

Walking Wisely With God

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- [0 : 0 0] Well, let's turn to the book of Proverbs chapter 3, and we're looking at the first twelve verses.
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- Let's turn to the book of Proverbs chapter 3, and we're looking at the first twelve verses. Let's turn to the Lord and shun evil. This will bring health to your body and nourishment to your bones.
- Let's turn to the Lord and shun evil. Let's turn to the Lord and shun evil. more richly in our hearts as we hear it preached tonight. Pastor Jason. Well, it's been about five months since I've preached to a congregation larger than three.
- So I've really trained myself to just stare straight at the camera and pretend that you're all there. And so I'm hoping that I just don't go on and do that.
- [2 : 0 5] I hope I remember that there are people watching. I hope there are. We are studying the book of Proverbs. We're studying that book because we're all becoming something more wise or more foolish.
- We're going somewhere. And again and again in the book of Proverbs, it talks about paths and ways. And that word path or way can even mean a rut that the wagon would go over again and again until there was a rut in the road.
- And that's what our lives are. Sometimes we say I'm in a rut. But biblically speaking, we're always in some sort of rut, going in some sort of direction, making progress in some way or other.
- And the book of Proverbs recognizes that and says those ruts can really solidify and take you someplace really good or someplace really bad.
- So life is walking down a path. Proverbs chapter 4, we haven't got there yet, but Proverbs 4 says that the path of the righteous gets brighter and brighter. So, you know, that early morning walk that you're on and the sun is coming out brighter and brighter.
- [3 : 2 4] Well, that's what it's like when you're righteous. The path of life shines brighter and brighter. The path of the wicked, though, is like deep darkness.
- And they stumble and they don't know why they're stumbling. So why does the Bible, why does the book of Proverbs talk about living as walking, as a path?
- Because on a walk, you get wherever you're going one step at a time. You don't really make a lot of grand progress.
- You don't make progress when you're leaping or somersaulting where you're going. That's not how life works and that's not how walking a path works.
- So if you were to take your kids, your family, out to Potato Creek and you're going down trail number two and all of a sudden one of them starts somersaulting, at first it would be cute.
- [4 : 2 5] And after a while they would be worn out and you would be saying, knock it off, just walk normal. And that's a lot like what Proverbs is. That's what living is.

It's done step by step. You don't sprint to wisdom. It's a lifelong pursuit. You don't have a hard 10 seconds and then you've caught it and you've got it and you're good to go.

It is day after day of little things, little reactions, little actions, little choices, little attitudes. And step by step, those things begin to add up and they begin to add up in your life.

They begin to change who you are and you begin to turn into something more and more. Something Christ-like, wonderful.

Or something horrific. Or something horrific. You can become wise or you can be utterly and stupidly, out of your mind, foolish.

[5 : 34] Just depends on what path you're taking. C.S. Lewis puts it like this. Christianity asserts that every individual human being is going to live forever.

Forever. Not here, but somewhere. And eventually, either in heaven or hell. Every individual human being is going to live forever. Going to go on.

There are a good many things that would not be worth bothering about if I were only going to live 70 years. But which I had better bother about very seriously if I'm going to live forever.

However, perhaps my bad temper or my jealousy are gradually getting worse. So gradually that the increase in 70 years would be hardly noticeable.

But it might be absolute hell in a million years. In fact, if Christianity is true, hell is precisely correct, the precisely correct technical term for what it would be.

[6 : 45] Because you're going to become something. And it just keeps going and going. People ask, why does hell have to last forever?

And that hardly seems right. That hardly seems fair. Why does it have to be that way? Well, there's a couple of different answers. But at least one of the answers, part of an answer anyways, is people don't change in hell.

They don't repent in hell. I think some people think that it works like this. You die or Jesus comes back. And all of a sudden you realize, oh, no, I got it all wrong.

God, you are good. You are great. I'm sorry. I made a mistake. And I gladly bow to you. And I love you. And God is saying just, sorry, it's too late. Well, the sorry it's too late is true.

But the part about them coming to terms with the fact that God is great and God is good and that they should love him. That isn't true. They don't break out of their ways.

[7 : 56] They don't want anything to be bigger and better and greater than themselves here in this life. And they're all bent in. They're all consumed with their desires, with their loves, with themselves.

And they don't want God to rule over them here and to be over them. And they can't stand the idea that God and what he wants would matter more than what they would want.

And they don't change after they die. They don't change after they die. No, it's a greater hatred. It's a greater stubbornness. It's more self-pity, more complaining.

And that really is a part of the horror of hell is because you become more and more self-consumed.

And what was merely sort of like a sin on the outside, you know, you just grumble sometimes.

[9 : 00] You just complain sometimes. Well, that turns more and more inside and you become that more and more and more.

And the point is, is we are going somewhere. We are becoming something. And in the book of Proverbs, God says, now listen to me. Learn from me. I'm going to teach you how to live here.

And I'm going to teach you how to live forever. I'm going to have, I'm going to teach you how to become something that is significant and wonderful. Something Christ-like. And so here we are.

We're in chapter three. And today we're talking about walking wisely with God. Walking wisely with God. So how do you make progress in this path of wisdom?

If life is a path and we're going and we want to make progress in the direction of wisdom, what do we need to do? Well, how do we walk wisely with God? Tonight we have five steps.

[10 : 00] There are five practices. There are five habits of thinking and heart that as we do them, and as we do them day after day after day, step after step, little thing after little thing, whatever you face in your life, whatever you face in your life, as you do these things, you will move forward toward wisdom.

You will walk wisely with God. So five steps, five practices, five habits. And the first step is this. They have to hold on to wisdom's teaching.

Hold on to wisdom's teaching. This is verses one and two. My son, do not forget my teaching, but keep my commands in your heart. That word keep means to guard, to protect, to treasure, to defend.

Keep my commands in your heart, for they will prolong your life many years and bring you prosperity. Wisdom is all about living harmoniously within relationships, within relationships with God and with people, and even within the fabric of this is God's world and this is how things work, and you live harmoniously within those relationships.

And so wisdom is very aware that things and people are connected. There are actions and reactions. There are consequences. People are connected, related to each other.

[11 : 31] And wisdom sees those relationships. So how do you connect and live within a relationship with God that is wise? Well, you have to hold on to wisdom's teaching.

The book of Proverbs is especially for young people, but it is for all of us. And no matter how much gray hair you have on your head, this is a time for you to say, I need wisdom and I need to hold on to what God has taught me.

And so here's the father in the first nine chapters. The father is the mouthpiece of wisdom. The father is the mouthpiece of God pouring out his heart, pouring out his wisdom to his children.

And parents, you know what these conversations are like. He's saying, listen to me. This is so vital. This is so important. Listen to me. I love you. I delight in you.

My words, my teaching, my commands, they'll do you good. And he's not saying just do this because I say so. Although that's true. He's saying, son, daughter, this will be for your good.

[12 : 43] Do it for your good. And that's how God is talking. That's how the father is talking to his son. And the amazing thing is this is how God is talking to you.

Tonight in the book of Proverbs, he has he has this. He wants this relationship with you. He wants to teach you. And he's saying, hold on to what I have.

Now, how good is that? That God is not disinterested in whether you understand. He is very interested.

He wants you to get what he is saying. He wants you to take it in and hide it in your heart and love it and keep it. So how good is that?

And if God's attitude towards us is that, then what are we doing with it? What are we doing with this book of Proverbs? Are we treasuring it, hiding it, keeping it, remembering it, meditating upon it?

[13 : 41] We talked about pleasing God, how faith pleases God last Sunday. Any parent will tell you. And if you're a parent, you know this, that when your children treasure your words and take your serious words seriously, that pleases you.

And so do we want to please God? Do we want to delight him? We'll then take these words. We're going to see this later and as we go.

But you're never going to become wise if you're always ready to teach. You're never going to become wise if you're already filled up.

If you're a know-it-all, then the book of Proverbs doesn't have anything. If your cupboard is full of instant ramen noodle meals, then when God brings in the real food, you're not going to have any place in your mind or in your heart for what he's saying.

And so we need to clear out all of our self-confidence and our own wisdom and say, Lord, you teach me. I'm ready to listen. And so that's step one.

[14 : 52] What does it look like to walk wisely with God? It's to have an open ear. It's to have an open heart. It's to have ready hands to say, Lord, I'm ready to take in whatever you give me. And it's not just today.

It's step by step every day along the way. That's step one. Hold on to God's word because it's good for you. So get it. Grab it. Keep it.

That's step one. Step two is verses three and four. Let love and faithfulness never leave you. Let love and faithfulness never leave you. Bind them around your neck. Write them on the tablet of your heart.

Step two, then, is love and faithfulness. And when you read the Old Testament, you know these words are so important.

And they describe the relationship that God has with his people. These are covenant words. Love and faithfulness.

[15 : 49] And that's who God is. And so what Proverbs is saying here is, how do you walk wisely with God? Is you live like him.

You live like him. Wisdom isn't about selfishness. Wisdom isn't about cunning and cleverness. The book of Proverbs talks a lot about those things.

And it's always in a negative sense. Wisdom isn't manipulation. It's not knowing how to get your own way. It's imitating God. Ephesians 5.1 As dearly loved children, live a life of love.

As dearly loved children, live a life of love. That's how God loves you. Two words that would describe God's relationship towards his people is he loves them and he is faithful to them.

And what he is asking for in response is that we love him and we'll be faithful to him. But it's not just to him. The first commandment is followed with the second commandment of loving others and being faithful to them in our relationships with each other.

[17 : 06] That's what wisdom looks like. So on the mountain, the Lord proclaimed that who he was to Moses. He's the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness.

Love and faithfulness. That's who he was for Israel. And that's who Israel was supposed to be for him, toward him. And really, that's how chapter 3 of Proverbs breaks down.

Is those two commandments of love the Lord your God with all your heart and love your neighbor, love your brother as you love yourself.

The first part of that we're covering today of Proverbs 3 is all about loving God and being faithful to him. And the second part of Proverbs 3 is now, how do you treat your fellow man?

But that's what wisdom is. That's where wisdom comes from. Wisdom comes from a heart that is lovingly connected to the Lord and lovingly connected to our fellow men.

[18 : 21] And all of the rest of life follows. Wisdom and folly falls on whether you're connected lovingly to God and lovingly to your fellow man.

Hosea chapter 4 talks about what happens when you don't write love and faithfulness on your hearts. When these things are far away. Hosea 4 talks about it.

Remember the book of Hosea. Israel and the Lord are married. They're like Hosea and Gomer. And neither Israel nor Gomer had love or faithfulness.

And so listen to what happens. Hosea 4.1. There is no faithfulness. No love. No acknowledgement of God in the land.

Doesn't that sound just like Proverbs chapter 3? No love. No faithfulness. No acknowledgement of God in the land. There is only cursing. Lying.

[19 : 24] Murder. Stealing. And adultery. They break all bounds. And bloodshed follows bloodshed. And because of this the land mourns. And all who live in it waste away.

So there's no love. There's no faithfulness towards each other. There's no flourishing. There's no flourishing. There's no life. And God is against them. And God is angry with them.

And so all of that bent inness. That self-absorption. That self-consumption. That I was talking about earlier. Where it's all about my loves and my desires.

And what I want in this situation. And what I think is right. My way. My wisdom. My idols. That is not. Wisdom. It doesn't lead to the things that wisdom leads to.

It's not what wisdom is. In Proverbs chapter 3. It's ruin. It's self-defeating. It's self-defeating. And you can just think of this.

[20 : 24] In a very simple example. You can think of someone who's always bragging. The braggart. Who's bent in.

And he's consumed. He's filled with pride. And what does he want? Well, he wants others to think well of him. Doesn't he? So he's always telling people what he's done. And what he has. And what he's accomplished.

He likes to brag. Because he wants to get the praise of men. But does he get it? Well, maybe just for a teeny tiny little bit. And maybe by a few people.

But on the whole. The bragger. His cleverness. Turns into a self-defeating thing. He doesn't get it. People aren't attracted to him.

And so the more he brags. And the more he feels like he has to brag. The less people end up liking him. There's no favor there.

[21 : 23] And so it's that kind of wisdom. That the book of Proverbs exposes. And says that's not really wisdom. But this bent inness can look totally opposite too.

It can even be the insecure person. Who's always putting himself down. Or herself down. Never has a good word to say about himself. And that person is never free to love people either.

She can never forget herself long enough. To just lovingly and genuinely and freely love someone. Without analyzing it. And criticizing it.

She can never forget herself. And finally get around to loving God and others. And that's not wisdom either. That bent inness. Instead wisdom is love.

And faithfulness towards others. And so. Chapter 3 here. Proverbs 3. If you bind love and faithfulness around your neck.

[22 : 26] And write it on your heart. Then what happens? You win favor. And a good name. The word favor there.

Is the word grace. Grace. And the idea is that. God and man. Find this wise man or wise woman. God and man find this person.

Attractive. And beautiful. You know. We talk about that. We use that word graceful. As someone that you're drawn to.

That is attractive. And so love and faithfulness. Is living in harmony. With the fabric of reality.

This is how relationships work. With God and with man. This is how they work best. And you end up flourishing. And it's where God and man says.

[23 : 22] There's something about this person. That is beautiful. I am attracted to them. I find a light in them. I enjoy them. There's something about them. I like.

Now God probably can put his finger. Exactly on what it is. But sometimes people. Just know that. There's something about you. That is different. That's attractive. They might not be able.

To put their finger on it. But when they see you. And they hear you. And they. They interact with you. They're drawn to you. And that's what this. Is talking about. So. Hold on to my teaching.

Step one. Love and faithfulness. Step two. Step three. Is this. Trust the Lord. Not yourself. How do you walk. Wisely with God.

Trust the Lord. Not yourself. Wisdom is. Continuously. Saying. How is the Lord.

[24 : 17] Right. And how may I be wrong. There's something. In wisdom. That is. Courageously.

And yet. Graciously. Self-reflective. You're always saying. At least. Suspecting yourself. People that are.

Absolutely. A hundred percent. Certain. On all of their. Opinions. Are very. Rarely. Rarely. Right. Are they. So.

Trust the Lord. Not yourself. Trusting God. Doubting self. Not to the degree. That you have no confidence. Or anything like that. But.

I rely. A hundred percent. On God's words. Now. But. I'll second guess. What I have to say. I'll think about. What I have to say.

[25 : 10] I'll not quite be. So. Adamant. That I am right. So. I'm not trusting. On myself. And so. Remember. Wisdom. We've used this definition. Is living in harmony.

With the fabric. Of God's world. Wisdom is living in harmony. It's going with. The fabric. Of God's world. And. Really. You get down.

To the. Nitty gritty. Of this fabric. Here. Here's reality. Here's reality. I was made. To trust in the Lord. I was made.

For this. Adam and Eve. Were never created. Where they were supposed to doubt. And be uncertain. About what God had to say. They were always met. Human.

Humanity. Was always met. To live with God's words. In our ears. And we were confident. And we were believing it. And we were relying upon it. I. This is reality. I was made.

[26 : 06] For. Believing. In God. To trust him. That's how God made us. That's how God made the world.

We're talking about. Wisdom is living in. The harmony. With the fabric. Of God's world. Well. Here it is. So. But. We've fallen. And we've sinned.

And Adam and Eve. Doubted God's word. And then they disobeyed. God's word. And so. Here we are. We're fallen. And we're dead. We're unbelieving. We don't trust God.

We suspect him. We're suspicious of him. We don't. Think he has our best interest at heart. And it's only. When we begin moving again. By the power of the Holy Spirit.

When we begin moving toward God. In faith. That we begin to get. With reality again. Where. The soul's first movement.

[27 : 01] Towards God. God. And God. I believe you. Is the soul's first moment. Of. Of sanity. Of. Of reality. God's the creator.

And I'm the creature. He's smarter than I am. He's wiser. Than I am. He's more experienced.

Than I am. He understands more. He has more power. He has more love. He has made great. And precious promises to me.

He sees the end. All the way from the beginning. We don't know what a day. Will bring forth. But God sees the end. From the very beginning. And he knows exactly.

What I'm facing right now. He knows the road I'm taking. And he knows how. I need to get to the end. And he showed at the cross. And in his word. That he loves.

[27 : 59] If I'm a Christian. He loves me. With all of his heart. He's committed to me. And time and time again. Hasn't he proven that. He's trustworthy.

I've doubted in the past. And I've been proven wrong. But he's always been proven. Trustworthy. Now that's reality. That's reality.

And so being wise in your own eyes. Is not only pride. It's really folly. It's stupidity. So think.

I'm a creature. I'm bound. By time. I'm bound by space. I have a limited mind. I only.

Know very little. Of what there is to know. And then. I don't know. All the things. I don't know. Isn't that true? You come into a situation.

[28 : 59] And it's. You're almost paralyzed. By. Because you don't know. How to make a decision. And the reality. Is you. You're saying. I don't know what I don't know. I don't know how to make this decision. Because there's so many variables. And I'm unaware of them all.

I'm ignorant. And I'm really good at misunderstanding. And misreading. Misinterpreting. Situations. And we do that.

Don't we? I was talking to someone. Just this past week. And we were saying. This is what makes this whole pandemic thing.

So difficult. Is because humans are really. Not good. At interpreting. Information. We like to think that we are.

But we aren't. And really only fools. Are so self-confident. And that's why. Scientists. Have peer-reviewed studies.

[30 : 01] They say. Hey. You weren't a part of this. Come look in this. And did we do this right? Does this data look. Valid? They say. Hey. We need someone's help here. That's why.

In medical studies. The gold standard. The thing that you really want to do. Is. Double-blinded. Placebo-controlled. Which just. Is all fancy talk for. The scientist doesn't know.

Who's given the medicine. The participants. Don't know who the medicine. Who's given the medicine. And then there's a fake. In there. Now. Why do you have to go to all that. That trouble. Why.

Why do we say. That it's better. That the scientists. Or the participants. Know what's going on. It's because humans. Are really bad. At interpreting. Data. Interpreting.

Information. Because we see. What we want to see. We. Create. Self-fulfilling. Prophecies. Our minds. Can make us.

[30 : 59] Think. Things are happening. When really. There's no way. That sugar pill. Should be helping you. But. Somehow it does. There are whole. Logic. And philosophy.

Classes. On logical. Fallacies. Because. We are really good. At doing them. Now that's. That's their minds out there.

And that's my mind. In here. And so. Would it make. Any sense at all. To be wise. In my own eyes. What.

Is that reality. That I'm the cleverest one. And I'm even smarter than. God. I know better than him. That's not reality.

Reality is. God is trustworthy. Always. I'm foolish. And wrong. A lot. Reality is. God knows. What is best for me. And I don't know.

[31 : 55] What is best for me. I think. I would have chosen. A lot different things. But. Those. All my choices. Would have turned out wrong. Reality is. God has proven himself. Over and over again.

And. The only thing. Maybe I've proven. Is that I am unreliable. Reality is. Is that. The God of all the earth. The Lord of all the earth. Will do right. And I am prone to wander.

And. Put into a. The. Just the right temptation. And situation. I'll not do. What is right. And so. Trust him. Trust him.

You're. You're going to be given. A hundred. Opportunities. Every day. To trust him. Or to be wise. In your own. Eyes. Where you will either.

Block. God. Out of the picture. And you don't see him there. Or you will recognize. That he is present. That he is. Lord over all. And yet. He is. In this situation.

[32 : 56] And when you have that. When you have. You've put God. At your right hand. That's reality. And so. When do you do it? Step by step.

Day by day. Moment by moment. And the more. You do with. The more. You'll get used to doing it. The more. You'll see. The wise. Consistently. Trust the Lord.

And the fool. Consistently. Is wise. In his own eyes. The wise. Live. In the reality. That is.

And the fool. Lives in their own. Self-made. Fantasy. And that's why. If you aren't saved.

This is at least. One of the reasons. Why you aren't. Second Thessalonians. They perish. Why do they perish? Why are they lost?

[33 : 55] They perish. Because they refused. To love the truth. And so be saved. When given a chance.

To accept reality. And embrace it. They refuse it. They don't want the reality. And so self-absorption. Is self-condemning. But right now.

Jesus Christ is. Is inviting you. To step out of that fantasy. And step into the reality. You've sinned.

And. You're. Far away from God. And yet you need him. And Jesus died. To bring sinners. Back to God. And so. Repent.

And turn from your own wisdom. And embrace him. Accept. Him. Give your heart. And give your mind. Over to him.

[34 : 52] To him. So faith is. Is shifting your reliance. On. Whose interpretation. You're going to go with. So you're looking at life.

Are you going to go with God's interpretation? Are you going to go with your own interpretation? Well wisdom says. Every day. Trust in the Lord. I'm going to trust in the Lord. I'm going to acknowledge him. And I'm not going to. Go with just what I think.

So trust him. Acknowledge him. That's. The third step. Now. Tonight. We're going to end with two tests. Two tests of faith. Two situations.

Where we need to trust. In the Lord. Not in ourselves. In both of these situations. Are situations. Where we are particularly prone. To. Rely on ourselves. And trust ourselves.

And. Just. Throw off. God's interpretation of things. So these are two tests of faith. Faith. And so. There are our last two steps. Number. Step four is. Honor the Lord with your wealth.

[35 : 51] So things are good. We're going to get to things are bad. In the next. The next point. But things are good. You have wealth coming in. You made a profit. Business is good.

Your job is going great. Your 401k is up. Whatever. Wealth is coming in. Things are good. What do you do with it? How do you connect to it? How do you address it?

How do you relate to that? What do you say to yourself? Then. How do you interpret this? The situation? How do you handle? How do you process this?

Here's one man. He thought to himself. What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops. And then he said.

This is what I'll do. I'll build bigger barns. In other words. He's. And I'll rest. I'll retire. Look at what I have. Look at what I've accomplished.

[36 : 47] Things are good. Time to rest and enjoy life. What was God's answer? You. Fool. Not you. Unrighteous person.

He was that. But. You. Fool. You. Fool. The problem wasn't so much the bigger barns.

The problem was not even. I want to retire. The problem was. God wasn't in that picture at all. There was no thanksgiving. There was no trust. There was no reliance.

There was no. Thinking of eternal things. Of eternal realities. He doesn't think about God. He doesn't think about any greater realities than himself. And what he wanted immediately. And you see that.

Because God now says. Well tonight. You're going to die. And you're going to face the judgment. And then who's going to have what you have. What you've created for yourself. This man had this very limited.

[37 : 46] Self-absorbed. View of his wealth. He was disconnected from God. And from reality. And that's why God says. You fool.

Your money is not disconnected. From me. And what you do. And your plans. And your relations. To that money. Is not disconnected.

From me. So what do you do? You honor the Lord with your wealth. But you'll only honor the Lord with your wealth. If you see.

That that's the test. That's the danger. That's the truth. this comes from him. And so I'll honor him with it.

I'll give my tithe. I'll sacrifice. I'll say thank you. In some way, I will acknowledge that God is in this. Wealth is a test of your heart.

[38 : 47] Wealth is an opportunity for you to either grow in wisdom or to grow in folly. Now, do I need to give all the illustrations of the people that have won the lottery?

And what did it do? It only increases their folly. They were fools to begin with, and they become more. Wealth is a why in the road where you're either going to become more wise or you're going to become more foolish.

So it's an opportunity to grow in wisdom or it's an opportunity to grow in folly. And maybe, I told the people we were eating lunch with that I've been thinking about this person a lot.

And you remember Tevye and the Fiddler on the Roof. He's having a conversation with Perchek. I don't know exactly who he is in the story, but Perchek says, money is the world's curse.

And Tevye says, well, may the Lord smite me then and may I never recover from it. Maybe that's how you feel. Well, if money is a test, well, man, I'm ready for that.

[39 : 53] I'll take that. And the book of James says, no. Read James chapter 1. There's two tests in James chapter 1.

It begins with trials, and it also talks about the rich man. Two tests, two trials. Read Proverbs chapter 30. Edgar says, give me neither poverty nor wealth.

Give me enough, but don't give me too much. It's too dangerous. Thomas Manton, the Puritan, said, you don't see the cracks of some jars until they are all filled up.

Do you have the picture? The jar is cracked. It's broken. But you don't see the crack until you fill it all the way up with water.

And then it starts leaking all over the place. And wealth will fill you up. Fills you up. And it's a test. Are there cracks there?

[40 : 58] Cracks of pride? Cracks of self-reliance? Cracks of self-glory? Cracks of greed? Cracks of self-sufficiency? Or maybe even cracks of suspicion?

Of self-righteousness? Maybe you were trusting in your poverty as a part of your spirituality. It's like, I'm a good Christian because I don't have as much as those people have.

I'm poor. But now what? You're not. So wealth can expose what you are secretly trusting in. Wealth will expose your relationship and your connection to God.

It will expose your heart. And so right now, we all have some amount of poverty and wealth. We're somewhere on this scale.

And it's a test. So wise men see wealth as a test and they acknowledge the Lord in it. They honor him in it. They see this is not something different.

[41 : 59] This is a part of my whole life where I am living for the honor of God. I'm loving him. And they pass the test. And as they pass the test, they become wiser.

And that's why a lot of times to whom little is given and they're faithful in it that God gives more because they passed the test. Now the other test is the one we're going to end with and it's discipline.

And this is step five. And this is the other end of the stick. So how do you walk wisely with God? You hold on to his word.

You hold on. You hold it in your heart. You practice love and faithfulness. You trust in him and not yourself. You honor him in your wealth. And then last of all, what do you do with discipline?

What do you do when the pain comes? And now the jar isn't full. The jar is empty. Maybe that's poverty. It's pain. It's some sort of thing.

[43 : 00] The Lord is bringing into your life that is unpleasant, that is unenjoyable, that is unsettling, that is difficult. So how do you process that?

How do you walk wisely with God? Well, you look at those things. You look at those difficulties and those trials and wise people are clear-eyed and they say they have a label for it.

They say this is discipline. I know what this is. The Lord is disciplining me. Now, that doesn't necessarily mean that you've sinned and he's punishing you for your sin. Sometimes it means that.

But we've talked about this word discipline in this book. And the most basic idea is that discipline is bringing someone under.

It's subduing them to reality. So a child that is disobedient is out of really the path of blessing, the path of life. And so in discipline, you get them back.

[44 : 02] You bring them back. And some pain is involved in bringing them back. This is the reality. God put mom and dad in charge. He says for you to obey. Discipline is subduing something wayward or something out of bounds and putting it back into its place.

And so Proverbs talks about for acquiring a disciplined and prudent life. That's not acquiring a, I have lots of spankings from God in my life.

It's I am now subdued. I've been brought under the Lord. And I'm, I have a brokenhearted obedience and faithfulness and I'm steadfast.

And, and even more than that, I'm, I'm, I'm putting myself under. This is God's world. There's rules and I'm living in harmony with it. I'm not going to play my own tune.

I'm going to play the music that he's given to me. So it's discipline. So what is God doing in discipline? It's not pain for pain's sake. God is at work.

[45 : 03] He's bringing my wayward heart back. And so when those trials come, what label do you put on them? The wise person says, this is discipline from my Lord, from my father.

So I don't see clearly. I don't see myself clearly. I might have an overinflated view of myself. I might have a misguided view of others. I might have a misguided view of God, whatever.

I might be holding onto some sin and rebellion. And God says, this is what will help. This will help.

And there's pain. And then we see things better. And we start to see a reality. We start to see our own hearts. Maybe we start to see others more clearly.

We start to see God more clearly. We begin to understand the fabric of the world that God has made. And our hearts connect with God's heart. We get put back to where we should be.

[46 : 03] And that's good. And we need it. And so Solomon says, don't despise the Lord's discipline. That means don't belittle it.

Don't think it's below you. Don't think you're above it. And you don't need it. We need it. We all need it. And he says, don't resent it or loathe it.

The book of Hebrews in the New Testament passage translates this as, don't grow weary under it. Those are two different ideas. But they're all true.

The tendency when we are facing discipline is to, one, think, why is this happening to me? This shouldn't be happening to me. That's to despise it and to think you're above it.

Or the other thing is to just so loathe it and hate it that you don't receive it well. And the other thing that you can do is you can just grow weary under it. And he says, don't do any of those.

[47 : 04] Don't resent it. Don't loathe it. But instead, consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds. So I want you to think of Paul's thorn in the flesh.

It was a trial. It was painful. And God meant it for good. There was grace that God had meant for Paul that could only come through that pain.

As long as Paul was whole and solid, there would be room for boasting. But when the thorn got stuck in the side, well, all of a sudden, Paul's fragility, Paul's brokenness, you could see it, and grace could come in.

And now Paul could say, you know what? Weakness isn't the problem. Weakness isn't a problem. Weakness is something I can boast in, because now Christ's power rests in me. Weakness is a chance for Christ's power to flow into me.

But you see, that grace flowed through Paul's thorn-pierced skin. His pain. And that's how Paul got it. That's how Paul connected in a greater way to the Lord Jesus.

[48 : 18] So wise discipline, our wise people see discipline as the love of God. This is not God hating. It's the goodwill of God. He's treating me like a son.

God doesn't hate me. In fact, he delights in me. Discipline is a sign of delight. And so you receive it, and you welcome it.

That word delight means you're accepted favorably. This is like a sign of being the child of God. This is God's stamp of approval.

Now I'm going to discipline this one and bring them under, because he's my son, and I delight in him, and I accept him. You're one of his favored ones. Now, maybe you're facing something like that, and you need to have new lenses, and you need to think about your trial in a different way.

What does it mean to walk wisely with God? Well, you see difficulty as discipline from a loving Heavenly Father. And so this week, and next week, and every week after that, you know what we're going to be doing?

[49 : 27] We're going to be walking. You're going to be taking step by step by step, and just like you don't remember every single step that you ever take when you're walking a trail at Potato Creek, it's just going to be these mundane little things, and you're going to be walking.

And so how do you walk wisely with God? You have an ear open, a heart open to his word, and you hold on to it. And you don't quit loving people.

And you don't quit loving God. And you trust the Lord with all your heart. And then you're going to get a mixture of good things and bad things. And God knows exactly what you need.

You're going to have that mixture. And you're going to see good things, and you need to honor the Lord in it. And you're going to see discipline, but you need to see both of them as tests. Tests as opportunities to grow in wisdom or to grow in folly.

And so the more you do these steps, one, two, three, four, five, and you do them every day, the wiser you'll become. And then what will happen?

[50 : 37] Well, all the good things that this chapter offers will start seeping into your life. Prosperity, favor, smooth paths, nourishment right down to your bones.

That's brimming over with new wine. The smile and delight of your father. That's the life we want. That's the life that God is offering. And that is the way forward.

And so, brothers and sisters, we need to keep walking step by step. Step by step. Well, let's pray. Heavenly Father, thank you for this chapter.

Thank you for this truth. Father, I pray that you would give us wise eyes and wise hearts to see you in all of these things.

To see you involved and ruling and reigning. And to see that in every situation, in every occasion, we're going to be tempted to trust ourselves.

[51 : 49] And instead of that, we need to trust in the Lord. And when good things happen, we're going to be tempted to boast. But help us to see you in it and honor you with our good things.

And when discipline happens, it is our inclination to think the worst of you, to get discouraged, to get weak, to get angry.

I pray that you would change our minds about trials and help us to see them from your perspective. As a loving father, doing his children good.

Help us to be humble enough to accept whatever you give us and to walk faithfully with you. I pray this for Jesus' sake and for his glory. Amen.