



THE
WORD

SESSION SNAPSHOT

WALKING ON THE PATH OF PROSPERITY

NARRATIVE PASSAGE:

Proverbs 3:1-12

GOSPEL FOCUS:

Hebrews 13:8

TAKEAWAYS:

- The real path to prosperity is paved through the practice of giving
- God is worthy to be trusted with our possessions

LAST WEEK'S READING:

- Proverbs 1-2
- Proverbs 3-4
- Proverbs 16-18
- Proverbs 31
- 1 Kings 11-12

KNOW THE WORD

PASSAGE OVERVIEW

Just as Solomon grew up receiving instruction from his father, he is turning around and instructing his son in the ways of the Lord. In this passage, Solomon shows the importance of obeying the Lord rather than the desires of the heart, and what kind of a fulfilled, abundant life walking with the Lord produces.

COMMENTARY AND STUDY MATERIALS

- v.1 One of the chief commands that pops up all throughout the Old Testament is to remember and not forget what you've been taught. In the culture of the day, much of the transmission of information was not from libraries, but was passed down orally from generation to generation. While books and records certainly existed, they were not as prevalent as they are today, meaning that the information you learned generally came from a trusted source--a person with whom you had a relationship. There is a direct line of transmission of God's Word from one heart to another.
- v.5 "Trust" is the Hebrew word *batah*, which relays the sense of being completely confident and safe in something. Trusting in God means a twofold recognition: who God is and who we are. When we see that we are not the ones in control and that everything we do should be for the purpose of bringing God glory, we find that trusting God becomes easier—though it remains a daily process that begins again each time we wake up.
- v.6 This has been traditionally translated "acknowledge Him," rather than "think about Him." The latter is, perhaps, more faithful to the Hebrew, which is closer to the meaning of "know Him." It points to the intimate experience of a personal relationship with Him. Notice that the sequence of verse 5 and 6 points to a remarkable truth: by trusting in Him, you will fully know Him, and He will make your paths straight.
- vv.11-12 Contrary to what Job's friends said to him, suffering is not just punishment. Joseph suffered at the hands of countless forces he could not control, but they were all molding him into the man he would eventually be—the one who saved both his family and his nation. Hebrews 12:5-6 says that suffering is a sign of being a child of God, which this verse says as well. God is the perfect father, and will discipline those whom He loves, precisely because He loves them.

STUDY THE WORD

Trust is one of the most basic things we need when we are living alongside other people, whether they are close friends, spouses, or even strangers on the street.

Who is the person in your life you trust the most? Why do you trust them?

OUT LOUD, READ PROVERBS 3:1-4

Solomon wrote these words to his son as the secret to living a life pleasing to the Lord. His son would have already trusted him, so read this proverb built around the idea of trusting the Lord from a similar place: coming from someone you can trust, sharing what he has already learned.

Why do you think Scripture tells us so often to remember the things that God has said and done?

When do you find yourself most likely to forget how you've experienced God in your life before?

Remembering the ways that God has worked is one of the easiest ways to trust Him in the future. The Israelites were constantly reminded to not forget the ways that they'd seen the Lord move in their lives, and we should be careful to do the same: God was faithful, He is faithful, and He will be faithful in the future. The more we remember that now, the easier it will be to do the same when we're in tough situations.

OUT LOUD, READ PROVERBS 3:5-8

This passage contains one of the most famous verses in this whole book. Read it with Solomon's life in mind, as well as with what Solomon would have heard David talk about regarding God's faithfulness.

What does it look like to put your trust in somebody?

Why is it so tempting to be impressed with our own wisdom (v.5, 7) instead of leaning on the Lord's?

What does it really look like to trust God? How can you know whether you're actually trusting Him or trusting in yourself?

A missionary told a story about trying to communicate what trust in God looked like. One day, he was walking down the street and saw a man sitting in a chair on his porch, his legs propped up, his head resting behind him on cushions. He asked "what are you doing?" and the man replied, "reclining." This is a picture of what trust looks like: your entire being is involved, and you rely on what is supporting you.

OUT LOUD, READ PROVERBS 3:9-12

God's blessing and discipline are sometimes seen as separate things, but notice as you read how Solomon describes them. They are not different; they're part of the same love the Father shows us.

What does it look like to honor God with your possessions? How does that affect what you buy and what you want?

What outcome does this section tell us comes from honoring God with our possessions and wealth? Have you found that to be true?

Honoring God is more than just putting money in an offering plate, it is a lifestyle. This is how a Christian lives his or her life—on mission. When living a life on mission, a wise question to ask ourselves may be, “How does the Lord want me to use this before I go out and do what I want with it?”

Refer to verses 11 and 12. What do you think of when you read about “the Lord’s discipline”?

Share a story about a time you were corrected and how you responded to it, whether good or bad.

What should our reaction be to being told, in a godly way, that we are out of line?

Discipline hurts sometimes, but it is an unmistakable sign that lets you know you were out of line. We are imperfect and will frequently get off track, and it is discipline that will keep us on the right path. We should love it and be thankful that He cares enough about us to make those corrections.

Would you consider your life abundant and prosperous? Why or why not?

How do you define an abundant and prosperous life?

What do you need to do to get to that point?

It's not wrong to be wealthy and prosperous by the world's standard; the question is, Are you using it in a way that would please Him? We shouldn't be seeking after God SO THAT we can be wealthy. In fact, He promised we'd be persecuted if we follow Him (Matthew 10:16-20, for example). We can get to the point where, even when we are being persecuted for our faith, we still consider our life abundant and prosperous.

APPLY THE WORD

Our entire being is involved in this biblical case study of trusting the Lord. Our minds, our bodies, and even our possessions are absolutely included in this kind of trust: we trust God to direct our minds and our decisionmaking; we trust God to direct the steps we take; we trust God to provide for us as we honor Him with the things He's given us.

Before you close your time in prayer, encourage those in your group to take a few minutes when you are done to answer the following and share updates next week:

Are any of your "ways" not devoted to the Lord? How can you take steps to change that this week?

Do you honor the Lord with the things that you have? What is one thing you can do with something you have this week in order to honor Him with it?

PREPARE FOR NEXT WEEK

Next Week's Reading:

- ***1 Kings 16:29-34; 17***
- ***1 Kings 18-19***
- ***1 Kings 21-22***
- ***2 Kings 2***
- ***2 Kings 5; 6:1-23***