have held many things in my hands, and I have lost them all; but whatever I have placed in God's hands, that I still possess."

Childlike Trust

A frantic mother called her pastor one day. She was experiencing a bad case of "nerves" as so many of us do. He thought he heard a child's voice while she was speaking, so he asked, "Is your child as upset and worried as you are?" "No, of course not," she replied. "But why not?" persisted the pastor. "I suppose she puts her trust in me and lets me do the worrying," she answered. "Then make a transference. Try to think of yourself as a child of God and, just as your child puts her trust in you, put your trust in God."

The key verses in this chapter are verses 5-6, a promise God's people have often claimed as they have sought the Lord's direction for their lives. And this promise has never failed them — if they have obeyed the conditions God has laid down in verses 1-12. God keeps His promises when we obey His precepts, because our obedience prepares us to receive and enjoy what He has planned for us.

Conditions to meet (vv. 1-12). The first condition for receiving God's guidance is that we learn God's truth (vv. 1-4). The will of God is revealed in the Word of God (Colossians 1:9-10), and the only way to know His will is to study His Word and obey it. By receiving the Word within our hearts, we experience growth in godly character so that mercy and truth ("love and faithfulness," NIV) become beautiful ornaments in our lives (Proverbs 3:3; 1:9). It isn't enough for believers to carry the Bible in their hands; they must let the Holy Spirit write it on their hearts (3:3; 7:3; 2 Corinthians 3:1-3). Obedience to the Word can add years to your life and life to your years.

Second, **we must obey God's will** (vv. 5-8). "He shall direct your paths" (v. 6, NKJV) is the promise, but the fulfillment of that promise is predicated on our obedience to the Lord. We must trust Him with all our heart and obey Him in all our ways. **That means total commitment to Him (Romans 12:1-2)**. The word translated "trust" in verse 5 means "to lie helpless, facedown." It pictures a servant waiting for the master's command in readiness to obey, or a defeated soldier yielding himself to the conquering general.

The danger, of course, is that we lean on our own understanding and thereby miss God's will. This warning doesn't suggest that God's children turn off their brains and ignore their intelligence and common sense. It simply cautions us not to depend on our own wisdom and experience or the wisdom and experience of others. Abraham did this when he went to Egypt (Genesis 12:10-20) and so did Joshua

when he attacked the little town of Ai (Joshua 7). When we become "wise in [our] own eyes" (Proverbs 3:7), then we're heading for trouble.

Share God's blessings (vv. 9-10) is the third condition we must meet if we want God to direct our paths. There's no such thing as "spiritual" and "material" in the Christian life, for everything comes from God and belongs to God. The Old Testament Jews brought the Lord the firstlings of their flocks (Exodus 13:1-2) and the firstfruits of their fields (Leviticus 23:9-14), and in this way acknowledged His goodness and sovereignty. The New Testament parallel is seen in Matthew 6:33.

If we don't faithfully give to the Lord, we don't really trust the Lord. Of course, our tithes and offerings aren't "payment" for His blessings; rather, they're evidence of our faith and obedience. Christian industrialist R.G. LeTourneau used to say, "If you give because it pays, it won't pay." Giving is heart preparation for what God wants to say to us and do for us. "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matthew 6:21, NKJV).

Our fourth responsibility is to submit to God's chastening (Proverbs 3:11-12). Chastening is a part of God's plan to help His sons and daughters mature in godly character (Hebrews 12:1-11). God chastens us, not as a judge punishes a criminal, but as a parent disciplines a child. He acts in love and His purpose is that we might become "partakers of His holiness" (Hebrews 12:10). Sometimes He chastens because we have rebelled and need to repent; other times He chastens to keep us from sinning and to prepare us for His special blessing. No matter how much the experience hurts us, it will never harm us, because God always chastens in love (Deuteronomy 8:2-5).

Blessings to enjoy (vv. 13-35). If we trust and obey, our Father will direct our path into the blessings He has planned for us; the first of these blessings is the true wealth that comes from wisdom (vv. 13-18). Some people know the price of everything but the value of nothing; consequently, they make unwise choices and end up with shoddy merchandise. An acquaintance of mine, thinking he was getting a bargain, bought a box of white shirts from a street vendor for just a few dollars. When he opened the box at home, he discovered they weren't shirts at all: they were dummies made to be used on corpses. So much for his bargain. You take what you want from life, and you pay for it.

It's good to have the things money can buy, provided you don't lose the things money can't buy. What good is an expensive house if there's no happy home within it? Happiness, pleasantness, and peace aren't the guaranteed by-products of financial success, but they are guaranteed to the person who lives by God's wisdom. Wisdom becomes a "tree of life" to the believer who takes hold of her, and this is a foretaste of heaven (Revelation 22:1-2).

Another blessing is harmony with God's creation (Proverbs 3:19-20). The person who walks according to God's wisdom can sing, "This is my Father's world," and really mean it. The wisdom of God brought everything into being (8:22 ff), including what science calls "the laws of nature." Obey these laws and creation will work with you; disobey them and creation will work against you. People in the so-called "New Age" movement try to be "at one" with creation, but they're doomed to fail because they reject the wisdom of God. Christians who live by God's wisdom will be good stewards of His creation and will use His gifts for His glory.

A third blessing is the Father's providential care (3:21-26). Because God directs our path, He is able to protect our path. The Lord isn't obligated to protect His children when they willfully go their own way.

They're only tempting Him, and that's a dangerous thing to do. Back in the early '40 s an angry unbeliever asked a pastor friend of mine, "Why doesn't God stop this terrible war?" My friend quietly replied, "He doesn't stop it because He didn't start it." It was started by people who rejected God's wisdom and pursued their own selfish plans.

When you surrender yourself to God, every part of your body belongs to Him and will be protected by Him. He will help you keep your eyes from wandering (v. 21), your neck from turning your face away from God's path (vv. 22; see Luke 9:53), your feet walking on the right path (Proverbs 3:23,26), and even your backbone safe while you're sleeping (v. 24). If something frightening suddenly happens, you won't be afraid (v. 25; see Psalms 112:7; 121:3-6), because the Lord is protecting you. How we sleep is sometimes evidence of how much we trust the Lord (Psalms 4-5).

A positive relationship with others (Proverbs 3:27-35) is a fourth blessing the believer enjoys when he or she walks in the wisdom of God. Wise Christians will be generous to their neighbors and live peaceably with them (vv. 27-30), doing their best to avoid unnecessary disagreements (Romans 12:18). After all, if we truly love God, we will love our neighbor as we would want him to love us.

On the other hand, if our neighbor is a perverse person who scoffs at our faith (Proverbs 3:31-35), the Lord will guide us in letting our light shine and His love show so that we will influence him but he won't lead us astray. Sometimes it takes a great deal of patience, prayer, and wisdom to rightly relate to people who don't want Christians in the neighborhood, but perhaps that's why God put us there.

It's possible to have a godly home in the midst of an ungodly neighborhood, for God "blesses the home of the righteous" (v. 33, NIV). We are the salt of the earth and the light of the world, and one dedicated Christian in a neighborhood can make a great deal of difference and be a powerful witness for the Lord.