



THE EXHORTATION OF WISDOM 3:1-35

After *wisdom* is received [2:10], it is necessary that it be listened to and retained. This chapter contains several practical exhortations, and useful precepts of *wisdom*. These exhortations and precepts are intended to regulate behavior and thoughts and will prove to be profitable to those who follow them.

I. AN EXHORTATION TO FOLLOW WISDOM'S TEACHING [verses 1-4]

1. There Must Be A Continual Regard For What Is Written In The Word Of God [verse 1]. These verses teach that the impressions of the Word of God must be retained.

☞ *“My son forget not my law”* The sequence is HEAR GOD'S WORD [1:8], RECEIVE GOD'S WORD [2:10], then REMEMBER GOD'S WORD! Godly living (wisdom) involves one's mind and memory. Godliness (wisdom) is associated with a regard and respect for God's law. In order to remember the Word of God read it and hear it repeatedly, meditate upon it, and constantly apply it to your life.

☞ *“let thine heart keep my commandments”* This is another stage in the process of living a life of wisdom, and involves the *“heart”* To *“keep my commandments”* is to cleave to them, and to obey them, and is another way to remember, for what is held unto and practiced is not easily forgotten.

There is a promise, as a way of encouragement [verse 2]. Three specifics are mentioned *“length of days”* *“long life”* and *“peace”* This has reference to usefulness and joy in life. THE WAY TO LIVE A USEFUL AND JOYFUL LIFE IS TO HEAR, RECEIVE, AND REMEMBER GOD'S WORD ALWAYS HAVING GOD'S WORD IN VIEW, CLEAVING TO AND OBEYING IT!

2. Live In The Exercise Of Mercy And Truth [verse 3]. *“Mercy”* (tenderness and compassion of heart toward others, love in action). *“Truth”* (faithfulness to God). These two things *“mercy”* and *“truth”* comprehend the duty toward God and man. There are three actions that we are to take regarding *“mercy and truth”*

☞ *“Let not mercy and truth forsake (leave) thee”* Never be without these.

☞ *“bind (tie) them (mercy and truth) about thy neck”* Keep these always near and in view.

☞ *“write (register and engrave) them upon the table of thine heart”* Do not forget them, keep them in memory.

There is a promise, as a way of encouragement [verse 4]. Following the direction of verse 3 will result in being esteemed by God and man as a person of understanding.

II. AN EXHORTATION TO DEPEND UPON GOD [verses 5-8]

1. There Should Be Full-Hearted Trust In The Lord [verse 5].

☞ *“Trust in the LORD with all thine heart”* This is the positive side of the exhortation. To *“trust in the LORD”* is to place confidence in Him, to rely upon Him, to depend upon Him, to believe in Him, to be persuaded by Him, to be surrendered to Him, to lean, and to rest upon Him, cleaving to Him, looking to Him, coming to Him, and living in the reality of Him. There are many exhortations to *“trust in the LORD”* [Psalm 37:3, 5; 115:11; Isaiah 26:4; 50:10]. This *“trust”* is to be *“with all thine heart”*

☞ *“and lean not unto thine own understanding”* This is the negative side of the exhortation, and further defines *“trust”* To *“trust”* is to *“lean”* and is the opposite of trusting or leaning upon self.

2. There Should Be An Acknowledgement Of The Lord [verse 6].

☞ *“In all thy ways”* (this has reference to one’s designs, aims, intentions, actions, and circumstances), *acknowledge* (to own, to recognize, or to make known) *Him”*

- To acknowledge God is to **recognize Him as Master**, to **recognize His authority**, and **our position before Him**.
- To acknowledge God is to **consult God in all things**, to **listen** and to **submit to His authority**.
- To acknowledge God is to **have a spirit of resignation**, and to be **willing to give up our own ways and desires to His commands**.
- To acknowledge God is to be **conscious of His presence**, of **His wisdom**, of **His power**, of **His promises**, of **His Word**, of **His faithfulness**, **goodness**, **mercy**, and **grace**.
- To acknowledge God is to **exalt God in all things**.
- To acknowledge God is to **praise God in all things**, and to **rejoice in God**.
- To acknowledge God is to **give thanks to God**.
- To acknowledge God is to **be always mindful of Him**.
- To acknowledge God is to **seek the blessing of God**.

There is a promise as way of encouragement-"*and He shall direct thy paths*" [verse 5]. To "*direct*" is "*to point or aim in a straight line toward something, to show the right road or course*" Such direction should be sought [Psalm 5:8; 25:5; 27:11; 143:10]. He will direct by wise counsel [Psalm 73:24], by Divine illumination [Luke 1:79], and by the indwelling of the *Holy Spirit* [Ezekiel 36:27].

3. There Should Be A Forsaking Of Self-Conceit [verse 7].

☞ "*Be not wise in thine own eyes*" This is reiterated by *Paul* in **Romans 12:16** "*Be not wise in your own conceits*" and means "*Do not think that you can stand by your own wisdom, independent of God's wisdom*" The "*wise in thine own eyes*" is he that leans on his own understanding. The antidote is "*Trust in the LORD with all thine heart*"

☞ "*Fear the LORD*" This is the antidote to being "*wise in thine own eyes*" Being "*wise in thine own eyes*" will keep one from fearing the Lord, and fearing the Lord will keep one from being "*wise in thine own eyes*"

☞ "*and depart from evil*" The "*fear of the LORD*" will cause one to "*depart from evil*" [Proverbs 14:16].

There is a promise as a way of encouragement-"*It shall be health* (strength and well-being), *to thy navel, and marrow* (life, vitality, passion, and vigor) *to thy bones*"

III. AN EXHORTATION TO HONOR GOD WITH WHAT ONE HAS [verses 9-10]

1. Honour The Lord-To "*honour the LORD*" is to give Him distinction, and acclaim it is to reverence Him, and to glorify and exalt Him, to show Him esteem, respect, and admiration.

2. Honour The Lord With Both Substance And Increase-The word "*substance*" has reference to capital, and the word "*increase*" has reference to profit. WE ARE TO HONOUR GOD WITH EVERYTHING THAT WE HAVE! Everything is God's [Exodus 19:5; Psalm 24:1; 50:10; Haggai 2:8]. He is the great bestower [I Chronicles 29:11-12], and we as His stewards are to use whatever we have received to glorify Him!

There is a promise as a way of encouragement [verse 10]. One will not become poorer by giving to the Lord's honour.

IV. AN EXHORTATION CONCERNING THE CHASTENING OF THE LORD [verses 11-12]

What is taught in these verses is reiterated in **Job 5:17; Psalm 94:12; Hebrews 12:5-6; Revelation 3:19.**

I. There Must Be A Proper Appreciation And Attitude Toward The Discipline Of The Lord [verse 11].

☞ *“My son despise not the chastening of the LORD”* To *“despise”* means *“to set lightly by, to have little esteem of, not to value, to reject”* The word *“chastening”* has to do with the **discipline**, **training** and **teaching** that God uses toward His children. This *“chastening”* has different aspects and purposes, such as **retributive** (punishment), **corrective**, **educative**, **strengthening** [James 1:2-3], and **preventive** [II Corinthians 12:7].

- The various aspects of this *“chastening”* is seen from the various words used to describe it. The word *“correction”* and *“correcteth”* [verses 11-12], meaning *“to set right”* The word *“rebuked”* [Hebrews 12:5], meaning *“to express sharp disapproval”* The word *“scourgeth”* [Hebrews 12:6], referring to *“a whip as an instrument of punishment”* corresponding to the word *“rod”* [Micah 6:9]. The word *“contendest”* [Job 10:2], indicative of *“God being a force against”*

- The *“chastening of the LORD”* is despised by **callousness** (a general lack of regard unto God’s admonitions and instructions). ONE WILL NEVER ATTAIN WISDOM BY BEING CALLOUS TOWARD THE ADMONITIONS AND INSTRUCTION OF THE LORD! The *“chastening of the LORD”* is despised by **complaining**. This is what the *Israelites* did in the wilderness on numerous occasions. The *“chastening of the LORD”* is despised by **carelessness**. There should be an examination of one’s heart and ways [Job 6:24; 10:2; Proverbs 4:26; Haggai 1:5; Micah 6:9].

☞ *“neither be weary of His correction”* THIS IS A WARNING AGAINST DESPAIR UNDER THE CHASTENING OF THE LORD! The word *“weary”* conveys the idea of being *“worn out, and exhausted”* The writer of Hebrews states; *“nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him”* [Hebrews 12:5]. The Lord’s *“correction”* is not *“joyous (delightful), but grievous”* [Hebrews 12:11]. But notice, there is an *“afterward”* [Hebrews 12:11]. The Lord’s *“correction”* is something that must be endured in order to receive its benefit.

- It is to be endured **prayerfully** [II Chronicles 16:12-13].
- It is to be endured **humbly** [Psalm 119:75; I Peter 5:6].
- It is to be endured **believing** [Psalm 27:13].
- It is to be endured **thankfully** [I Corinthians 11:32].
- It is to be endured **submissively** [Leviticus 10:1-3; I Samuel 3:18; Psalm 39:9].

2. There Must Be A Proper View Of The Lord’s Discipline [verse 12]. The *“chastening of the LORD”* should be viewed as flowing from God’s **love!** He does not chasten as a Judge, but as a Father, therefore it should be viewed as a manifestation of God’s **care**, and as something that is **profitable** [Hebrews 12:10-11].

Heavenly wisdom teaches us neither to **despise** God's discipline, nor to be given over to **despair** under God's disciplinary training, but to humbly submit to Him, realizing that chastisement is a family mark, a sign of sonship [Hebrews 12:6-8], a proof of God's love, and a token of His Fatherly kindness and care, and is to secure our spiritual well-being [Hebrews 12:9-10].

V. AN EXHORTATION CONCERNING THE VALUE OF WISDOM [verses 13-20]

1. Wisdom Must Be Obtained-*"Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding"* There are two key words "findeth" and "getteth" which imply that true heavenly "*wisdom*" is not in man naturally. IT IS SOMETHING HE MUST FIND AND GET! The word "findeth" implies **search** and the word "getteth" means "*draweth out*" implying that WISDOM MUST BE GOTTEN FROM ANOTHER, AN OUTSIDE SOURCE!

2. Heavenly Wisdom Brings A Happiness That Transcends The Happiness Found In Wealth [verses 14-15].

☞ *"For the merchandise (commodities, and produce) of it (wisdom and understanding) is better than the merchandise (commodities and produce) of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold"* [verse 14]. HEAVENLY WISDOM IS MORE SURE AND A GREATER GAIN THAN SILVER OR GOLD, OR ANYTHING THAT SILVER AND GOLD CAN BUY! Therefore greater and more strenuous effort ought to be put forth in the obtaining of "*wisdom*" and "*understanding*" than that of obtaining silver or gold!

☞ *"She is more precious (valuable and rare), than rubies: and all things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her"* [verse 15]. HEAVENLY WISDOM IS MORE NECESSARY AND ADVANTAGEOUS THAN SILVER, GOLD, OR RUBIES! Therefore greater and more strenuous effort, and greater concern ought to be displayed in retaining "*wisdom*" and "*understanding*" than that which is displayed in the retaining of earthly wealth.

3. Heavenly Wisdom Brings A Happiness That Is Inclusive Of All Those Things Which Are Supposed To Make People Happy [verses 16-17].

4. Heavenly Wisdom Is A Happiness Of Paradise [verse 18].

5. Heavenly Wisdom Is A Participation In The Happiness Of God Himself [verses 19-20].

This happiness is not the object of pursuit, not the thing that we are to chase and run after, not the thing that we are to strive for, and seek, and go in search of, not the thing that we are to be occupied with, but is the **result** of living with the right object and goal, the **result** of a life rightly lived. Here in **Proverbs** it is the result of “*wisdom*” and “*understanding*” [3:13]. There is a happiness that is independent of **change** and **circumstances**, a happiness that can be experienced in the very midst of **calamities**, **sorrow**, and **trials** [Habakkuk 3:17-18; II Corinthians 6:10]. *Paul* and *Silas* with bleeding backs, had a song in their heart, and sang praise to God! The writer of **Hebrews** wrote of those who “*took joyfully the spoiling of your goods*” [Hebrews 10:34]. This is a happiness that is not based upon **feeling good**, or **certain preferences, conditions, and desires being met**. It is a happiness that is not based upon **acceptance and recognition**, or upon certain **attainments**. IT IS A HAPPINESS THAT IS INDEPENDENT OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF LIFE! This happiness is an inward **calm** and **satisfaction** even in the midst of that which is seemingly adverse! It is a happiness that **excels** all others, a happiness that is **abundant** (overflowing), a happiness that cannot be fully described or explained [I Peter 1:8]. THERE IS A HAPPINESS THAT IS NOT MERELY SHORT-LIVED AND TEMPORARY! A HAPPINESS THAT GOES BEYOND JUST A NOW AND THEN EXPERIENCE! THERE IS A HAPPINESS THAT IS A WAY OF LIFE! But this kind of happiness is a **result** not a pursuit! Man can have the “*pleasures*” of God, and there is a “*gladness*” that only God can give [Psalm 36:8; 46:4], but they are not found in the things or the philosophies of the world. Happiness as a way of life is the result of **seeing the Lord in our life** [Psalm 16:8-9]. Happiness as a way of life is the result of **recognizing and acknowledging God as God** [Psalm 144:15]. Happiness as a way of life is the result of **trusting the Lord** [Proverbs 16:20]. Happiness as a way of life is the result of **reverence to God** [Proverbs 28:14]. Happiness as a way of life is the result of **keeping God’s law** [Proverbs 29:18]. Happiness as a way of life is the result of **knowing and obeying the teachings of Christ** [John 13:17]. Happiness as a way of life is not the result of a life without suffering, but the result of **enduring suffering as Christ** [James 5:11]. Happiness as a way of life is the result of a **life not patterned after the ungodly** [Psalm 1:1], and a **mind saturated with the Word of God** [Psalm 1:2]. Happiness as a way of life is the result of **certain attitudes** known as the “*Beattitudes*” [Matthew 5:3-11]. All of these things are the result of heavenly “*wisdom*” and HAPPINESS AS A WAY OF LIFE IS THE RESULT OF HEAVENLY WISDOM [Proverbs 3:18].

VI. AN EXHORTATION TO HAVE LIVES GOVERNED BY WISDOM [verses 21-35]

1. The Exhortation To Look To And To Keep Wisdom [verse 21].

2. The Encouragement To Enforce The Exhortation [verses 22-26].

☞ “*So shall* (in order that) *they* (wisdom and discretion), *be life unto thy soul*” [verse 22]. Such brings spiritual **strength** and **satisfaction**.

☞ *“and grace to thy neck”* [verse 22]. Heavenly *“wisdom”* will beautify life.

☞ *“Then shalt thou walk in thy way safely”* [verse 23]. Heavenly *“wisdom”* brings safety, and shelter sparing the individual much harm.

☞ *“thy foot shall not stumble”* [verse 23]. Heavenly *“wisdom”* brings security and consistency.

☞ *“When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid”* [verse 24]. Heavenly *“wisdom”* brings confidence and courage.

☞ *“thy sleep shall be sweet”* [verse 24]. Heavenly *“wisdom”* brings peace, tranquility, and contentment.

In verses 23-24, it is revealed that heavenly *“wisdom”* provides one with safety and security in daily walk, and in verses 25-26 there is also the provision of safety and security in sudden and unexpected dangers as well.

3. The Leadings Of Wisdom [verses 27-31]. This heavenly *“wisdom”* will lead one to be just [verse 27], to be benevolent [verse 28], will prevent one from devising evil [verse 29], and will keep one from unnecessary strife [verse 30], and will prevent one from being envious [verse 31].

4. The Blessings Of Being Governed By Heavenly Wisdom [verses 32-35]. In these verses there is a contrast drawn between those who are not governed by the rules of *“wisdom”* and those who are governed by the rules of *“wisdom”*. Those who are not governed by *“wisdom”* are referred to as the *“froward”* [verse 32], the *“wicked”* [verse 33], the *“scorners”* [verse 34], and the *“fools”* [verse 35]. Those who are governed by *“wisdom”* are referred to as the *“righteous”* [verse 32], the *“just”* [verse 33], the *“lowly”* [verse 34], and the *“wise”* [verse 35].

☞ *“His secret is with the righteous”* [verse 32]. The things of the Lord are revealed to those who are governed by *“wisdom”*

☞ *“He blesseth the habitation of the just”* [verse 33]. The word *“blesseth”* stands in contrast to the word *“curse”* (sign of God’s displeasure, a burning indignation). *“He blesseth the habitation of the just”* God brings pleasure (happiness and delight) to the house of the one under the government of heavenly *“wisdom”*

☞ *“He giveth grace unto the lowly”* [verse 34]. Those who are governed by the rules of heavenly *“wisdom”* find the favor, acceptance, and kindness of God.

☞ *“The wise shall inherit glory”* [verse 35]. The wise shall enjoy *“glory”* (wonder), not just for a season as do *“fools”* but for eternity. THE WISE DO NOT MERELY LIVE FOR THE HERE AND NOW!

The teaching of heavenly *“wisdom”* stands in stark contrast to the *“wisdom”* of the world. The teaching and instruction of heavenly *“wisdom”* is of great value and benefit, and the individual who follows the instruction of such *“wisdom”* will stand in sharp contrast with the men of the world, living far above the ways and policies of the world. The individual who is governed by the teachings of heavenly *“wisdom”* is blessed of God beyond measure, and will enjoy the blessings of God in this life.
