

PROVERBSTHREE, FIVE AND SIX

Intro: Our verses tonight were written by King Solomon especially for his son. Cf. Prov. 1:1; 3:1. Before we finish tonight we will see that this was truth which Solomon had received from his father, King David. Therefore, both of them were following what Moses told the people of Israel to do about teaching their children in Deut. 6.

The context (vv. 1-10) indicates that Solomon is teaching his son some of the basic principles that he should carry with him throughout his life. See v. 2. He promises him that it will bring blessing. Cf. vv. 4, 8, 10.

This is further emphasized by Solomon's use of the words, "thy ways . . . thy paths" (v. 6).

Therefore, while these are good words for a crisis, it is Solomon's intention that his son shall live according to these principles every day!

As we look at the two verses, we can see some very obvious things:

- 1) There are three imperatives which Solomon gives to his son. Two are positive; one is negative.
- 2) These three imperatives are followed by one promise. It comes at the end of v. 6.

Therefore, we can say that there are (1) two things which Solomon's son was to do, (2) one thing he was not to do, and (3) one thing which he could expect the Lord to do.

The whole point of these verses is that there would be times in the life of Solomon's son when he would be confused, when he would be discouraged, when he might be fearful, or even unbelieving--those times which come in the life of every child of God. IF HE WERE LIVING THIS WAY, THEN HE WOULD GO ON IN TIMES OF SPECIAL NEED. So often we look for help in crisis times because we have not been living as we should when things have been going well for us. Solomon evidently wants to keep his son from making such a mistake.

All of these imperatives are spoken in the singular, which adds further emphasis to the fact that his son's blessing did not depend just upon the knowledge of these truths, nor upon the fact that others might be living this way, BUT HE HIMSELF HAD TO ACT UPON THESE TRUTHS IF HE WERE TO RECEIVE THE BLESSINGS.

Furthermore, we must recognize that these are words for one who is a child of God--not for the people of the world.

First note that there are:

I. TWO POSSIBILITIES (Prov. 3:5).

Solomon commands the one; he condemns the other. And it is important that we notice the way Solomon states this --not as something to discuss, or to pray about, but to see that there is no alternative if one wants to experience the blessing of God.

We can trust Jehovah, or we can trust our own limited understanding--a word which emphasizes our ability to figure things out so that we will know what to do.

Solomon seems to indicate that you cannot do both at the same time, not if you are trusting "in the Lord with ALL your heart."

"Trust" and "lean" are two words which convey the idea of placing all of the burden upon the Lord.

It is wonderful to be doing this all of the time, but it is also wonderful to know that we must do this in times when we are so confused that we do not know what to do. So often Israel acted upon what seemed to be expedient at the moment, only to learn that she had done the wrong thing. Cf. Isa. 10:20,

"And it shall come to pass in that day, that the remnant of Israel, and such as have escaped of the house of Jacob, shall no more again lean upon him who smote them, but shall lean upon the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, in truth."

Before we leave v. 5, notice the name of God which is used here: Jehovah. What is the idea in this verse? Cf. the very circumstances under which this name was given to the people of Israel in Ex. 6:1-8.

The point is this: God is unchanging, and His purposes for Israel will never change, but will be fully completed in every sense of the word. THEREFORE, SOLOMON WANTS HIS SON TO TAKE THIS TRUTH WHICH GOD HAS GIVEN TO THE NATION AND SEE THAT THE SAME THING APPLIES TO HIM AS AN INDIVIDUAL CHILD OF GOD!

II. ONE CONCERN (Prov. 3:6a).

What did Solomon mean that we should "acknowledge him"?

Interestingly, this is one of the Hebrew verbs for teaching. Solomon is telling his son that, in addition to trusting, leaning, hoping, in the Lord, he should'

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have one concern constantly before him, regardless of what the circumstances might be. It is this: In all thy ways know him!

I mentioned earlier tonight that Solomon was passing truth on to his son which he had received from his father, David. Now we are ready to see that. Let us turn to 1 Chron. 28:5-9, esp. v. 9, "And thou, Solomon, my son, know thou the God of thy father."

Remember Peter's words in 2 Pet. 3:18. When do you get to the end of knowing the Lord as Jehovah? Never!

See what Paul said about himself in Phil. 3:10, and keep in mind that he was in prison when he wrote this.

GOD MAY HAVE MANY DIFFERENT REASONS FOR TAKING US THROUGH THE EXPERIENCES WE HAVE, BUT THERE IS ALWAYS ONE THAT WE CAN COUNT ON EVERY TIME: HE IS SEEKING TO MAKE HIMSELF MORE FULLY KNOWN TO US.

As we recognize Him, His presence, His power, His wisdom, His purpose, His faithfulness, His grace, His love --life can be full of joy and peace!

Cf. Daniel coming out of the lions' den--Dan. 5:20-22.

"In all thy ways" - KNOW HIM!

What are the prospects for all that we have seen thus far?

III. THE PROMISE (Prov. 3:6b).

What a wonderful promise it is!

The "he" is emphatic. The Lord makes Himself personally responsible for those who cast themselves completely on Him, wanting to learn of Him.

What will "He" do? "He will direct thy paths."

There are two things I want you to see here:

A. There is some basis for saying that these are appointed paths. That is, our circumstances are not accidents, or due to the opposition of others, or even to our own failures. These all have to be taken into consideration. BUT--

"The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, and he delighteth in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand" (Psa. 37: 23, 24).

How wonderful it is to know this, and to believe it!

But there is another point of interest here.

- B. The meaning of the verb, "direct." "And he shall direct thy paths."

This verb, "direct," is translated, "make straight," in Isa. 40:3, and the following two verses will show us what the promise in our text means.

It means that God's purpose in ordering our steps will be fully accomplished regardless of the circumstances. He may have to lift up some valleys, and do away with some mountains, but this is nothing for Him!

Hear Paul's parting word in 2 Tim. 4:6-8,
"For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; Henceforth . . ."

Concl: Could we ask for anything more as the children of God than He has given us in these verses?

What a word for a father to pass on to his son! Oh, that the Lord would give each of us the wisdom to act on these truths so that we might come to know Him more and more, and see HIM working out all of His purposes for us to our great blessing and to His great glory!