

Proverbs Chapter 3

1 My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments:

2 For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee.

3 Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart:

4 So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man.

5 Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

7 Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil.

8 It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones.

9 Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase:

10 So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.

11 My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; neither be weary of his correction:

12 For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.

13 Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding.

- 14 For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold.**
- 15 She is more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her.**
- 16 Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honour.**
- 17 Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.**
- 18 She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her: and happy is every one that retaineth her.**
- 19 The LORD by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding hath he established the heavens.**
- 20 By his knowledge the depths are broken up, and the clouds drop down the dew.**
- 21 My son, let not them depart from thine eyes: keep sound wisdom and discretion:**
- 22 So shall they be life unto thy soul, and grace to thy neck.**
- 23 Then shalt thou walk in thy way safely, and thy foot shall not stumble.**
- 24 When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid: yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet.**
- 25 Be not afraid of sudden fear, neither of the desolation of the wicked, when it cometh.**
- 26 For the LORD shall be thy confidence, and shall keep thy foot from being taken.**
- 27 Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it.**

28 Say not unto thy neighbour, Go, and come again, and to morrow I will give; when thou hast it by thee.

29 Devise not evil against thy neighbour, seeing he dwelleth securely by thee.

30 Strive not with a man without cause, if he have done thee no harm.

31 Envy thou not the oppressor, and choose none of his ways.

32 For the froward is abomination to the LORD: but his secret is with the righteous.

33 The curse of the LORD is in the house of the wicked: but he blesseth the habitation of the just.

34 Surely he scorneth the scorners: but he giveth grace unto the lowly.

35 The wise shall inherit glory: but shame shall be the promotion of fools.

Let us again look at some selections from these verses, starting with verse 5: **Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.** Trust in God rather than human intellect. Humans are not near as smart as they think they are. Quit thinking you have this all figured out and you don't need any outside help.

Wholly and securely rely, instead, upon God's power, wisdom and goodness, and upon his providence and promises. Rely upon God's Word for direction in life and help in all your affairs and in times of danger. Do not place your confidence and hope in bodily strength, wealth, friends or human government. *[T]hink not to accomplish thy designs by the strength of thine own wit without God's blessing.* (Poole). Everybody has something they hang their hat on; this is the only winning coat rack.

Looking next to verse 8, heeding this valuable advice from the Preacher will **be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones.** Here we are talking about physical health; the body's vital organs and frame (bones). This reference to marrow is most interesting. Again resorting to Poole: *Marrow is the nourishment and strength of the bones, and a great preserver and prolonger of life, as the decay of it is a chief cause of the weakness, and dryness, and decay of the body. The sense of the verse is, This wisdom or fear of God is not only useful to the salvation of the soul, but also to the health and welfare of the body, both as it prevents those diseases and distempers which are oft procured by sinful lusts and passions, and as it giveth us an interest in all God's promises, and putteth us under the care of his special providence.*

Marrow is that which moistens and irrigates the bones, keeps them strong and solid. **His breasts are full of milk, and his bones are moistened with marrow.** (Job 21:24). Marrow commonly refers to the soft, spongy and fatty tissue inside human bones that produces blood cells. Humans have red marrow which produces blood cells and yellow marrow which is made up mostly of fat cells and serves as an energy reserve. Figuratively speaking, "marrow" denotes the most essential, vital or foundational part of a concept.

All things considered, we are talking here about the very essence of human health and well-being. Sincerely learning and keeping God's law, and obeying his commandments, has a very real and practical impact on your life. Your health is vital to your life experience. There is a comedian by the name of Mike Goodwin who captures this concept quite hilariously:

"There are only two things to worry about: whether you're healthy or whether you're sick.

If you're healthy, you ain't got nothing to worry about.

But if you're sick, you've got two things to worry about: whether you get better or whether you get worse.

If you get better, you ain't got nothing to worry about.

But if you get worse, you've got two things to worry about: whether you're gonna live or whether you're gonna die.

If you live, you ain't got nothing to worry about.

But if you die, you've got two things to worry about: whether you go to

*heaven or whether you go to hell.
If you go to heaven, you ain't got nothing to worry about.
But if you go to hell, you've got two things to worry about: original or extra
crispy!"*

As noted, good health is a very practical result of obeying. Now, this is not to suggest that the Lord's people are some sort of superman – far from it. Certainly their bodies are racked with pain and illness from time to time, some more than others, but this is a relative concept. Generally speaking, the Lord's sheep are blessed with vigor and health compared to most of humanity.

A population's overall bad health is a curse to any society or nation; witness what is happening in America and the prohibitive cost of health care and its destructive impact. According to available data and research, the general health condition of the U.S. population is characterized by a high prevalence of chronic diseases, widespread obesity and lagging overall health outcomes compared to other wealthy nations. Data from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention show that 6 in 10 Americans live with a chronic condition and 4 in 10 have multiple conditions. This is strong evidence of this nation's rejection of the Word.

**¹⁹ The LORD by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding
hath he established the heavens.**

**²⁰ By his knowledge the depths are broken up, and the clouds drop
down the dew.**

These two verses need to be looked at together. Verses leading up to these paint a majestic description of wisdom. It is better than silver and gold. It is more precious than rubies and everything you can think of that you would like to have does not compare to wisdom. Her hands hold length of days, riches and honors. Hers are the paths of peace. And so on.

But these verses then speak to the Lord's various accomplishments by the use of wisdom, including founding the earth itself, establishing the heavens and the wonderful existence of that system that waters this planet.

Barnes captures this thought: *Hereto Wisdom has been thought of in relation to men. Now the question comes, What is she in relation to God? and the answer is, that the creative act implies a Divine Wisdom, through which the Divine will acts.* And, as you might expect, Dr. Gill digs a little deeper for the thought:

The Lord by wisdom hath founded the earth,.... He has created all things, and made the world by his Son, the Wisdom of God, [Ephesians 3:9](#), [Hebrews 1:2](#); not using him as an instrument; but, he being an efficient cause with him, to him, as to the first cause, the creation of all things is ascribed, [John 1:1](#); and particularly the laying the foundation of the earth, [Hebrews 1:10](#); and though this is true of the divine perfection of wisdom, [Jeremiah 10:12](#); yet from the context it appears best to understand it of the essential Wisdom of God, Christ Jesus;

Here are some good passages to consider in this context. **All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made.** (John 1:3). **To him that by wisdom made the heavens: for his mercy endureth for ever.** (Psalm 136:5). **O LORD, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches.** (Psalm 104:24). **And to make all *men* see what *is* the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:** (Ephesians 3:9). **Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;** (Hebrews 1:2).

What of these depths and dew? Fountains, rivers, creeks, springs, streams, etc. flow there from. From the depths come forth surging waves and the dew (rain) falls from the clouds. These are the two sources of living water without which the earth would fail. Some say this is reference to the breaking up of the fountains of the great deep at the flood. **And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry *land* appear: and it was so.** (Genesis 1:9). Others say this relates to the dividing of waters at the Red Sea. **He divided the sea, and caused them to pass through; and he made the waters**

to stand as an heap. (Psalm 78:13). All, and more, according to this text, are wonderful works of divine wisdom. From Poole:

***The depths are broken up;** that great abyss or depth of waters, which was mixed with and contained in the bowels of the earth, did break forth into fountains and rivers for the use of men and beasts; which is justly remembered here as an illustrious effect of God's wisdom, by which the earth was made habitable, and the waters serviceable.*

***The dew;** under which the rain is comprehended, as being of the same nature and use.*

²⁴ When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid: yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet.

Americans are scared. (I speak of Americans because that's where we are; but much of this likely refers to the rest of the world's inhabitants). Polling and scientific studies reflect that a large majority of Americans report feeling anxious, stressed or afraid about the current state of the country and the world. Data from the American Psychiatric Association show that roughly 2/3rds of adults experience heightened anxiety regarding safety, current events and the future. Americans' fears cluster around several core areas: Government Corruption; Personal and Family Health; Economic Insecurity; Cyber-Terrorism and Data Privacy; War and Global Conflict; Environmental Pressures; Technological Disruption; and, Personal Violence (murder; rape; etc.).

Cities are swimming in violence of all sorts, shapes and sizes. Trump calls out the National Guard and threatens martial law to try and stem the flow of blood resulting from murder and mayhem with little to show for it. Public perception and the fear of personal violence are the major drivers behind the booming private security industry. Much of the spike in the \$50 billion a year industry is coming from Corporate America and their new focus on "Executive Protection." Forty percent of Fortune 500 firms now explicitly allocate massive budgets for protection of their top executives. Security and "flock" cameras are everywhere. And so on.

At the same time, Americans are having significant difficulty sleeping and getting enough rest. Data highlights widespread sleep deprivation and chronic sleep issues across the country, including short sleep duration, trouble falling or staying asleep, and diagnosed chronic insomnia.

But this verse promises God's favored few they generally will not be afraid and they will have sweet sleep. Benson writes this relates to being free of fear of *fire, or thieves, or any of the terrors of the darkness, knowing that when thou and all thy friends are asleep, yet He that keepeth Israel, * * neither slumbers nor sleeps, and that to him thou hast committed thyself, and taken shelter under the shadow of his wings.*

As you might expect, Dr. Gill gets a bit more rambunctious on this topic, saying *when thou liest down on thy bed at night in order to take sleep, having committed thyself into the hands of a faithful Creator and covenant God and Father, and of Christ the Redeemer and Wisdom of God; thou shalt not be afraid of thieves breaking in to hurt thy person or rob thee of thy property, or of fire to consume thy dwelling and substance, and of nocturnal apparitions and diabolical spectres deceiving thy sight and disturbing thy mind: or when thou art "asleep", for so the word also signifies; thou shall not be surprised out of it with any of the above things, or terrified with uneasy imaginations, anxious cares, distressing dreams[.]*

These are not just words. The true children of God, in these worrisome and violent times, take real and meaningful solace in these life-related promises as they make their way through this sad vale. In other words, these promises hold real teeth and are not just vapid pronouncements. That's not to say that we should be reckless in our daily goings and comings, all the while assuming guaranteed personal safety, or that we will never have hard nights. But all in all, our lot in these two important aspects of daily living is far superior to the typical worldling.

Let's close with these good verses on these two subjects: On safety: **The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore.** (Psalm 121:8). On sleep: **Upon this I awaked, and beheld; and my sleep was sweet unto me.** (Jeremiah 31:26). **[H]e giveth his beloved sleep.** (Psalm 127:2). **Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night[.]** (Psalm 91:5).