

“Simple Instructions”

Sermon Reflection Questions, November 15, 2009

Proverbs 3:5-6, Unlocking the Old Testament

The book of Proverbs is like no other book in the Old Testament. It is lumped into the category of Old Testament Poetry along with Job, Psalms, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon, but it has a very different flavor than any of these. The book of Proverbs is written by King Solomon, most likely to his son, but Proverbs is certainly applicable to us as well. Proverbs are simple, Godly instructions to live by. Certainly one of the most, if not the most well known is Proverb 3:5-6. It calls for our complete and total surrender to and trust in the Lord.

1. One of the things that I believe is neat about the book of Proverbs is that it serves as a legacy of faith from Solomon to his children. It causes me to think about what legacy, model, and life lasting instructions I will be leaving for my children. If you have children, what 3-5 core instructions would you want them to live by for the rest of their lives? (If you don't have children, perhaps you can think of nieces or nephews or other children with whom you have influence.)

2. Proverbs 3:5 begins with “Trust in the Lord with all your heart.”

a. Trust means both to have security and stability, but also to have confidence and boldness. Read the following passages (Matthew 28:19-20, Acts 4:27-31). How does security and stability lead to boldness?

b. Where are you bold because of the Lord?

c. Where are you timid in your faith? How are the areas of your life where you are timid caused by lack of trust?

d. We often think of heart as our emotions and passions, but in the Hebrew culture heart has to do not only with emotions and passions, but also with our minds. Given this understanding, in your own words describe what it means to “Trust in the Lord with all your heart.”

3. The second part of Proverbs 3:5 says “and do not rely on your own insight”. But often we will say, “God has given me a brain and common sense, so why can't I rely on my own insight or understanding?” Read the following passages (Matthew 10:34-39, Romans 3:9-12, Romans 12:1-2, Luke 10:29-read this verse in the context of Luke 10:25-37). Why can't we rely on our own understanding? (Give some examples from your life or the life of others.)

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4. Proverbs 3:6 begins by saying “in all your ways acknowledge Him.” The tough thing for Christians is still to acknowledge God in all things. What areas of our lives (even as believers) are especially difficult to turn over to the will of God? What types of situations or circumstances do you have a difficult time giving over to the direction and will of God?

5. How do the instructions in Proverbs 3:5 lay the ground work for God’s call in Proverbs 3:6?

6. The end of Proverbs 3:6 gives the promise of what God will do if we rely on His direction. The NRSV says “and he will make your paths straight.” The Message says “and he will make your paths smooth.”
 - a. What are the differences between these two translations?

 - b. Given our understanding of the totality of scripture, which translation seems to be more accurate?

 - c. What then is the nature of God’s promise to us in Proverbs 3:6?

 - d. Where in your life have you seen God deliver on this promise?

 - e. Where do you right now need God’s guidance and leading to make your paths straight?