

Pursuing Righteousness

Proverbs 3:1-12

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Sunday School Lesson

Douglas Chapel Missionary Baptist Church

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Introduction---- The book of Proverbs is a book of small saying that carries large messages. As one read this powerful book, the walk of a man of wisdom is placed before us in very practical terms. This book is not focused upon how to get to heaven nor life after getting there; its focus is upon living victoriously in this present world. Although written many years ago, the truth applied here are just as relevant today as they were the day they were written. The reason for this is that wisdom is timeless and righteousness is dateless. As you read this book take the position of a child who is being instructed by his father and mother as to how to live a successful life. This book contains some of the greatest principles for success ever given.

- i. My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments:
vs.1---The text begins with instructions of a parent to their child concerning their responsibility toward the law of God. Three things are immediately placed upon the child as to their responsibility. First, the child was to remember whose they are: “My son.” I remember when I was a young boy my parents would always remind me when I walked out the door to remember how to behave. They let me know that my behavior was a reflection of them as a parent. Each believer should daily walk remembering whose child we are. We are the children of God and should behave in such manner. Second, the child is told to not forget the law of their parent. Children need the instruction of their parents. Parents have the responsibility of making laws that govern the life of their children. Children don’t have enough exposure to life to make laws that are healthy. Children function based upon what they want and not what they need; therefore, parents need to provide instruction that will discipline a child’s action and decisions to keep them from fulfilling the lust of their flesh. God has provided the Bible as a book of instruction from our heavenly Father in order to discipline our decisions and action to keep us from living a life based upon our wants rather than our needs. Finally, the

- child is commanded to keep the commandments (instructions) that were given unto the child by the parent. It is not enough to remember what you are to do or what you have been told, you must act based upon the instructions. Today many believers spend a lot of time learning the word of God. However, much less time is spent applying the word to daily walk. James instructs believers to be more than hearers of the word but become doers of the word.
- ii. For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee. Vs.2---
With the three responsibilities comes three promises as a result of obeying instructions. First, length of days would be added. Second, long life would be added. Finally, peace would be added as a result of obeying the word. If you look at the Hebrew words used in the text for length of days and long life you will discover that there is progressiveness in the promises: length of days and long life means that from day to day or from sunrise to sunrise would be added to being alive. This is a life of living which differs from a life of existing. Getting up and going from sunrise to sunset without accomplishing anything of purpose is just existing not living. It doesn't matter how much money you make or what fame you gain, life has to consist of more than just making another day. The ultimate goal is to have a life of peace. Peace here means "shalown" or happiness. This is an inner peace that surpasses human understanding. This is a peace that is present when you are in the mist of storms. This is a peace that comes from knowing you did the right thing.
 - iii. Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart: vs.3---The child is commanded to stay with mercy and truth as a part of their life's principles. Mercy is that ability to demonstrate kindness toward others. Mercy is what ones give to those who are guilty of wrongness. God understands that we live in a world of hurt people who will do hurtful things unto us. We must learn to treat them with mercy rather than justice. Jesus teaches us to show kindness toward those who will treat you wrong. The believer is challenged to live in truth, do that which is right, rather than that which is comfortable. Believers are not to live a life of revenge or score keeping. God calls upon us to do what is right (truth) not matter what those around us do. It is important to note that one is to make mercy and truth a life practice. This way of life must be so embedded in a believer that they will not need to look for what to do in the scriptures because it is written within their heart.
 - iv. So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man. Vs.4--- As with any act of obedience, there is a promise associated

- with it. There are two promises given here. First, there will be favor (grace) from God and men. Grace is undeserved blessings. It is important to note that as you extend kindness to others, God and others give you grace in return. This is the law of positive return which states that the more you bless others the more God will bless you. Second, good understanding (Hebrew translation is success or intelligence) from God and man will come as a result of showing mercy and walking in truth.
- v. 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. Vs.5,6---In verses 5 and 6 three more commands are given to direct the life of God's child. The child is to TRUST the Lord with their entire heart. Every part of the believer's life should be based upon their trust in the Lord. We are challenged to walk by faith not by sight. Second, the believer is challenged to not trust in their own understanding or their own knowledge. Since we are limited in our knowledge, we should trust Him who is all knowing. When decisions are made based on limited knowledge, mistakes will be made. However, when decisions are made based upon full knowledge then you don't have to worry about mistakes being made. Humans have limited knowledge and God has unlimited; therefore, it is better to rely (lean) upon God rather than self. Third, the believer is challenged to acknowledge (recognize) him (God) in everything in life. There is nothing too small or too large to exclude God from your life. Things that may seem small may later have a great impact upon your life. Since we are limited in our knowledge, we must seek God in the small and large things of life. This simply means getting God involved in every aspect of life. When you invite God to be a part of the things in life, He will graciously enter in and direct your path. The ministry of the Holy Spirit is to lead us into all truth. If we will allow Him to be a part of our lives, He will direct you correctly.
- vi. Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the Lord, and depart from evil. It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones. vs.7, 8---The believer is challenged to not trust in their own wisdom or what looks right in their sight but do what is respectful (fear) to the Lord. When decisions are made based upon giving pleasure to God the results will be health and strength in the life of the believer. Here we are brought face to face with the close connection between man's moral and spiritual condition and his physical health. It has been estimated that fear, sorrow, envy, resentment, hatred, guilt, and other emotional stresses account for over 60% of our illness. Add to that the terrible toll taken by alcohol (cirrhosis of the liver); tobacco (emphysema, cancer, heart disease); immorality (venereal diseases, AIDS). Then we realize that "he shall direct your paths" is more literally "he shall make your

paths smooth” or “straight,” but guidance is surely included in the promise. Solomon, by divine inspiration, was way ahead of his times in the field of medical science.

vii. Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine. Vs.9, 10---The believer is challenged to demonstrate their honor of God by giving unto Him. God must hold the place of highest honor in a believers life. God has always required that He be first. How is this firstness demonstrated? It is demonstrated by placing God before your substances. Before a believer takes anything for self, they are to take out the first portion for God. The firstfruit was the possession of the Lord. To take it for self was to refuse God His rightful place of being first. This was a great dishonor of Him. Today, believers are challenged to show honor unto God by giving unto Him in tithes and offerings. It is to be understood that all belong to God and we are his stewards using His possessions to bring honor unto Him. The result of giving to God first is an increase. When we honor God by giving unto Him we are opening the door for more blessings. It is important to note that the purpose in giving is to honor the Lord not try to gain more for yourself.

viii. My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord; neither be weary of his correction: For whom the Lord loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth. Vs.11, 12--- All men sin and bring dishonor upon the Lord. Those who enjoy His great blessing will at times experience His chastening, for Yahweh corrects every son whom He receives (Heb 12:5–13). These times of chastening are a sign of both His displeasure and love. When He sends difficulties into the lives of His children, He is not to be regarded as a vindictive despot, but rather as a loving father who diligently corrects His children. **Neither be weary of his correction.** Man is born in sin and practices the art of sinning arduously before he meets the God of grace. Thus, the Lord’s hand of correction is often found upon us shepherding us away from sin. We must not weary of this hand upon us or despise its gentle and persistent presence, a presence that is always grounded in His faithfulness (I Cor 10:13). A humble submission is an essential adjunct to our growth in spiritual truth (I Pet 5:6).