

## The Blessing of Life in the Lord

### Proverbs 3:1-12

#### Introduction

1. It is important that we do not take being children of God for granted. When we do, we fall short and only realize what we have when we have attempted to mess it up.
  2. Many view the Christian life through a grimace, as though it were something negative, but the life God wants us to live is an abundant one – **John 10:10**
  3. Christians are the most blessed people on earth, and it is because of their life in the Lord – in fellowship with Him.
- I. Life in the Lord
- A. Obedient Faith **(v. 1)**
    - a. The law and commands of the father are from the Lord – **(v. 5)** – “The son’s confidence is neither in an impersonal created order subject to his rational control nor in an impersonal code of ethics inherited by tradition from the fathers but in Israel’s covenant-keeping God who stands behinds the moral order and the heritage and its promises.” (Waltke, Bruce K., NIC Old Testament)
      - i. **Proverbs 2:1, 5** – if – my words, commands – then – fear of the Lord, knowledge of God.
      - ii. **Proverbs 1:7** – fear of the Lord, knowledge.
      - iii. A father seeking to raise the son in the purpose of life – **Proverbs 22:6; Ecclesiastes 12:13-14**
    - b. **“do not forget”** and **“let your heart keep”** are synonymous.
      - i. **“keep”** – *nāṣar* – “watch, guard, keep” (TWOT) – **“let your heart guard my commandments” (LSB)**
      - ii. This manifests the aspect of choice – to forget is to CHOOSE to forget – **cf. 2 Peter 3:5**
      - iii. **2 Peter 1:9** – **“has forgotten”** – *lēthēn* (noun, forgetfulness) *labōn* (active verb, to take) – i.e. he welcomed the forgetfulness.
    - c. The heart does the guarding – Heart used throughout scripture in reference to the inner man – intellect, will, emotions – **Proverbs 4:23**
      - i. It is actively engaging your entire being in the knowing of the commands and acting on them.
      - ii. **Deuteronomy 6:4-6** – entire heart, soul, strength.
      - iii. **Deuteronomy 8:3; Matthew 4:3-4** – not simply an understanding of relying on God’s provisions, but a comprehension of essence of your (spiritual) life.

- iv. This is not intellectualism, ritualism, or traditionalism, BUT A MERGING OF OUR ENTIRE LIFE WITH GOD’S WILL.

B. Faithful Love (v. 3)

- a. Some mistakenly view God’s commands or consider the mere concept of commandments in a very impersonal way.
  - i. However, commands from God always have great implications beyond the surface of what is required.
  - ii. Example – cf. **Leviticus 10:3** (before God); **Romans 13:10** (before man)
- b. **“Mercy and truth”** are the effect intended by the **“law”** and **“commands”** of God – they have significant and practical purpose behind them – God is not capricious.
  - i. **Mercy** – *ḥesed* – kindness, lovingkindness, mercy, steadfast love, loyalty, unfailing love.
  - ii. **Truth** – *’emet* – firmness, faithfulness, truth, stability.
  - iii. These two are in consideration of our relationship with God and man – **Micah 6:8** (justice and mercy – man; walk humbly with God)
- c. Bind around neck, write on heart – i.e. taken everywhere we go, and a part of our innermost being – to influence every thought and every decision.
- d. **Philippians 1:9-11** – intelligent and discerning love which weighs each moment and circumstance with careful thought and acts in the greatest interest of the other – giving God and man what is best within God’s will and our ability.

C. Unreserved Trust (vv. 5-6a)

- a. **“all your heart”** and **“all your ways”** encompass every thought and motivation – this leaves no room at all for leaning on our own understanding.
  - i. **Proverbs 26:12** – foolish.
  - ii. There is no part of life where we are sufficient, and without need of consulting our God – **1 Corinthians 3:18-20** – we become a fool to be wise in God.
- b. **“acknowledge Him”** – “‘To know’ in this book means personal knowledge, intimate experience with a person’s reality...Personal knowledge of God ensues from risking oneself to obey the specific teachings that pertain to all sorts of human behavior in full reliance on God to keep his promises coupled with them.” (Waltke, Bruce K., NIC Old Testament)

- i. **2 Peter 1:2-4, 8** – “**knowledge**” (**vv. 2, 3, 8**; *epignōsis* – participant knowledge) “**partakers**” (**v. 4**; *koinōnos* – sharing, fellowship)
  - ii. This means full surrender to Him in all areas of life with confidence that His way is best – **James 1:5-8; 4:13-17** – practical look – asking for wisdom, accepting by faith, committed and unwavering doing, IF THE LORD WILLS, KNOWING TO DO GOOD AND DOING IT.
- D. Clean Fear (**v. 7**)
- a. This gives another dimension to **verses 5-6a** – what does trusting in the Lord and acknowledging Him necessarily include?
  - b. Fear – **Proverbs 1:7** – beginning of knowledge.
    - i. Compliments “**trust in the Lord**” (**v. 5**).
    - ii. **Matthew 5:27-30; 10:27-28, 32-33** – wouldn’t this include a great deal of trust? I trust that what He says has substance, is true.
  - c. The fruit of fear – “**depart from evil**” – **Psalm 19:9, 11-13**
    - i. **Clean** – i.e. pure, righteous, holy, etc.
    - ii. **Enduring** – opposite of whatever momentary pleasure or advantages sin affords.
    - iii. (**vv. 11-13**) – keeps us from great mistakes, ensures great benefits, preserves one before God in holiness.
    - iv. **Proverbs 2:10-15** – the fear of the Lord, and the wisdom it affords, keeps us from going down the destructive path of unrighteousness.
- E. Cheerful Honor (**v. 9**)
- a. More than what has preceded this verse does it show a positive view of God and His dealings with us – our obedience, faithfulness, trust, and fear certainly should be from a heartfelt longing for God, but the pursuit of honoring Him with the best of what we have is an exclamation point of the life devoted to Him.
  - b. “**your possessions...all your increase**” – **1 Corinthians 4:7** – what do we have that is not from God? (**cf. James 1:18**)
  - c. “Honor (kabbēd), whose root kābēd means “to be heavy,” signifies to esteem a person as having value and to declare him such to give him social weight or prominence...Here that declaration is made not in a speech act but in the concrete act of presenting tribute to him from your wealth.” (Waltke, Bruce K., NIC Old Testament)



- ii. The word indicates the view others have of one because of their wisdom and understanding.
    - b. God will be pleased as you do His will and bring glory to Him.
    - c. Other men will be pleased to be around you, to have you as their friend, acquaintance, employee, employer, coworker, etc.
    - d. As Jesus – **Luke 2:52**
  - C. Straight Paths **(v. 6b)**
    - a. ***“And He will make your paths straight.” (NASB)***
    - b. Direct – *yâšar* – “to be right, be straight, be level, be upright, be just, be lawful, be smooth” (BDB)
      - i. I.e. it not only will make your path right in regards to God’s will, but it will make it smooth – pleasant, successful, fruitful.
    - c. “One has to view the course of one’s life from a bird’s-eye view, not from a worm’s-eye view, to see this truth. A Portuguese proverb says, ‘God writes straight with crooked lines.’” (Waltke, Bruce K., NIC Old Testament)
      - i. **Proverbs 13:15** – at the end of the day this is always true.
  - D. Contented Health **(v. 8)**
    - a. Flesh and bones here speak to more than just the body, but is a way of reference the wholeness of man.
    - b. As Paul would say – ***“Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Thessalonians 5:23).***
    - c. Discussions of psychology and mental health are abundant in our culture – the ultimate answer is trust in God!
    - d. **Philippians 4:6-10** – giving our cares to God and meditating on the things which He has revealed are most important grants peace and health to our entire being that is unmatched!
  - E. Prosperous Return **(v. 10)**
    - a. This is not the gospel of health and wealth but has a continued spiritual emphasis.
    - b. **(v. 9)** – God gave so that you could honor Him with the strength provided by Him.
    - c. **(v. 10)** – His continued giving is supply for the same end!
    - d. **2 Corinthians 9:6-11** – in the benevolence context, Paul shows that when we give liberally we will receive in the same way, but so that we can give even more!

- e. This must be applied to everything – whatever we have, from ability to knowledge to opportunity, is to be dedicated to the Lord, and when He inevitably causes us more prosperity in those areas we are to use it to further glorify Him.
- F. Delighted Love **(v. 12)**
  - a. The chastening is not out of hate, but love. It is meant to be constructive, and protective. The absence of it is devastating – **Hebrews 12:5-11**
  - b. If we were not disciplined, then it would be indicative of being without a father. We need it, and He lovingly supplies it.

### **Conclusion**

1. Following the word of God is more and must be more than simply getting by with the bare minimum. It is more than a checklist.
2. God wants to fill our lives with Himself – with His goodness, wisdom, love, grace, mercy, etc.
3. It only makes sense that when one allows himself to be completely enveloped by the Creator who gave him life that his life will have great direction, meaning, and substance.