

Proverbs chapter 3

V1. Was Solomon writing about his law of the land as he was King, the advice he's dishing out in this book of proverbs or was he writing about God's law? What does he mean by 'let your heart keep my commands?' Jeremiah 31:33.

V2. In what way might keeping the law increase your life expectancy? Deuteronomy 5:16.

V3-4. Orthodox Jews take this verse and Deuteronomy 6:6-9 quite literally. They wear what they call a phylactery, a small leather box containing extracts from the Torah (God's law) which they strap to their head and another on their left arm. What does Jesus say about this? Matthew 23:5. So what do you think Solomon and Moses really mean? How does this differ from perceived wisdom whereby lying, cover up and ruthlessness are seen as a prerequisite to ambition?

V5. Looks easy, doesn't it? But is it in practice? Forget everything you've been taught and instead just trust God. How does that work, practically speaking? We're built to worry and panic when we're in difficulty or danger, that's what adrenaline is for. But is it showing a lack of faith in God if you're awake all night, panicking because they're going to make a load of redundancies at work, your marriage is on the rocks or your little child is facing exclusion at school, or your mortgage or your rent is in arrears? Romans 8:37-39, 2 Kings 6:17-20 and Luke 22:44.

V6. Translations differ wildly

in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight. Proverbs 3:6 NIV

In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths. Proverbs 3:6 NKJV

In all your ways know and acknowledge and recognize Him, And He will make your paths straight and smooth [removing obstacles that block your way]. Proverbs 3:6 AMP

In all thy ways know thou Him, And He doth make straight thy paths. Proverbs 3:6 YLT

Which version do you think has the best ring of truth about it?

Reference John 1:23, spot the difference.

V7. In this context, what does, wise in your own eyes mean? Does Ephesians 1:16-17 render this verse obsolete? Does V7 contradict V13?

V8. Practically speaking, how does this work?

V9-10. Is this the prosperity gospel?

V11-12. Spot the difference between the word son in the Old Testament and son in the New Testament, Romans 8:14. New Testament equivalent of verse 12 is Revelation 3:19.

V13-15. How do you define wisdom? Read 1 Kings 3:5-10. What is an understanding heart? Is it difficult to discern between good and evil?

Verses 13-18 is described in terms of 'courting', similar to the Song of Solomon. Can you see the similarities between looking for a spouse and looking for wisdom? Solomon is

talking about good wisdom. Is there good and bad wisdom in the same way as there's good and bad potential spouses out there?

V16. This link between wisdom and life expectancy, also wealth. When reach a certain age, your natural outlook begins to alter. You realise your body isn't indestructible and needs regular care and attention. You begin to value money instead of splashing out; that is, so long as you have some wisdom.

V17. Is there a link between wisdom and peacemaking? Read James 3:15-18.

V18. The tree of life. Genesis 2:22-24, Revelation 2:7 and Revelation 22:1-3 and verses 14-15. Tree of life was uprooted and relocated in Heaven. Genesis tells us there were two special trees in the Garden, the tree of life and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. The latter was the only one that Adam and Eve were forbidden from even touching. There was no rule against eating from the tree of life. However when they transgressed, they were kicked out of the Garden of Eden, in case they ate from it and lived forever. The Tree of Life in Revelation is so big it spans a river whose source is the throne of God and it also spans a street. It bears fruit once a month and its leaves have medicinal qualities that heal nations. Back to Proverbs. Wisdom is life extending, it bears fruit and it has healing properties.

V19. Wisdom has immense power, it was a principle tool of creation. This is something that even up to today only God can do, and neither man nor Satan can do. We can change the properties of a substance and we can combine substances but we can't create them. Same goes for Satan, he'd be homeless if it weren't for God creating Hell for him.

Colossians 1:16, Matthew 25:41. Note that God also needed understanding to create the heavens and sky, Genesis 1:6-8. Why did God need understanding and why do we need that same understanding and where do we get it from? Put another way, is verse 19 at all relevant to men of Solomon's era and us?

V20. A third attribute is put into the mix, knowledge. Depths were broken up, a reference to Genesis 1:6-10. In this context what is knowledge? Is it something you get from school or college? Is wisdom the same as knowledge? It's the application of knowledge. Can you think of examples of knowledge without wisdom? Is knowledge always a good thing? Genesis 2:16-17. Solomon himself backtracks his advice in Ecclesiastes 1:16-18. Here's a more contemporary example-

A study done by an Oxford University professor of more than 3,300 Facebook users in the UK concluded that there were only 4.1 "dependable" friends out of a typical user's 150 Facebook friends. What was the point or benefit of that study, and how much was that professor paid to undertake it?

This is what Paul thinks- 1 Corinthians 8:1. But let's not be like petulant school boys, thinking, it's cool to be thick, I don't want to be a swat. Isaiah 11:2 describes knowledge as being one of Jesus's attributes. There's good knowledge and bad knowledge. James 3:13-18.

V21. Let them not depart from your eyes. 'Them' are wisdom, understanding and knowledge. What might Solomon mean? Constantly looking at people, situations and information presented to you with wisdom, understanding and knowledge. Don't just take everything at face value.

V22. They are crucial to your soul. Not sure how they make your neck graceful.

V23. With these attributes you'll have confidence in your life. Verse 6 is crucial, how can you go wrong if God is directing your paths? But be aware and avoid traps, Jeremiah 5:26.
1 John 4:1

V24. With wisdom, knowledge and understanding, you'll sleep better. Is that right?

Is wisdom a good thing to be sought after or a bad thing? Ecclesiasties 1:12-18. Is there a bad or dark side?

How and where do we get wisdom? James 1:5