

The Best Advice

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Date: 15 July 2018

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- [0 : 0 0] Well if we could, this evening with the Lord's help and the Lord's enabling, if we could turn back to that portion of scripture that we read in the book of Proverbs, Proverbs chapter 3, and I want to take as our text this evening the words, the familiar words of verses 5 and 6. Proverbs chapter 3 and verse 5, where Solomon says, Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him and he will make straight your paths. What's the best advice you've ever been given? What's the best advice you've ever been given? The best advice I was given, that was by my father. If you don't ask, you don't get. That was the advice he gave. It's not spiritual advice, but it was good advice and it's been useful advice and I've applied that advice to many circumstances and many situations in my life. But you know, advice is an interesting thing because sometimes we want it and sometimes we don't want it. Sometimes the advice we're given is good advice.
- [1 : 3 0] Sometimes the advice we're given is completely useless advice. Sometimes people love giving advice when advice is not required. But sometimes we don't like being given advice even when it's needed. And that's a difficult thing about advice. In order to give advice, we need to be wiser than the person receiving advice. But in order to receive advice, we have to be humble enough to admit that we need advice. And you know, it's hard for us to have areas in our life that we know that need improvement or correction. But the truth is, we all need advice. Whether it's advice about life, whether it's advice about salvation, Christianity, family, relationships, children, cooking, finance, whatever it may be, we all need advice. But it's how we respond to advice that really matters. And that's what the book of Proverbs is all about. It's a book of wise sayings written by King Solomon.
- [2 : 3 7] The book of Proverbs is a book of advice on how to live wisely. And from the outset, Solomon says that the key to true wisdom is to fear the Lord. That's what he says. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. And in this book of Proverbs, Solomon gives to us lots of advice. And he has the authority to give that advice because he was the wisest man who ever lived. And just to quote some good advice that Solomon gives us, to quote a few Proverbs, he says, whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but he who hates reproof is stupid. Another proverb, whoever winks the eye causes trouble, but a babbling fool will come to ruin. Another one, an excellent wife is the crown of her husband, but she who brings shame is like rottenness in his bones. Another, a man of quick temper acts foolishly, and a man of evil devices is hated. Another, righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.

[3 : 42] Another, a soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. And you know, as the wisest man who ever lived, Solomon has good advice to pass on to us.

And it's advice that's applicable to all of us. But you know, I think it's safe to say that the best advice that comes from this book of advice, it comes from these two well-known verses.

Proverbs 3, verse 5 and 6. This is the best advice anyone could ever receive.

And you know, like a father speaking to his son, Solomon wants to give to us the best advice. And as Solomon gives to us the best advice, he reminds us here of two important things.

He reminds us of the need to have confidence in the Lord, and also to take counsel from the Lord. And there are our headings this evening, just two headings tonight.

[4 : 51] The best advice we are to take, to have confidence in the Lord, and we're to take counsel from the Lord. So first of all, we're to have confidence in the Lord.

Confidence in the Lord. Look again at these verses. He says, trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.

These verses, they give to us the best advice. And they're familiar words, and you could say even that they're precious words, because they remind us about our need to have confidence in the Lord.

And that's how Solomon begins. He begins with this command. Trust. He says, trust in the Lord with all your heart. And as you know, the word trust, it means to be full of confidence, to have, to be without doubt, to have assurance and certainty.

And that's what Solomon's command here in verse 5 is. It's trust. Trust the Lord with all your heart. Have confidence in the Lord. But, you know, of course, trusting someone, it doesn't come naturally to us.

[6 : 03] Because, well, we don't trust strangers. Not for any particular reason, except that we just don't know them. And, well, maybe the same was true when you first met your husband, or you met your wife, or you met a friend.

At first, you didn't trust them with your life. Not because you thought that they couldn't be trusted, but because you didn't really know them. But in order to get to know someone, there has to be this knowledge of a person.

You have to get to know them. There has to be a relationship with them. And there has to be, in one sense, an element of love between them. And that all takes time. Getting to know someone takes time.

Trusting someone takes time. Because we can't just trust someone without knowing them, or without having a relationship with them. Or possessing an element of love towards them. We have to get to know them.

And understand them. And build that relationship with them. And we do that by spending time with them. Trust doesn't come immediately. We learn to trust someone.

[7 : 07] We learn to trust someone. And this is why Solomon advises us to trust in the Lord. Because the more we get to know the Lord, the more we will trust him.

But the only way to trust in the Lord is to get to know the Lord. Because we will only trust in the Lord when we know him, when we have a relationship with him, and when we love him.

We will only trust in the Lord when we know him, when we have a relationship with him, and when we love him. but then it raises the question, well, who is the Lord?

Who is this Lord that Solomon advises us to trust in with all our heart? Who is the Lord? And you know, what's interesting is that the Lord's name tells us everything we need to know about him.

Because the name or title, Lord, it's the title of someone who is a king. And the Lord is king. He is king over creation. And he is king over salvation.

[8 : 10] He is the king of kings and he's the Lord of lords. And you know, this is the wonderful thing about the Lord of creation and salvation. He is three persons. He is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

They're not three lords, but they are one Lord. Because God the Father is Lord. God the Son is Lord. God the Holy Spirit is Lord. They're one Lord. And they're Lord over all.

And as the Lord of creation, he has created this world by the word of his power. The book of Genesis reminds us that the Lord God said, let there be.

And it was. And he saw that it was all very good. The Lord of creation, he created all things by the word of his power. And he sustains all things by the word of his power.

Everything is under his sovereign rule and sovereign control. The times, the seasons, the years, the tides, the weather, the sunrise, the sunset.

[9 : 10] Everything is under his sovereign rule and sovereign control. Not even a sparrow can fall to the ground without him knowing. Because the Lord, he has appointed all things.

Every providence. Every experience. Every circumstance. Every meeting. Every parting. Every illness. Every sadness. Every sorrow. The Lord has appointed all things.

He has appointed the day of our birth. And he has also appointed the day of our death. He is Lord over all creation. But more than that. He is the Lord over our salvation.

And as Lord, he created all things by the word of his power in the space of six days. And all very good. But sin destroyed that. Sin ruined and marred the perfect creation which the Lord had made.

And the only remedy to the ruin which sin had caused. Was the promise of salvation. And as Lord over all. The Lord, this is the thing. The Lord could have left us in our estate of sin and misery.

[10 : 20] He could have left us to suffer the loss of communion with him. He could have left us to remain under his wrath and his curse. He could have left us to be made liable to all the miseries of this life.

To death itself. And to the pains of hell forever. The Lord could have left us in our ruin of sin and misery. But yet out of his own good pleasure.

According to his great love for us. And his mercy upon us. And his kindness towards us. The Lord provided a remedy to our ruin. In the promise of salvation.

And that promise of salvation. It came to us by way of a covenant. And this is important for us to remember. Because the name or title Lord.

When we see it written here in capital letters. It means the one who keeps covenant. The one who keeps covenant. And you know it's safe to say that the Lord certainly lives up to his name.

[11 : 20] Because when the Lord entered into a covenant. That covenant of grace with Abraham. Back in Genesis chapter 12. It was a covenant of grace.

And it was a covenant of grace. Because there was nothing that could sever the Lord's covenant promise with his people. It was a binding promise to which the Lord bound himself.

He covenanted himself to his people. And because the Lord bound himself to his covenant. He will never break his promise. And he will always remain faithful to his covenant.

He is the one who keeps covenant. And you know it's because the Lord has revealed himself. As the one who is sovereign over all things. And faithful to his covenant promise.

It's because the Lord has made himself known. And acted towards us according to his grace. And demonstrated his love for us in the person of Jesus Christ. And he even proved his mercy offered towards us in the cross at Calvary.

[12 : 22] It's because of all this that the Lord is worthy of our trust. He is worthy of our trust. And because of who the Lord is.

We have no reason to doubt him. We have no reason not to trust him. We have no reason not to get to know him. Because the Lord is faithful.

The Lord is dependable. He's reliable. He's trustworthy. And you know my friend. This is the best advice you could ever be given. Trust in the Lord.

Trust in the Lord. But notice what Solomon says. Solomon says that you must trust in the Lord. With all your heart.

With all your heart. Not some of your heart. Not part of your heart. Not most of your heart. But all of your heart. You're to give the Lord your whole heart.

[13 : 21] Because he has made himself known to you. And he is worthy of your trust. Trust in the Lord. He says. With all your heart. And you know this is the call of Christianity.

Because the call of Christianity. Is to trust in the Lord. With all your heart. But you know those who refuse to trust the Lord. With all their heart. They seek to do the opposite.

As it says in the second half. They seek to lean upon their own understanding. And that's how those who don't trust the Lord live. They live leaning upon their own understanding. They live leaning upon their knowledge.

Upon their intellect. Upon their education. They live leaning upon their feelings. Or their emotions. Or their experiences. They live leaning upon their finances. Their health. Their comforts.

Their friends. Their family. Those who refuse to trust the Lord. With all their heart. They are leaning upon their own understanding. And you know as Solomon. As he gives to us the best advice.

[14 : 21] He says. Don't do that. Don't even think about it. Don't lean upon your own understanding. Because your understanding. It's so limited.

It's so finite. It's so changeable. It's so inadequate. Don't lean upon your own understanding. Because. It will only lead you astray. Trust in the Lord.

With all your heart. And trust him. With every circumstance. And every situation. You face in this life. Because my friend. There's no one else like the Lord. There's no one else like the Lord.

He is creator. He's sustainer. He is saviour. He's infinite. Eternal. And unchangeable. He's omnipotent. Omniscient. And omnipresent. He's gracious.

Loving. And merciful. He's the one who keeps covenant. With those who trust him. My friend. If this is the Lord. That's revealed to us. On the pages of scripture.

[15 : 20] Then why on earth. Would you want to lean upon your own understanding? Why would you want to lean. Upon your own understanding? Why would you want to trust. In yourself? Why would you want to lean upon.

Anyone. Or anything else. Apart from the Lord. Because what the Bible reminds us. Is that the Lord is worthy of our trust.

We are not worthy of him. But he is certainly worthy of our trust. He is worthy of our trust.

And you know. This was true of a woman called. Louisa Stead. Louisa Stead. She was a missionary in South Africa. During the 19th century. She was originally from Dover.

In the south of England. And she was actually converted. At the age of nine. But Louisa Stead. She emigrated to America. Before entering the mission field. And she went to America.

[16 : 18] And she married there in 1875. And only a few years later. She and her husband. And their four-year-old daughter. They were on a beach one day.

And it was on that day. That Louisa Stead's life. Changed forever. They went to the beach. At Long Island in New York. And they went for a picnic.

And just as they sat down. They heard the cries of a young boy. Drowning in the sea. So Louisa's husband. Straight away. He dived into the water. But as what often happens.

Is that the rescuer. Is also pulled under the water. And sadly that day. Both the young boy. And Louisa Stead's husband. Drowned right before their eyes.

But you know. It was out of her anguish. And her sorrow. That Louisa Stead. Wrote a beautiful hymn. About trusting in Jesus. And leaning upon. His promises.

[17 : 17] And the hymn. It opens. With the words. 'Tis so sweet. To trust in Jesus. Just to take him at his word. Just to rest upon his promise. Just to know.

Thus saith the Lord. Jesus. Jesus. How I trust him. How I've proved him. O'er and o'er. Jesus. Jesus. Jesus. Precious Jesus. O for grace.

To trust him more. O for grace. To trust him more. And you know. As it is with many hymns. They're born out of circumstances. And situations.

Of heartache and sorrow. And yet. They affirm to us. That leaning upon our understanding. Our own understanding. It's of no help to us. Because when our life.

Is turned upside down. In a moment. Who else can we turn to? Who else can we trust in? Who else can we look to? And lean upon. But the Lord.

[18 : 15] Who else? But the Lord. My friend. This is the best advice. We could ever be given. Because we're being called. To have confidence in the Lord.

By trusting in the Lord. With all our heart. But the best advice Solomon gives. It's twofold. Because it not only involves. Having confidence in the Lord.

It also involves. The need to take counsel. From the Lord. That's what we see secondly. Counsel from the Lord. We'll read these verses again.

Solomon says. Trust in the Lord. With all your heart. Do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways. Acknowledge him. And he will make straight. Your paths.

And you know. This advice from Solomon. It really is the best advice. And it's the best advice. Because it's all encompassing. It's all encompassing advice. And I say that.

[19 : 14] Because Solomon advises. That you should first of all. Have confidence in the Lord. By trusting in the Lord. With all your heart. But then Solomon says. That the only way.

You can trust in the Lord. With all your heart. Is to acknowledge the Lord. In all your ways. The only way. You can trust the Lord. With all your heart. Is to acknowledge the Lord.

In all your ways. And you know. I love that phrase. Acknowledge him. The beginning of verse 6. Acknowledge him. The phrase literally means.

Let him know. Let him know. Therefore. The only way. We can trust the Lord. With all our heart. Is to let the Lord know.

All our ways. Because as we said. In order to trust someone. We have to know them. We have to. Have a relationship. With them. And that's what Solomon. Is reminding us here. That the only way. You can trust the Lord.

[20 : 09] With all your heart. Is by getting to know him. Getting to know him. As your creator. As your sustainer. The one who keeps you. He's your savior. He's the one who's infinite.

Eternal. And unchangeable. He's omnipotent. Omniscient. And omnipresent. He's gracious. Loving. And merciful. He's the one who keeps covenant. With those. Who trust him. The only way.

You can trust the Lord. With all your heart. Is by getting to know him. And as you get to know the Lord. Solomon. Advises that you have to. Acknowledge the Lord. You have to let him know.

Everything that's going on. In your life. In all your ways. Acknowledge him. In all your ways. Let him know. Solomon.

In all your ways. And of course. What Solomon is talking about here. Is the importance of prayer. Bringing everything to the Lord. In prayer. Because as Solomon is advising here.

[21 : 05] The only way you can trust the Lord. With all your heart. Is to acknowledge the Lord. In all your ways. And you know. Thinking about it. Solomon must have learned this.

From his father. David. Because as you know. David. He's recorded in the Bible. As a man. After God's own heart. But David was also.

A man of prayer. And many of the Psalms. They are David's prayers. And they all. They repeatedly affirm to us. That the only way. You can trust the Lord. With all your heart.

Is to acknowledge the Lord. In all your ways. And that was certainly. True of David's life. So much so. That David prayed. And he thanked the Lord. As we were singing. In Psalm 139.

David prayed. And thanked the Lord. That the Lord knows. Everything about him. He says. O Lord. Thou hast me searched unknown. Thou knowest my sitting down.

[21 : 59] And rising up. Yea all my thoughts. Afar to thee are known. My footsteps. And my lying down. Thou compassest. Always. Thou also most. Entirely art.

Acquaint. With all my ways. And so in Psalm 139. David confesses. That the Lord was acquainted. The Lord knew. All his ways.

Not only because the Lord knew. Everything about David. But also because David. Acknowledged the Lord. In all his ways. David let the Lord know. What was going on.

In his life. And Solomon is advising. That's what we do too. Because Solomon says. In all your ways. Acknowledge him. In all your ways.

Let the Lord know. What's going on. Let him know. What's going on. In your heart. And your mind. And your circumstances. But you know.

[22 : 54] More specifically. The phrase. All your ways. It can also be translated. As all your roads. Or all your paths. And you know. When you think about it.

As. In all your paths. Acknowledge. The Lord. It gives to us. This vivid imagery. That. Throughout our journey. Through life.

We all take different paths. We're all on a different path. Tonight. And there are lots of paths. That come our way. In life. Some.

Are avoidable. Some are unavoidable. We all take different paths. Throughout our journey. In life. But what Solomon advises. Is that.

If you want to trust the Lord. With all your heart. Then whatever path. You are on. Let him know. Acknowledge the Lord. In all your paths.

[23 : 50] Speak to the Lord. Pray to the Lord. Ask the Lord. For guidance. Let the Lord know. What path. You're on. Whether it's a path of. Illness. Or a path of health.

Whether it's a path of worry. Or a path of strength. Whether it's a path of anxiety. Or a path of. Of direction. Whether it's a path of doubt. Or a path of assurance. Whether it's a path of pain.

Or a path of help. Help. Whether it's a path of. Loneliness. Or a path of companionship. Or a path of sorrow. Or a path of joy. Or a path of salvation. Or a path of even damnation.

Whatever path you're on. Whether it's a narrow path. Or a broad path. The wonderful thing about Solomon's advice. To us tonight. Is that. It's applicable to every single one of us.

Because whatever path we're on tonight. Whatever our circumstances. Whatever our situations. Whatever our concerns. Whatever our worries. Whatever we may be faced with. Even things that we don't understand.

[24 : 52] The wonderful thing is. We come to a God who knows. And a God who understands. The Lord knows what path we're on. And he knows the way that we take.

That was Job's confession. In the midst of all that he went through. He lost his family. He lost his. His job.

He lost his wealth. He lost his wife. Job. Lost everything. And yet in it all. Job trusted the Lord with all his heart. And he acknowledged the Lord in all his ways.

Which is why Job confessed. He knows the way that I take. And when he has tried me. I shall come forth as gold. My friend.

This is the best advice. Because we're being advised to trust in the Lord with all our heart. And we're being advised to acknowledge the Lord in all our ways.

[25 : 50] In every path of life. We are to have confidence in the Lord. And we are to take counsel from the Lord. And the counsel which the Lord gives. When we acknowledge him.

His counsel. Is from his word. Solomon says that when you trust in the Lord with all your heart. And you acknowledge the Lord in all your ways. It's then that the Lord will direct your path.

It's not that the Lord will make your path straight. The ESV I have to confess. It's a poor translation. Because by saying that the Lord will make your path straight. It can give us false hope.

Which is something the Bible never gives. Because the Bible never promises that trusting in the Lord. Will make for an easy life. The Bible never promises that the Lord will answer all our prayers the way we want them answered.

The Bible never promises that the Lord will make every twist and every turn in the path of life straight. The Bible never promises that. But the Bible does promise that when you trust in the Lord with all your heart.

[26 : 54] And when you acknowledge the Lord in all your ways. The Bible promises that the Lord will direct your path. And my friend whatever path you're on.

The Lord will always direct your path. By his word. Because as our catechism reminds us. The word of God is the only rule.

To direct us. It's the only rule. And this word will direct us. Because this book. It's a living book. And it speaks into every situation.

And every circumstance. And every experience. Don't forget it. This book still speaks. And it gives direction. To every path we are on in life.

Therefore we must take our counsel. From the Lord. And his word. And you know it was David who prayed in Psalm 16. That the Lord would guide him and direct him in all his paths.

[27 : 55] And we'll sing these words in a moment. Because. They remind us that David. As we said. David trusted the Lord with all his heart. And he acknowledged the Lord in all his ways.

David had confidence in the Lord. And he took counsel. From the Lord. And David's response to the advice he was given. Was that he confessed about the Lord.

It was beautiful what he said. Thou wilt me show the path of life. Of joys that is full store. Before thy face. At thy right hand. Are pleasures evermore.

The Lord was directing his path. Friends. This evening Solomon is giving to us. The best advice.

And with this advice. He has reminded us of. Two important things. The need to have confidence in the Lord. And the need to take counsel.

[28 : 54] From the Lord. Because the only way. That you can trust in the Lord. With all your heart. Is to acknowledge the Lord. In all your ways. The only way.

You can trust the Lord. With all your heart. Is to acknowledge the Lord. In all your ways. And when. You do that. The promise here.

Is that he. Will direct your paths. This is the best advice. You could ever be given. The best advice.

But you know. Advice is only useful. Advice. It all depends on how we respond. To the advice.

Doesn't it? It's how we respond. To the advice. That really matters. How do we respond. To the best advice. That could ever be given.

[29 : 51] Trust in the Lord. With all your heart. Do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways. Acknowledge him. And he. Shall direct your paths.

May the Lord bless. These thoughts to us. Let us pray. O Lord. Our gracious God. We give thanks to thee.

That. The word of God. Who gives direction. To us. We thank thee Lord. That even in our waywardness. That when we go off track. That when we drift.

And when we slide. That thy word. Is one that directs us. To the rock. That is higher than us. And Lord. We plead with thee. Anew this evening. That thou wouldst enable us.

To keep trusting thee. That where our trust. Has maybe grown cold. Or weak. That we would renew. Our desire. And our. Our trust in thee.

[30 : 46] To keep trusting. As the hymn writer said. O for grace. To trust him more. O Lord. How we need thy grace. To trust thee. That when the world. The flesh. And the devil.

Come upon us. And all these distractions. That are around us. They take our mind. And our heart. Away from thee. But yet Lord. We thank thee. For thy word. That gives to us.

The best advice. To keep trusting. To keep looking. To keep pressing. To keep going on. Towards. The call of God.

In Christ Jesus. Help us Lord. We pray. To trust in thee. With all our heart. And to lean not. Upon our own understanding. But in all our ways. To acknowledge thee.

For thou art the only one. Who will direct our path. All Lord. Lead us and guide us. Then we pray. Show us thy way. Teach us thy path. And lead us. In the ways everlasting.

[31 : 42] Go before us. Then we ask us. Bless us. In the week. That lies ahead. A week Lord. That is unknown to us. But we commit every care. And keeping. Into thy hand. Knowing Lord.

That thou art one. Who watches over us. Do us good. Then we pray. Go before us. For Jesus sake. Amen. We shall conclude our service.

By singing those words. In Psalm 16. Psalm 16. Page 216. Psalm 16.

We're singing from verse 8. Down to the verse Mark 11. Psalm 16.

Before me still the Lord I said. Sith it is so that he. Doth ever stand at my right hand. I shall not moved be. Down to the end of the psalm. Thou wilt me show the path of life.

[32 : 45] Of joys that is full store. Before thy face at thy right hand. Our pleasures evermore. These verses to God's praise. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Before me still the Lord I said. Sith it is so that he.

Doth ever stand at my right hand. God I shall not move thee be.

Because of this my heart is glad, and joy shall be expressed.

In thy my glory are my flesh, and confidence shall rest.

[34 : 05] Because my soul, in grip to dwell, shall not be left by thee.

Nor wilt thou give thine holy one, for I've shone to see.

Thou wilt be sure the path of life, of joy there is full store.

Before thy face, at thy right hand, are pleasures evermore.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all, now and forevermore. Amen.