

# God Above All

*June 2, 2024*

## Lesson Summary

### **Main Passages**

Proverbs 3:1-10

### **Session Outline**

1. Value the Word (Proverbs 3:1-4)
2. Trust the Lord (Proverbs 3:5-6)
3. The Wise Life (Proverbs 3:7-10)

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### **Theological Theme**

God is worthy of our trust and honor above all other things.

### **Call to Action**

What decisions are you struggling to make? Prayer is often something we do as a last resort. And yet it should be our first step toward a straight path. In what ways can you “know” or acknowledge God in your decisions?



## Leader Guide

# God Above All

### Introduction

The average person makes between about thirty-five thousand decisions a day.<sup>1</sup> Sometimes it feels like about that many are necessary just to order coffee in our favorite cafe, but before you ever make it to pick up your favorite hot beverage, you've already consciously made many choices. Life is all about choices and a decision for one thing is a decision against something else. Choices matter because one leads to the next and so on.

Scripture emphasizes the truth that decision making affects our lives and our Christian witness. Much is determined by your decision-making process and who or what you rely on to guide you in the choices you make and the direction you go. The world has a plethora of options available to steer you in the way that best lines up with the agenda of the enemy and draws you away from the Lord. Today we will consider how to protect yourself and choose right living in your daily decisions.

- ❓ How would you describe your decision-making ability? Decisive? Indecisive? Confident? Easily swayed? Why?
- ❓ What factors in the world have influence over our decisions? How heavily would you say these weigh in your life?

### Session Summary

Solomon shared practical wisdom about how to live rightly with the Lord in Proverbs 3. Although addressed to his son, these words are applicable to anyone who desires to follow the Lord and live for Him. Solomon stressed the value of the Word of God. We are not to settle for mere head knowledge but to take it God's Word and obey it with our lives.


Trusting God with your whole heart over anything else was Solomon's key point. God is worthy of our trust, and we should not make the mistake of thinking human understanding is more reliable than listening to and obeying His Word.

## 1. Value the Word (Proverbs 3:1-4)

Solomon's words in this chapter were the advice of a father to a son. He warned to never forget the Word of God. Many times, the struggles we face in making decisions connects back to a neglect of the Bible. Solomon stressed the importance of valuing the Word and following it with our lives.

These verses teach us that wisdom is attained through the mastery of God's Word. Scripture is the center of all we do as the body of Christ, and it is the book by which we live the Christian life. The Bible is from God, reveals God, and teaches truth. Only through the study and application of God's Word do we learn how to live for God and share His love with the world.

Valuing the Word is not just about knowing what it says in your head. We do need to know what the Bible says, but we must also apply it to our lives by obeying what it says. Reflecting on the Word is the first step to internalizing its truth and living it out. Someone who knows the Word of God but fails to obey it can be said to have forgotten the Word.

 What are some practical ways to value the Word of God each day?


The Bible is a guide that teaches us how to grow in our faith and how to live as disciples. David called it "a lamp for my feet and a light on my path" (Psalm 119:105). It's profitable to teach, so it's profitable to learn from. Rebuking and correcting also make it useful for preventing; there's no need to be rebuked or corrected if you never did something in the first place. The Bible, when actively consumed, provides us all we need to mature in our faith, a process God designed to happen in the community of His church. Committing ourselves to the discipline of study is a sure step toward attaining wisdom. In the second command from these verses (vv. 3-4), Solomon instructed his son to pursue love and faithfulness, with the result being a good reputation with God and man.

Solomon stressed the role of the heart in valuing the word to live rightly. Outward obedience or behavior is not the end goal. It is vital that you love and obey God as you live in obedience. A righteous life is not just about how a person talks or acts but about the condition of the heart in relationship to God and His Word.

Solomon encouraged his son to keep steadfast love and faithfulness as close as a necklace around his neck. Think about the idea of writing something on your heart or binding it around your neck like a valued piece of jewelry. They should be so valued that they are never forsaken but cherished continually.


### The Wisdom of God

Wisdom is more than a matter of knowing rules of right and wrong; it is a matter of knowing God. The wise trust in the Lord rather than in their own wisdom. They fear and honor Him and accept His discipline. The Lord, not just their awareness of certain principles, protects them.

-  Why are loyalty and faithfulness important (v. 3)? What specific actions and attitudes reveal that we value loyalty and faithfulness?

Who doesn't want the favor and success of both God and man? Those who listen to Solomon's words and pay attention to them can experience a life of blessing. Giving God the credit and glory He deserves is the right choice. While we choose this primarily for the purpose of honoring God, we are told people will also take notice.


Keeping commandments with the heart means totally dedicating oneself to obeying them. For the wise Christian, love and faithfulness should be a part of our very beings. If we follow God's wisdom, we will experience the benefit of favor in our relationships with God and man. We will have a good reputation.

-  Application: What evidence does your life give of how much you value God's Word? How does this compare to how much you would say you value the Bible?


## 2. Trust the Lord (Proverbs 3:5-6)

To walk rightly with the Lord, we must trust Him. Many people claim to value the Word of God and follow Him, but they don't live in active trust of God. Words are not enough if your life doesn't reflect what you say you believe.

Solomon acknowledged our tendency toward a divided heart. He also experienced this firsthand. When you seek to divide your trust between God, the world, and your own wisdom, you aren't trusting the Lord as He intends. God is worthy of all our trust, and we must continually seek to trust Him above all else.

-  Where do you tend to have a divided heart when it comes to trusting God?

In verse 5, trust indicates complete reliance. Picture a servant waiting for the master's command, ready to obey. Or a military soldier yielding to a conquering general. These pictures help us apply this concept to our lives. Instead of looking to serve your selfish nature, how can you be like a servant waiting for instruction from the Lord? What have you been seeking to control that you need to surrender to the Lord?

-  Which of these analogies speaks to you most and why? How is God calling you to respond?

Trusting God with all your heart is an all or nothing idea. This type of trust requires actively putting away our own understanding. We must consciously choose to trust God over what we see and understand when we look at our circumstances. In numerous situations in Scripture, the circumstances looked dire or hopeless but in response to active human trust, God stepped in and everything changed.

Trusting God with all your heart means knowing Him in all you do. Invite God into every area of your life. This means you don't restrict your relationship with the Lord to certain times and places like Sundays or church meetings and small groups but follow your own wisdom and desires at work or hanging out with friends. God wants you to trust and acknowledge Him in every way, every day of your life. As you do, He will direct your path and show you the way to go.

- ❓ Application: Where do you need to actively invite God to reign in your life today? What might this require you putting off or taking on?

### 3. The Wise Life (Proverbs 3:7-10)

We must not think our wisdom is better than God's. This is directly tied to not leaning on our own understanding. Those who are wise in their own eyes are puffed up in vanity and pride and don't see their need for the Lord.

- ❓ How can you know when you are leaning on your own understanding? How can you guard against this on an ongoing basis?

A natural result of trusting God will be a reverent fear of Him. As we trust Him, we come to know Him more closely and grow in awe of Him. As we respect and revere the Lord more, we will turn from evil more readily. The more you are drawn toward the Lord, the more you are drawn away from evil. Growth in holiness and godliness also means a greater awareness and resistance of sin in our lives.


Fearing the Lord is the opposite of being wise in our own eyes. When we fear the Lord, our focus is on Him, and we will see clearly just how great and wise He is and how small and foolish we are. Nothing helps with humility like a clear glimpse of God; seeing Him reminds us of our place.

- ❓ How have you experienced fear of the Lord as the Bible describes? How does humility draw you further into relationship with and trust of God?

Another practical way to show trust in the Lord is in how you treat your possessions. When you truly trust the Lord, you are freed to a life of generosity. God is the giver of all good things, and He provides exactly what you need when you need it. The way you treat possessions and money reflects who or what you trust.

Solomon said we should give God our first and best. It shows we truly trust and honor the Lord when we give our best and first, not the last or leftovers. When you wait to see how much you have left over before giving to God, it is a sign you are relying on material resources over trusting Him. God has unlimited resources, and He knows how to honor and prosper those who honor Him with everything. Solomon said the One who steps out in faith and gives generously will be blessed.




Proverbs 3:9-10 presents an if-then relationship, not a magical formula. Certainly, those who honor God in the way they use their possessions and money will have their needs met. However, even ones with perfect integrity can experience personal or financial loss (Job 1:12-22).

-  Application: How does today's study challenge you to live differently regarding your wealth and possessions?

## Conclusion

These words from Solomon to his son are pertinent to our lives today. We are easily distracted and allow our hearts to be divided when it comes to where we place our trust. To live rightly with God, we must seek to have hearts that fully trust Him and value His Word above all else. This requires knowing the Word of God and displaying obedience to it in all of life.

Regardless of our circumstances, we should always trust the Lord and His instruction more than our own understanding. Solomon pointed out the positive benefits that come from knowing, listening, and living out the Word of God. God will guide us in every situation and is more than faithful to continually meet our needs.

-  Where do you need wisdom today? How can you put your trust in God as you seek to make any significant decisions?
-  How can we as a group encourage one another to trust God instead of relying on our own understanding?
-  How does continual trust of God lead us to share the truth about Him with others?

## Prayer of Response

*Thank the Lord for loving you and directing your steps. Ask for greater ability to trust and obey Him in the coming days.*

## Memory Verse

*Trust in the LORD with all your heart,  
and do not rely on your own understanding;  
in all your ways know him,  
and he will make your paths straight.*  
—Proverbs 3:5-6

## Additional Resources

- *Exalting Jesus in Proverbs* by Daniel Akin and Jonathan Akin
- *Proverbs for You* by Kathleen Nielson
- *Be Skillful* by Warren Wiersbe

## Disciples Multiplying Disciples





# Historical Context of Proverbs

## Purpose

Because these proverbs are in the Bible, they do not just entertain; they exhort, encourage, and offer hope. Solomon called readers, especially youth, to pursue wisdom rather than foolishness. He encouraged the inexperienced to become wise rather than mockers, to be teachable rather than incorrigible, to live rather than to die. He predicted that people who pursued wisdom would generally find success and happiness in this life, but he promised that they would absolutely find joy and blessing in eternity.

## Author

Solomon is credited with the proverbs in chaps. 1–29 of the book of Proverbs (1:1; 10:1). There is biblical evidence that Solomon was wise and a collector of wise sayings (1Kg 3:5–14; 4:29–34; 5:7, 12; 10:2–3, 23–24; 11:41). Chapters 1–24 may have been written down during his reign, 970–931 BC. The proverbs in chaps. 25–29 were Solomon’s proverbs collected by King Hezekiah, who reigned 716–687 BC (25:1). The last two chapters are credited to Agur and Lemuel (30:1; 31:1), about whom nothing else is known. An editor was inspired to collect the proverbs of Solomon, Agur, and Lemuel into the book we now have.

## Setting

The reign of Solomon represented the peak of prosperity for the nation of Israel. The period saw the greatest extent of Israel’s territory, and there was peace and international trade (1Kg 4:20–25; 10:21–29). It is likely Solomon knew about the ancient tradition of wisdom in Egypt (1Kg 3:1), but through inspiration and God’s gift he composed even better sayings (1Kg 3:12; 10:6–7, 23). Solomon addressed his teaching to his son or sons, but these inspired wise sayings are applicable to all people. The book of Proverbs, like the rest of the Bible, contains stories, teaching, and examples. People should make appropriate application of these truths to their own situations (1Co 10:11).

## Special Features

What is a proverb? A secular proverb seeks to state a general (not absolute) truth, such as “a fool and his money are soon parted.” It is typically pithy, that is, it is brief but rich in meaning: “No pain, no gain.” A proverb is practical; it gives advice that is useful in the real world: “A stitch in time saves nine.” It should be applied; the reader should consider what changes he should make in his own life in light of the proverb: “Charity begins at home.” A proverb is derived from astute observations about how life usually works; the creator of a proverb shows himself very knowledgeable and perceptive, able to see what is generally true and to draw conclusions from it: “The pen is mightier than the sword.”

## Extended Commentary

### Proverbs 3:1-10

3:1–12 In this section the odd-numbered verses give a command and the even-numbered verses a promised result (the command continues in v. 6a).

3:2 To have well-being is to be healthy, free from threat or need, and thus fulfilled, content, prosperous, and at peace in a way that only God can grant (Ps 4:8; 119:165).

3:3–4 Loyalty (Hb *chesed*, see note at 19:22) and faithfulness summarize godliness in contrast to the selfish malice and infidelity of the wicked (14:22; 16:6; 20:28; cp. Mt 22:37–40). The son should make them his permanent characteristics, externally and internally.

3:5 To trust anything or anyone other than the Lord results in disaster (11:28; 28:26; cp. Ps 52:7; 62:10; Is 30:12–13; Ezk 16:15). To rely on something—a synonym for “trust”—is to lean on it as if it were a crutch (2Sm 1:6; Jb 8:14–15; Is 50:10). Understanding is good (16:16), but only if it is from the Lord (9:10).

3:6 To know God in all your ways is to invite his presence into all daily activities and decisions. Make your paths straight (or smooth) means that God will make righteousness attainable.

3:7 Turning away from evil and worshiping the Lord is the gist of repentance (Ac 8:22; 26:20), which requires humility (Jr 31:19).

3:8 Body (lit “navel,” Sg 7:2) and bones stand for the entire person.

3:9–10 Possessions is the word for abundant “wealth” (8:18; 10:15; 11:4; 12:27; 13:7, 11; 18:11; 19:4, 14; 28:8, 22; 29:3) or sufficiency (“enough” in 30:15–16), the stored resources that are ready for use. The first produce was the earliest and best of the crop (Dt 18:4). Those who honor God with their wealth will receive more with which to honor him (Mal 3:10; Lk 19:17, 26).<sup>2</sup>

## References

1. Frank Graff, “How Many Decisions Do We Make in One Day?,” PBS North Carolina, August 10, 2022, <https://www.pbsnc.org/blogs/science/how-many-decisions-do-we-make-in-one-day/>.
2. David K. Stabnow, “Proverbs,” in *CSB Study Bible: Notes*, ed. Edwin A. Blum and Trevin Wax (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), 957.