

# Wisdom

## WISDOM FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS

Focal Verses • PROVERBS 3:1–12

### Aim for Change

By the end of the lesson, we will: IDENTIFY God’s principles for living purposeful lives; TRUST that God’s wisdom reveals purpose and meaning of life; and SEEK God’s wisdom when making choices in daily life.

### In Focus

“We can do this together,” Greg offered. Robbie didn’t know how to respond. He was disappointed that one of his business associates launched a side business without consulting him. Not to mention, Greg started a business Robbie didn’t believe in. “We can do this on the side. What do you say?” Greg asked, breaking into Robbie’s train of thought.

“First, let me say “congratulations.” But I won’t be joining you. My family started this business, and this is where I’m supposed to be.”

“Yeah, our bills are paid, but we could be rolling in dough. Don’t you want to never worry about money again?” While the answer was an affirmative, Robbie knew going into the business of PayDay loans, just to make money, was the wrong thing to do. As far as he was concerned, PayDay loans were legal loan-sharking designed to trap people in financial slavery while keeping banks out of the community. One owner of a PayDay business Robbie knew was living in a mansion and driving luxury cars before being charged with fraud and embezzlement. Robbie knew it was his conviction to stay put.

“Yes, I know I could live more comfortably, but I believe the wise thing to do is keep working at my family’s business. My business is meant to bless our community by building it up—not to curse it by destroying it. This business will be around long after those PayDay businesses shut down,” Robbie said.

*Today’s lesson teaches that wisdom protects, preserves, and provides. What is the most insightful piece of wisdom you have ever heard?*



### Keep in Mind

“Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding”  
(Proverbs 3:5, KJV).

## Focal Verses

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**KJV** Proverbs 3:1 My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments;

2 For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee.

3 Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart:

4 So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man.

5 Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

7 Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil.

8 It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones.

9 Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase:

10 So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.

11 My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; neither be weary of his correction:

12 For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.

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### The People, Places, and Times

**Solomon.** He is the author of the majority of the book of Proverbs and the son of King David of Israel by Bathsheba. As David's life was full of turmoil and darkness (though with many triumphs and blessings), he wanted a different life for his sons. His hope for a calmer life began with naming the child; Solomon's name means *the peaceful one*.

Solomon's life was much more peaceful and affluent than his father's life. Perhaps that can be attributed to the way Solomon lived. When God gave him a choice, Solomon chose wisdom over riches (1 Kings 3:4–9), and was known as the wisest man ever to live.

Like his father, Solomon chronicled his life through his writings—David through the book of Psalms, and Solomon through Song of Songs, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes. In Proverbs 3, Solomon is persuading his own son on the benefits of living wisely.

**Proverbs.** A proverb can be defined as a brief and to-the-point saying that expresses a basic truth or practical precept. Teaching by proverbs was an ancient way of teaching among

the Greeks, and it was popularly used because of its plain and simple methodology.

### Background

Though many regard the book of Proverbs as a collection of wise sayings from primarily King Solomon, we would do well to regard the Holy Spirit as the ultimate source. The proverbs are just as timely to be practiced today as when they were first given.

The first chapters of Proverbs are looked upon as a preface—an introduction that explains the book's scope, intention, and background. In most Bibles, Proverbs 1 is labeled as "The Purpose of Proverbs," and chapter two is considered as an invitation to the benefits of wisdom. Chapter three outlines the benefits of wisdom when they are applied because of one's trust in God.

### At-A-Glance

1. Three Regards (Proverbs 3:1–6)
2. Three Exhortations (vv. 7–12)

## In Depth

### 1. Three Regards (Proverbs 3:1–6)

King Solomon advises his son with three regards. The first—to have a continual regard for God’s precepts—can be found in verses 1 and 2. Verse 1 reads, “My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments.” Solomon admonished his son to do more than memorize the Scriptures. Knowing that God’s Word can be forgotten as quickly as it is memorized, Solomon encouraged his son to keep God’s commandments in his heart. While the mind records words, the heart paints pictures with detail and emotions, and gives purpose and inspiration to mere words. There is an often-quoted adage, “People will forget what you said, they will forget what you did, but they will never forget how you made them feel.” It is true that the heart retains what the mind forgets.

The second concern that Solomon encouraged his son to keep was a regard for God’s promises, as found in verse 3. “Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart.” Solomon made sure to let his son know that life wouldn’t always be rosy. He encouraged his son to depend on God’s promises and faithfulness during difficult times. He urged him to wear God’s promises and faithfulness as one wears a treasured necklace, never meant to be removed by its owner. Solomon taught that his son must also have a continual regard for God’s providence. Verse 5 reads, “Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.” Though Solomon was wise and rich and had many forms of success, he taught that none of these things would have been possible without God. So Solomon encouraged his son to seek God’s will, direction, and provision for his life through prayer.

Just as David desired a more peaceful life for his son Solomon, Solomon wanted the same

for his own son. Solomon knew that if his son kept a persistent and continual regard for God’s precepts, promises, and provision, he would lead a life of unspeakable advantages.

### 2. Three Exhortations (vv. 7–12)

Solomon was an exhorter, one who inspired others to action through encouragement. In verses 7 through 12, he gave his son three exhortations, each enforced with a good reason. The first can be found in verse 7, “Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil.” To fear the Lord is to live humbly and dutifully before Him. Some people who consider themselves as wise are self-reliant, prideful, conceited, and arrogant. It is impossible to fear the Lord and be wise in your own eyes. In verse 8, Solomon cited the advantage of fearing the Lord. It is good health and strength of the body, or “health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones.”

“Honour the LORD with thy substance and with the firstfruits of all thine increase,” is the second exhortation, and is found in verse 9. Solomon lived in luxury but recognized that it was poor substance if he had not honored the Lord with it. Solomon was known for dedicating his belongings to the Lord, and he encouraged his son to do the same. The blessing of giving back to the Lord what He gives us is “increase,” as indicated in verse 9.

Verse 11 contains the third exhortation, wherein Solomon advises his son not to disregard God’s correction. Solomon knew that hating, ignoring, or hardening oneself, while under affliction, prolongs it. While being corrected by God is hard, it is necessary. Solomon taught his son that God’s correction is not vindictive or for punishment. It is for grooming and producing, and is done out of love. The advantage of being receptive to God’s correction includes sharing a close, delightful, and loving relationship with God.

### Search the Scriptures

1. What are the advantages of keeping God's Word in the heart (Proverbs 3:2, 4)?
2. Whose path is directed (v. 6)?
3. Whom does the Lord correct (v. 12)?

### Discuss the Meaning

Read verses 11 and 12 and consider this:

If God gives to those who give back to Him, then why are so many tithing Christians financially struggling?

### Liberating Lesson

The cares of life are choking the strength out of families. Financial challenges, underemployment, depression, and addictions are just a few of the things that pull parents away from their families. Today, many parents are too worried, too busy, and too overwhelmed to take time with their children. As a result, we find many children sexting, murdering, failing school, doing drugs, and having babies. In Proverbs 3, we find Solomon—a busy king with 700 wives and 300 concubines—making time to teach his son how to live. How can the Black church as a spiritual community empower parents to become active participants in their children's lives, in spite of life's challenges?

### Application for Activation

If it is not us personally, then we all know people who are struggling to raise their children. Try your best not to judge yourself or them as bad parents, and commit to do better yourself, or to help them do better. Pray for direction, and ask God for help. Do something productive this week: find a counselor, attend a parenting support group, talk with your pastor or other godly parents, get active in your child's school, and talk to your child. With God, it is possible to restore and resurrect parent-child relationships.

### Follow the Spirit

What God wants me to do:

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### Remember Your Thoughts

Special insights I have learned:

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## Say It Correctly

Chronicles. **KRO**-ni-kəlz.  
Septuagint. Sep-**TOO**-ə-jint.  
Torah. **TO**-ra.

## Daily Bible Readings

### DAY 92

2 Samuel 8–12  
Psalm 38:9–16

### DAY 93

2 Samuel 13–15  
Psalm 38:17–21

### DAY 94

2 Samuel 16–18  
Psalm 38:1–4

### DAY 95

2 Samuel 19–21  
Psalm 39:1–6

### DAY 96

1 Kings 1–5  
Psalm 39:7–13

### DAY 97

1 Kings 6–9  
Psalm 40:1–4

### DAY 98

1 Kings 10–14  
Psalm 40:5–8

## Notes

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