

Proverbs 3:1–12

Children of the Heavenly Father

Monday, September 16, 2024 • Read Proverbs 3:1–12

Questions from the Scripture text: How does v1 address the reader? What does v1a set over-against v1b? What will this father's commands add to him in v2? What (and Whose!) attributes do they keep close (v3a)? How close (v3b–c)? What is their relation to his identity (v3b)? To his intellect/affections/will (v3c)? With whom do they bring him into favor (v4)? Whom is he trusting, if the commands control the heart (v5a, cf. 1b)? How much? What mustn't he be relying upon (v5b, cf. v7a)? What (Whom!) must he know (v6a, cf. v7b)? In how many of his paths? Who will straighten whose ways (v6b)? From what will this straight, safe path of knowing and fearing the Lord depart (v7b)? What blessing comes this way (v8)? In what other area of life is knowing/fearing/honoring the Lord the way (v9a)? By what action (v9b)? And with what result (v10)? But, possibly, what short-term result (v11)? And why would a believer experience this short-term result (v12)?

Why does God address believers as children? Proverbs 3:1–12 looks forward to the sermon in the midweek prayer meeting. In these twelve verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **God addresses believers as His children, because that is what He is making them, in Christ.**

Children Directed and Disciplined by Their Heavenly Father. Again, we hear the now-familiar refrain, “My son” (v1, 11). And we finally have it confirmed that this isn't just because the book is from a father to a son. It is divine Scripture that addresses us as sons (v11–12; cf. Heb 12:5–6). In fatherly love and delight in them, God gives His sons discipline (v11–12) and instruction (v1) to give them a long (eternal!) and blessed life (v2; cf. Deu 5:16, Eph 6:1–4).

Children Developing into the Image of Their Heavenly Father. When God addresses us as children, it is in part because He is intent upon making us to be like Himself (cf. Heb 12:10, 14; 1Jn 3:2–3; Rom 8:29; Eph 1:4–5). This is the point when v3 tells us that His Word adorns us (v3b) with mercy and truth (v3a) and conforms us to mercy and truth (v3c). This “mercy and truth” are covenant love and covenant faithfulness, the same words used to describe that in which God abounds (end of Ex 34:6). These were how Jesus Himself was identified as God the Son (cf. Jn 1:14). As they marked Him as a baby, then a toddler, then a little child, then a youth, mercy and truth gained Him favor with God and with men (cf. Lk 2:52). It is thus with all His children (v4). It will be thus with you, if by His discipline and instruction, He conforms you to the image of His Son!

Children Depending upon Their Heavenly Father. Trusting in YHWH with all our heart (v5a) doesn't just mean trusting Him intensely; it means trusting in nothing else. Not even our own understanding (v5b). *Especially not* our own understanding! We must indulge only that understanding that is from Him, that is according to His Word, and never that which is merely our own. v6a is a command to know Him in all our ways. There must be nothing in our lives that is apart from knowing Him. Everything according to His Word. Everything in dependence upon Him. Everything before His face, in fellowship with Him. Everything unto His glory.

This is the method by which YHWH straightens our paths (v6b), the way by which He makes our paths upright, the way by which He takes us straight to everlasting blessedness. The long days of v2a are not just in this world; they are everlasting life. The peace of v2b isn't just shalom in every way in this life and this world; it is the blessedness of God Himself. The physical health and strength of v8 isn't just in this life, but genuine, physical health and strength in the resurrection forever—and spiritual health and strength of a glorified soul animating, and expressing itself through—our glorified body forever and ever.

So, we must be especially wary of being wise in our own eyes (v7a). If we lean on our own understanding, then we will walk in evil (v7b). Instead, we must fear Him and depart from it. Depending entirely upon Him doesn't mean merely trusting Him to do what is right. It means trusting Him that what He says *for us to do* is right.

Children Devoted to, and Delighted in, Their Heavenly Father. v9 teaches us to be good children of the LORD, Who has given us everything. Honoring Him as Father (v9a, cf. Deu 5:16) means recognizing that all that we are and all that we have is a gift from Him (v9b). “Firstfruits” is not just chronological (the initial produce) or qualitative (the best produce). It is recognition that we belong entirely to Him; we are indebted entirely to Him. So, we are to honor Him even, and especially, with our wealth (v9, cf. Mk 7:10–12). We must handle wealth, including all money and property, as belonging to the Lord.

The promise of v10 is real, for this life and the next. Our literal barns and vats will have exactly as much as is best for us, and the discipling of our Father will give us contentment with whatever He provides for us. If you are not content with what you have, you will not be content with ten times as much. But, if you see the purpose of your wealth as to enjoy His goodness and serve His glory, you will be content with it in this life. And, you will inherit more riches than you can imagine in a new heavens and new earth that you can't imagine. And it will *still be less wealth* than the wealth that you have in God Himself (cf. Ps 73:25–28; Rom 8:32; 2Co 9:15, 9:6–14; Php 4:19–20).

In what ways does God give you instruction? What uses do you make of them? How has He disciplined you? How are you responding? How are you pursuing the resemblance of Christ in yourself? In what ways are you fighting against being wise in your own eyes? What does your level of contentment tell you about your view of wealth and providence? How does your devotion to Him show up in how you use your wealth?

Sample prayer: Lord, thank You for taking us to be Your own dear children in Christ. Conform us, by Your Spirit, to Your Son, Who is full of mercy and truth, we ask in His Name, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP73C “Yet Constantly, I Am with You” or TPH257 “Children of the Heavenly Father”

”(The following is a machine-generated transcription. PLEASE BE AWARE of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Proverbs 3:1-12, these are God's words. My son did not forget my law, but let your heart keep my Commandments. For length of days and long life and peace. They will add to you. Let not mercy and Truth, forsake. You bind them round your neck. Write them on the tablet of your heart.

And so find favor and high esteem in the sight of God and man. Trust in Yahweh, with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him. And he shall direct your paths. To not be wise in your own eyes, Fury off and depart from Evil.

That will be Health to your flesh and strength to your bones. Honor, Yahweh with your possessions. And with the first fruits of all your increase, So, your barns will be filled with plenty and your Vats will overflow with new wine. My son, do not despise the chastening of Yahweh.

In order to test his correction, For whom. Yahweh loves he corrects. Just as a father, the son In whom he Delights. Amen, this ends this reading of Inspired and inered toward Twice. Again in this passage we hear what has become a familiar address in the Book of Proverbs. where he says in verse 1, my son.

And then again in verse 11, my son and it's particularly in that context in verse 11, when he says, My son, do not despise the chastening of Yahweh. as a father. He whom Yahweh loves he corrects as a father, the son in whom he Delights. And so, we See here that in fatherly love and Delight in them, God gives his children discipline.

discipline for their good, even though it's painful and we're familiar with the passage in Hebrews 12 that actually quotes from here. And there in Hebrews. He says, do not forget the scripture which addresses you as Sons. Teaching us reminding us that Yes, it's probably true that the Book of Proverbs.

Was written largely from a father to his son, largely from Solomon, perhaps to read them. From Solomon to either an ideal son or a specific son. But one of the things that the Holy Spirit does in this way, is that he addresses us as Sons he addresses us as God's children.

So that when we see in the Book of Proverbs, it's saying my son We are to remember that God, addresses us with fatherly love and fatherly. Delighted. He speaks to us

because we are his children and he loves us. And he teaches us how to live, because we are his children and he loves us.

He points us to himself because we are his children and he loves us. He is giving us eternal life because we are his children and he loves us and part of what he does, is he does. So is he gives us our discipline, our swats, Because we are his children.

And he loves us. And so he sets, of course, the example, For Earthly parents as well, but that's Not the main point here, the main point here is that we are children who are directed and disciplined by our heavenly father. The next thing that we see, especially In verse 3 is that we are being developed into the image of our heavenly father and he says, let not mercy and Truth, forsake you let not hessed or Emmett forsake.

You this pairing of these. Two attributes is one that is especially used of God throughout the Old Testament. He is the one who is abounding in Christ and emitiesis, when he declares his own name to Moses on the mountain in Exodus 34. And now he's saying that by his own instruction, he makes us to be.

More loving and faithful. He makes us to be more and more like himself. In fact, when the Lord Jesus, A baby, and then a toddler, and then a child, and then a youth, and then a man grew. He grew in displaying the The steadfast law of or Covenant love and the Covenant faithfulness of God.

And so as he As he grew and he displayed these things he grew in favor with God. There it's not like God loved Jesus more, you know, when he was 11, then he did when he was two. Scripture says of Christ that he grew in wisdom and stature and favor with God and men.

It means that as his mind grew and as his body grew The expression of that mind and the conduct of that body more and more. Displayed, the character of And so, when we hear that, From Luke chapter 2 and then we read this in Proverbs 3. He says let not mercy and Truth forsake.

You bind them around your neck. Write them on the tablet of your heart. You know, let them be your adornment on the one hand that which identifies you, and adorns, you on the one hand, buying them around your neck, let them be that which controls your thinking and feeling, and choosing more and more, write them on the tablet of your heart.

then he says the outcome of that in verse 4. If by God's use of God's word, he conforms us to his own image. What will happen verse 4. So, find favor and high esteem or understanding In the site of God. And man, that's exactly what Luke 2 says about.

What happened with Jesus. As. As he grew. So first Verse 1 and 2 and then, Verse 11 and 12. So, we are children, who are directed. And disciplined by a heavenly father. Next verses, three and four. We are developing into the image of our heavenly father. versus five through eight.

We are to be children who depend upon our heavenly father instead of depending upon ourselves. You know, trust in Yahweh, with all your heart, that means there's none of your heart left that trusts in anything else, you don't hedge your bets. you don't trust in the means, you use the means that he has commanded.

That but you don't trust in the means. He is commanded. You do what's, right? But you don't trust in doing what's right? You believe what's right? But you don't trust in your believing. That's right. No, you trust in him. and if you are going to trust entirely in him, Then certainly, you must not lean on your own understanding.

And, We be creative in interpreting that in verse 5 in a way that leaves room for Pride or leaves room for being willful or doing things. Our own way verse 7, makes it much Adds language that clarifies saying do not be wise in your own eyes. Furyall, and depart from Evil, Be careful that you not be the sort of uninstrutable person.

if you are uninstrutable. with men. Then although you may be self-deceived and come to the word and have what you think are quote, unquote, wonderful quiet times or Whatever people like to call them. But if you're coming, why is in your own eyes? Then you will lean on your own understanding.

You may even end up leaning on your own understanding and calling it trusting in the Lord. And so Pride, self-righteousness. Self-Wisdom being wise in your own eyes. A great danger. But if we are proper children of our heavenly father, we'll depend upon him. Verse 5 and we'll know him.

when verse 6 says, in all your ways acknowledge Him, it's not. It's not translating a phrase that means or a sentence closet means in all your ways. Give him credit. Or in all your ways. Even remember. That he's the one that you're depending on, it's a relational word.

It's not a remembering word. In all your ways, know him. That everything we do, we would do in relationship with him. And then trusting not just that. His word will tell us the right path. It does. But praise God. Since we are sinners and we are, we are weak.

If we know him, if we are his children who know him, And in everything we do, we are knowing him, he is the one Who straightens the path. So not just the word tells us what the straight path is and tells us how to walk in it and that we should Etc.

But God is the one. Who on the one hand straightens our path by Grace, making us to walk in it but then there's also a straightening of the path by superintending Providence. It, we are not actually unable to undo. We are not actually able to undo. The good plan of God for us, although We may stumble.

And we certainly sin and commit. All sorts of error and yet he causes even that to work together for the good of his children. He will not give them Christ, he will not give them himself in Christ. And then, Their final blessedness, their final glory in him full. So he will straighten He will straighten our paths.

and he'll do this. in every way. Not just in a spiritual way. But, all of the things that we need in this life, whether food or drink or trouble or any other such thing, And do not forget that the next World. The next life is the long one, is the lasting and enduring one.

So when he says it will be Health to your flesh and strength to your bones, there is some fulfillment of that. Some some measure of even A physical benefits to living a wise and Godly disciplined life. And then, even more than that, When we are ill or injured.

The one who knows God in, in his life, in his living. Has joy and endurance of Soul, that is. That is just as much Health to our flesh and strength to our bones. But ultimately there's a fulfillment here both physically and spiritually that doesn't come until the next life.

We are not going to have the sort of A persistent contentment. And joy and peace in God. in this life that he gives us. The perfecting of Holiness and the glorifying of the Soul and certainly Although, our souls are Growing more and more. In those things in this life, our bodies are actually decaying in this life and there's a literal physical health and strength.

That is to come in the resurrection but this is still the path to the resurrection. The path of knowing him belonging. To him. So, versus one to two and 11 to 12. Children who are directed and disciplined by our heavenly father. Verses, three and four children, who are being developed into the image of our heavenly father, Verses five through eight children, who are depending upon our heavenly father and then verses 9 and 10 children, who are devoted to and delighting in Our heavenly father, this

means Not just with all of our substance but with all that we have when he says honor, Yahweh with your possessions and the first fruits of all your increase,

This isn't just a rule.

About. Tithing and giving more than a tithe. That the, the first part of everything that we get from him. We give back to him. the reason for that rule is because we don't belong to him, just 10% or 15, or 25, or whatever it is that we end up giving we belong to him, a hundred percent.

And giving the first fruits. To God, the first part of our increase shows that we belong entirely to him. It doesn't get us off the hook. Or excuse us from living our whole life, for him. Everything that we do for his praise rather. It is a reminder to us that the reason we give this first part is because we belong to him.

And if we live this way as one who depends upon him entirely is devoted entirely to him, Delights entirely to him, then we indeed will have contentment in this life to the extent that we live that way. To that extent, we'll be content. Our barns will be filled with plenty.

Our Vats will overflow with new wine. Now, there is a future fulfillment of that in the new heavens and the new Earth. Well, very specifically in the new Earth. as well. You will have. Enough. You will have what is best for you. From your heavenly father. We must not.

Into the idea. Of thinking that if we just had more We would be happier. If you are not content with the Lord in knowing him in all your ways. If you are not content with the Lord and what you have now, You will not be content with the Lord and ten times.

What you have now? And so, there is a knowing of him, a delighting in him, depending upon him a Devotion to him. this right knowing of him. is the key to plenty, is the key to enough is the key to contentment, even in this life, although he does promise A new heavens and a new Earth as our inheritance as his children.

But, As his as his children, we must be devoted to and delighted in him. So, These 12 verses especially hold before us. That the scripture speaks to us as God's children. And calls us into a life through faith in Christ. As those who are his own dear. Children. And then, let's pray.

Our Father in Heaven, we pray that you would make us to know you as our father That we would receive your fatherly instruction and your fatherly and discipline this love from you. We want to. Be more and more like Christ. We want to be children on Earth. Bear. A resemblance to our Father in heaven.

Grant that it would be. So, Give us not to be wise in our own eyes, but to depend upon you. To teach us from your word and to help us by your spirit to be conformed to that word and give us To be devoted to you to honor you and then to Delight in you to be content with whatever we have because we have you So make us to be such children and thank you for being unto us such a father Through and in Christ in his name, also we pray.

Amen.