

The Lord Is At Your Side

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[0 : 01] Proverbs chapter 3, verses 13 to 35. Blessed is the one who finds wisdom, and the one who gets understanding.

For the gain from her is better than gain from silver, and her profit better than gold. She is more precious than jewels, and nothing you desire can compare with her.

Long life is in her right hand. In her left hand are riches and honor. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.

She is a tree of life to those who lay hold of her. Those who hold her fast are called blessed. The Lord, by wisdom, founded the earth.

By understanding, he established the heavens. By his knowledge, the deeps broke open, and the clouds dropped down the dew. My son, do not lose sight of these.

[1 : 10] Keep sound wisdom and discretion, and they will be life for your soul and adornment for your neck. Then you will walk on your way securely, and your foot will not stumble.

If you lie down, you will not be afraid. When you lie down, your sleep will be sweet. Do not be afraid of sudden terror, or of the ruin of the wicked when it comes.

For the Lord will be your confidence, and will keep your foot from being caught. Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to do it. Do not say to your neighbor, go and come again.

Tomorrow I will give it, when you have it with you. Do not plan evil against your neighbor, who dwells trustingly beside you. Do not contend with a man for no reason, when he has done you no harm.

Do not envy a man of violence, and do not choose any of his ways. For the devious person is an abomination to the Lord, but the upright are in his confidence. The Lord's curse is on the house of the wicked, but he blesses the dwelling of the righteous.

[2 : 19] Toward the scorners he is scornful, but to the humble he gives favor. The wise will inherit honor, but fools get disgrace.

This is God's holy and authoritative word. The main point of this passage, as I unpack it, you'll see is that we should humbly confide in God's grace, rather than pridefully contend for self-advancement among our neighbors.

It's about cultivating trust in God that enables us to live as good neighbors, doing good works in our world. First, in verses 13 to 26, it talks about the value of wisdom.

And then in the following verses, verses 27 to 35, it talks about the virtues of wisdom. Why wisdom is necessary, and what wisdom looks like.

That's the first, the division of this passage. Let's look at the value of wisdom to begin. Verses 13 to 16 really is, well, 13 to 26 actually is an introduction to the lesson that comes in verses 27 to 35.

[3 : 30] And here he talks about the value of wisdom to tell us to treasure it. And it's further subdivided into three parts, so you can see it. Verses 13 to 18, it tells us about the value of wisdom to man.

Verse 13 begins, blessed is the one who finds wisdom. That's literally, blessed is the man who finds wisdom. The Hebrew word for man that's used here is Adam.

That's where we get the name Adam. Then verses 19 to 20 tell us about the value of wisdom to God. Verse 19 says, the Lord by wisdom founded the earth. Value of wisdom to man, value of wisdom to God.

And then finally in verses 21 to 26, it tells us about the value of wisdom to us. It exhorts us to value wisdom and to cherish it and to keep it. It says in verse 21, my son, do not lose sight of these.

Keep sound wisdom and discretion. It's using the figure of the son to refer to all of God's people. So first, it tells us the value of wisdom to man. Verses 13 to 18. This subsection begins and ends with the word blessed, as you can see.

[4 : 39] Verse 13 says, blessed is the one who finds wisdom and the one who gets understanding. And then verse 18 ends that subsection by saying, those who hold her fast are called blessed.

Those who walk in wisdom are blessed. The word blessed means happy in Hebrew. Those who walk according to the wisdom of God are happy.

Sometimes Christians say this kind of thing. God wants you to be holy, not happy. God's design for your marriage is holiness, not happiness.

How many of you guys have heard that? It's a common phrase. It's partly true, but it could be misleading. Because yes, God wants you to be holy, but only a holy life is truly a happy life.

The 17th century English pastor, Thomas Brooks, wrote a book entitled, Holiness, The Only Way to Happiness. And in it, he writes, quote, holiness differs nothing from happiness but in name.

[5 : 50] Holiness is happiness in the bud, and happiness is holiness at the full. Happiness is nothing but the quintessence of holiness. That's the case because happiness, as defined not by the fleeting pleasures of this world, but true happiness in the Lord, that comes from holiness.

God doesn't want your life to be a drudgery, to be boring, to be burdensome. God wants you to be truly happy in him. And if we believe that, then we would pursue holiness.

I think we'd be a little more excited and zealous in our pursuit of holiness, because that's where we find true fulfillment. That's when we are experiencing life to the full, when we're living optimally.

It's when we seek God and pursue his holiness, set apart for him. Verses 14 to 15 tell us why the wise life is the happy life. For the gain from her is better than gain from silver, and her profit better than gold.

She is more precious than jewels, and nothing you desire can compare with her. The word gain refers to profitability, and the word precious refers to rarity, to scarcity.

[7 : 09] The wisdom of God is something that should be prized above all else, because it's profitable and rare. Whatever it is that you desire, maybe your dream car, or a dream house, or a dream job, or a dream spouse, or a dream vacation, nothing you desire can compare with God's wisdom.

Wisdom is better riches than having billions of dollars. Wisdom is a rarer treasure than the rarest diamonds. And that's why we should be consumed with finding it, and keeping it.

Verses 16 to 17 continue this reason, Long life is in her right hand, in her left hand are riches and honor. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.

We should seek wisdom because it grants long life on the one hand, and riches and honor on the other. It's important to note that this is the reward of wisdom. It's the byproduct of living wisely.

It's not the goal of life. It's not the end. When Solomon, the primary author of Proverbs, first became a king of Israel, God asked him in 1 Kings 3, verses 5 to 14, he appeared to Solomon in a dream, and God asked him, What do you want?

[8 : 26] Ask me what I shall give you. And then Solomon replied this way, He said, Give your servant an understanding mind to govern your people, that I may discern between good and evil, for who is able to govern this, your great people.

It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this, and God said to him, Because you have asked this, and have not asked for yourself long life, or riches, or the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, behold, I now do according to your word.

Behold, I give you a wise and discerning mind. I give you also what you have not asked, both riches and honor. And if you will walk in my ways, keeping my statutes and my commandments, as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your days.

You guys see the parallel there. Solomon is the author, the principal author of Proverbs, and he is writing about how living according to God's will, his wisdom grants long life, and riches, and honor. But this is the general code that God has embedded into our universe. It generally produces long life, riches, and honor, as opposed to living a life of sin, and crime, and foolishness.

[9 : 41] But Proverbs does admit exceptions, because we live in a broken, sinful, upside-down world that frequently subverts God's good purposes. But this is the general promise.

But it's not something that you should live for. You shouldn't live to get rich. You shouldn't live merely for the sake of living longer. That's foolishness. And the Bible explicitly challenges desiring

to be rich.

1 Timothy 6, 9-10 tells us not to desire to be rich, because that leads us to ruin and destruction. Rather, the long life and the riches and honor that's promised here is the byproduct. It's the reward of living wisely, which is what we should seek, regardless of the outcome.

But this wisdom of God promises more than just health and wealth in this life. Verse 18 says, She is a tree of life to those who lay hold of her. Those who hold her fast are called blessed.

The tree of life is a symbol of vitality and healing. It's even a symbol of eternal life in Scripture. In Genesis 3, verse 22-24, after Adam and Eve sin against God and by taking from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, God expels them from the Garden of Eden.

[11:00] Lest they, it says, take also of the tree of life and eat and live forever. And so, in light of that, the promise of long life and riches and honor in the Old Testament, it gets transposed to a higher key in the New Testament.

It's the same song, but it's in a new key because the promise of long life gets transposed to the promise of eternal life and the promise of riches is transposed to our heavenly riches because those were, in fact, the ultimate realities that our temporal blessings like long life and riches were supposed to point to.

I'll elaborate on that, how God promises those things, eternal life and eternal heavenly riches later. But for now, we see in verses 13-18, this is why the wisdom of God is valuable.

It's valuable to man. It's valuable to humanity. Next, in verses 19-20, we see the value of wisdom to God. It says, The Lord, by wisdom, founded the earth. By understanding, He established the heavens.

By His knowledge, the deeps broke open and the clouds dropped down the dew. We see two pairs of merisms here. Merism is a literary device where you refer to two extremities of a spectrum in order to refer to the whole thing, the whole range.

[12:18] So, for example, when we say, Go search high and low, we don't mean just search the high places and low places and ignore everything in the middle. We mean search everything, right? Search high and low. Similarly, when we say, everyone, when we invite people and say, you know, young and old are both welcome, we don't mean only the old people and children can come.

We mean everyone can come, right? That's Samarism. So here, it talks about that. It says, The Lord, by wisdom, founded the earth. By understanding, He established the heavens.

That means He created everything, all of creation. He created, by what? By this wisdom that He is holding out to us, this wisdom of God. Similarly, when it's, the next one is also a kind of merism, because it says, By His knowledge, the deeps broke open and the clouds dropped down the dew.

The deeps is a reference to the primordial waters that were there at the beginning of God's creation when it was still, the world was still formless and empty. Genesis 1, 2 describes it this way.

It says that earth was without form and void and darkness was over the face of the deep and the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. This is before He divides, before He forms and fills the world, there's this watery chaos that He's created.

[13:41] And then, now from that, later in Genesis 1, verse 6, He separates the waters, separating, creating an expanse with water above, the clouds and the water below, the oceans. He breaks open the deep.

He separates it. So that's kind of what's in view. How did God do that? The water below, water above, all of it He established, found it, separated, formed by His wisdom.

This wisdom that the author of Proverbs is offering to us. Physicists, right, dream about what it would be like to pick the brains of Isaac Newton or Albert Einstein if you could have coffee with them.

Right? People who study literature dream about getting coffee with Shakespeare. What would it be like if I could talk to him? But that's nothing compared to the glimpse that we're getting here into God's wisdom.

What if you could have access to the divine wisdom by which God founded the earth, established the heavens, and broke open the deeps?

[14:47] If we want to know how we ought to live, should we not learn from the author of life itself, the source of all wisdom?

That's the value of wisdom for God. All the more than we should recognize the value of wisdom for ourselves. Verses 21 to 22 exhort us, my son, do not lose sight of these.

Keep sound wisdom and discretion and they will be life for your soul and adornment for your neck. There is an escalation or a progression in the verbs that I use to describe the urgent value of wisdom.

So if you look at verse 13, it begins by using verbs of discovery. It says, we ought to find wisdom and get understanding. Verse 18 uses verbs of acquisition, grabbing hold, saying that we ought to lay hold of wisdom and hold fast to it.

And now verse 21 uses verbs of retention. The phrase, do not lose sight in Hebrew is literally, keep wisdom from departing from your eyes. It means, keep it in front of you.

[15:58] Don't lose sight of it. Guard it and watch it and hold on to it. It's matched by the verb keep. Keep sound wisdom and discretion. The progression, that's how we are to seek and guard wisdom.

There is no passivity in any stage. Those who lack wisdom should seek it earnestly. Those who have found wisdom should lay hold of it eagerly. And those who have wisdom should keep it jealously.

You don't find precious jewels just rolling about on the street. When you have a precious jewel, you don't wrap it with a piece of use napkin.

Keep it on the countertop. You don't get lost or stolen. It doesn't just stay there. Likewise, the precious wisdom must be found, grasped, and guarded as we live our lives.

And when we do that, it says in verse 22, wisdom and discretion will be life for your soul and adornment for your neck. The Hebrew word that's translated here as soul also means neck.

[17:15] It's a different word for neck than the one that's used in the next phrase. But it's, nevertheless, means neck. The reason why soul and neck get kind of used in the same way is because a lot of people, the way commonly you perceive it is that there's life, there's breath in your neck, in your throat.

If someone chokes, they die. And so, that's why that word is used, neck is used figurative to refer to soul. And so, with that in mind, there's a tight parallelism in that verse, verse 22.

Wisdom and discretion will be life for your soul and adornment for your neck. Wisdom both preserves the life inside your neck and adorns the outside of your neck.

In chapter 1, verse 9, we are told that the father's instruction and mother's teaching are pendants of your neck. The adornment of the neck is often connected in the ancient world to status, to investing of authority.

It refers to a position. honor. And so, then, wisdom being life for our necks and adornment for our necks is another way of phrasing verse 16, which said, long life is in her right hand and in her left hand are riches and honor.

[18:31] These two things come to those who cherish wisdom. If we find, grasp, and guard wisdom, it will preserve and adorn our lives. Then, verses 23 to 24 continue, you will walk on your way securely and your foot will not stumble.

If you lie down, you will not be afraid. When you lie down, your sleep will be sweet. When you walk and when you lie down is another merism.

It means whether you are working or resting, whether you are out and about or you're staying at home, there will be no need for you to fear anything because God's wisdom will secure you, keep you safe.

you can think about it this way. It's the people who run red lights that are always nervously looking around to make sure there's no police officers. It's the people who slander or gossip their friends and neighbors that are always suspecting their own friends and neighbors thinking, oh man, I think this person is going to backstab me or talk about me behind my back.

It's the people who lie and promote a false image of themselves that are always insecure about themselves. They live in fear of being exposed.

[19:49] Only people who have integrity live without fear. Only people with integrity live fearlessly and freely. Only people who walk in wisdom live securely, knowing that their foot will not stumble.

Only they can lie down and not be afraid and sleep soundly without fear and worry. Similar to what God says, what the psalmist says in Psalm 4 verse 8, In peace I will both lie down and sleep for you alone, oh Lord, make me dwell in safety.

The wise walk securely and sleep soundly. Verses 25 to 26 continue this theme. Do not be afraid of sudden terror or of the ruin of the wicked when it comes.

For the Lord will be your confidence and will keep your foot from being caught. Do not be afraid. This is a command. God commands that we not be afraid of a sudden terror or of the ruin of the wicked thinking that, oh man, that's going to happen to me too. Why? Because it says God will be your confidence. Literally that phrase is God will be at your loin. God will be at your side to keep your foot from being caught.

[21 : 13] The command not to be afraid is the flip side of the command to trust the Lord in verse 5 earlier in this chapter because if you live according to the wisdom of God, then God is walking by your side.

He has your back. It's in some ways insulting to his power and authority for us to be afraid. My younger daughter is terrified of dogs.

So when we're walking through Twin City Plaza, the park, the Gold Star Mothers Park, on our way to our church meeting space, there's almost always dogs.

And there's almost always dogs that are not leashed, not following the time guidelines that are there. And so what happens when a dog that's not well trained and starts to approach as is, she will usually grab hold of my leg and hide behind me.

And usually I will let her climb up onto me and I'll hold her and I'll tell her, you don't have to be afraid because I'm with you. Unless it's a really big dog and I'm afraid. That's essentially what God our Father does with us.

[22 : 30] Do not be afraid. Don't be afraid of sudden terror because it's not sudden to me. God is sovereign.

He sees everything. Time is in His hands. Do not be afraid. Not a single person in the universe dies outside of God's sovereign rule.

Even in the middle of a pandemic. And not a single Christian should fear death because it's a portal to eternal life at our Father's land.

in our home. If we live with faith in God, we don't need to fear ultimate, eternal destruction that will face every wicked, every wicked person who rebels against God without putting their faith in Jesus. We'll be saved from that. We'll not be met with the faith of the wicked. So then are you humbly confiding in God? Are you walking in faith? Are you trusting Him?

[23 : 46] Or is your life characterized by fear and anxiety, restlessness, disturbed sleep? Do you trust in the Lord or are you leaning on your own understanding?

We should humbly confide in God's grace, His protection, rather than pridefully contending for our self-advancement, for self-protection, self-righteousness.

that's the value of wisdom. Having taught us about the value of wisdom, the author transitions to extolling the virtues of wisdom in verses 27 to 35. This is what wisdom looks like.

And it looks like, not at all surprisingly, it looks like obeying the greatest commandment. The greatest commandment Jesus gave in Matthew 22 verses 37 to 40.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And the second is like it.

[24 : 48] You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets. In the first 12 verses of this chapter, the sage exhorted us to trust in the Lord with all of our heart.

That's what it looks like to love the Lord, to pledge allegiance to the Lord with all of our heart. And in the second half of this chapter, the sage exhorts us to love our neighbor as ourselves. Our love for God flows into our love for neighbors.

Our trust in God produces good works toward our neighbors. The two are inseparably intertwined because if we don't trust God to attend to our good, we will selfishly protect and secure our own good at the expense of our neighbors.

It says in verses 27 to 28, Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due when it is in your power to do it. Do not say to your neighbor, Go and come again tomorrow.

I will give it tomorrow. When you have it with you. Depending on which English translation of the Bible you are using, you may or may not have a footnote at the end of the first clause in verse 27.

[25 : 59] In the ESV, the English Standard Version, there's a footnote that says, Hebrew, Do not withhold good from its owners. That's the literal meaning of the clause.

Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due. This verse is speaking of some kind of tangible good that is owned by a person, another person, or due to that person.

You are not to withhold such things from them. So what exactly does that mean, to withhold good from its owners? Why do I have it if it's theirs? Yes. This prohibition is a classic example. It's the most common example used to refer to oppression or injustice, social injustice in Scripture. It's when you withhold wage from a day laborer.

So for example, in Leviticus chapter 19 verses 9 to 18, which is the original context in which this command to love your neighbor as yourself is given, it gives you a list of illustrations or examples of how that should play out.

[27 : 00] What your love for your neighbor should look like. And one of those illustrations is in verse 18 of Leviticus chapter 19. It says, You shall not oppress your neighbor or rob him. The wages of a hired worker shall not remain with you all night until the morning.

The same issue that James talks about in the New Testament. In the ancient world, day laborers were very common. They belonged to some of the poorest class of people. And what would they do?

They would get hired for just the day of labor to go and work the field for the landowner. And at the end of the day, they will be compensated for the work that they did that day. And for many of these people, because they were poor, that day's wage was their daily bread.

They didn't get it. They don't eat that day. But they were also easy to take advantage of. It's easy for the landowner to say, Oh, well, I don't think you did the work in a satisfactory way.

I saw you taking a break a little too many times. Because they didn't pay it up front. It was easy for the landowner to say, Well, you know, I'm not sure where I placed the money.

[28 : 15] I will have this money for you tomorrow. Hoping that maybe they won't come back. That's kind of how rebates work, isn't it? They bait you in saying, Oh, here, we'll give you this rebate if you buy this thing.

Hope, knowing fully that the vast majority of people will never claim the rebate. But that was very oppressive because even if they have these poor day laborers, even if they had legal recourse, that would come days later.

They go hungry. They go hungry. They go hungry. And God harped on that, said, Don't ever withhold the wage of a day laborer.

Give it to him. And so don't say, Go and come again. Tomorrow I will give it. He's talking about that kind of thing. So he's saying, basically in general, the principle is this. Treat people fairly.

Don't defraud people. Give people what is due to them. What is owed to them. Don't withhold good from them if it is in your power to do it.

[29 : 20] And I think this classic case, because it is, I think, representative of the kind of love that we are to show to our neighbor. And Jesus further illustrates that in his command to love your neighbor as yourself with the parable of the Good Samaritan that he tells us in Luke 10, 29 to 37.

And there he tells us that a neighbor is whomever we come across in our day-to-day life, whomever we come across that has a need that we can meet.

Don't withhold that from that person. Do you see someone with a stalled car? Do you have the tools and the skills to help?

Then do it. Do you see someone who is hungry? Do you have the means to get food for that person? Then do it. Do you see someone who is cold?

Do you have clothes with which you can clothe that person? Then do it. Does your neighbor need emergency child care? Then take their child into your home. Do you provide it for them? Does your neighbor need to borrow a car?

[30 : 26] Lend it. Whomever you come across, if they have a need that you can meet, meet it. Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due when it is in your power to do it.

The Bible never demands that we give what we do not have. But if we are able to meet a need today, don't deny your neighbor or defer for tomorrow. Meet it.

Do it today. Be ready for every good work. Verses 29 to 30 continue this lesson. Do not plan evil against your neighbor who dwells trustingly beside you.

Do not contend with the man for no reason when he has done you no harm. The phrase is fascinating. Literally, do not plan evil is literally do not plow evil against your neighbor because plowing is preparation for sowing.

So it's used figuratively to refer to any kind of preparation or planning that you do. So he's not saying, you know, I mean, because we may do all kinds of accidental evil to our neighbors.

[31 : 30] I've done plenty of them, for example, by flooding my toilet and getting water down into my neighbor's ceiling and ruining the neighbor's ceiling. Thankfully, there's insurance for those things. But you might do all kinds of accidental evil to your neighbor, but that's not what this is talking about.

He's saying, don't premeditate evil against your neighbor. Don't plan it. Don't plot it. Your neighbor is dwelling trustingly beside you.

What has he done to you? Do not contend with a man for no reason when he has done you no harm. The word contend means to accuse. For example, when you file a complaint about your neighbor who has done nothing wrong to you or when you sue your neighbor for some monetary gain or to gain some kind of territorial advantage or whatever it might be.

We are not to take advantage of our neighbors. The word evil in verse 29 and the word harm in verse 30 are the same words in Hebrew. So this demonstrates the biblical principle of eye for eye. Your neighbor hasn't done anything evil to you so don't plot evil against him. Don't plan to harm your harmless neighbor. Leviticus 24 19-21 codifies this principle.

[32 : 42] It says, If anyone injures his neighbor as he has done it shall be done to him. Fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, whatever injury he has given a person shall be given to him.

Whatever kills an animal shall make it good and whoever kills a person shall be put to death. In the New Testament, this command gets transmuted to do not resist the one who is evil, Jesus says in Matthew 5-38-42, but if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.

The reason why this gets transformed in the New Testament is because Jesus dies as a suffering servant for the sins of the people he's going to save. He is killed, he suffers at the hands of the people he came to save and so throughout scripture in 1 Peter, for example, he tells believers, you are to suffer even when people oppress you and do evil to you for the sake of witnessing to that person about your suffering Savior so that you might have the opportunity to love and serve that person in spite of the oppression and evil that you endure for the sake of that person's salvation.

That's why in the New Testament this gets transformed but even in that context refers to non-retaliation as a personal ethic. It's not saying there should be non-retaliation in the legal system, in justice system.

In the justice system, in the institutional justice, eye for eye is still the best legal principle for society because what it means is essentially the severity of the punishment should match the gravity of the crime.

[34 : 23] That's justice. When someone pokes your eye, you don't go out claiming, calling for it, off with his head. That's unjust.

We have to be just to our neighbors. Verse 31 warns us, Do not envy a man of violence and do not choose any of his ways. This is where this Proverbs, the author of Proverbs anticipates that there are exceptions to this because the landowner who deprives the day laborer of their fair wages might get richer, might get greater honor.

The person that falsely accuses his neighbor might successfully smear his neighbor and advance his monetary and social standing. An evildoer might fad himself and live a long life.

But even then, it says, Do not envy a man of violence and do not choose any of his ways.

Verses 32 to 35 give us a series of reasons. Four. The devious person is an abomination to the Lord, but the upright are in his confidence.

[35 : 48] The Lord's curse is on the house of the wicked, but he blesses the dwelling of the righteous. Toward the scornors, he is scornful, but to the humble, he gives favor. The wise will inherit honor, but fool gets disgrace.

The reason why we ought to do that is theological. If man is all there is in the world, then injustice makes perfect sense. Injustice is by far the most successful policy.

But man is not autonomous. Man is not all there is in the world. There is a God. And it says, it invokes the name of God, the Lord, three times in verse 32, 33, and 35, all to tell us to live as a wise person.

A devious person is an abomination to the Lord. Causes visceral offense to God. It turns his stomach to see someone defraud somebody else.

It's repulsive to him. But the upright are in his confidence or in his most intimate counsel. It's repelled by the devious, but God draws near the righteous to his counsel.

[37 : 02] The Lord curses the house of the wicked, but blesses the dwelling of the righteous. The house represents all that belongs to the wicked person as well. Verses 34 to 35 fittingly conclude this section this way.

Toward the scorers, he is scornful, but to the humble, he gives favor. The wise will inherit honor, but fools get disgrace. For this reason, we should humbly confide in God's grace rather than proudly contending for self-advancement among our neighbors.

Notice the contrast of verbs in verse 35. The wise will inherit honor, but fools get disgrace. The word get is literally exalt oneself.

To overreach. To stretch out in order to grab something that doesn't belong to you. Exalt yourself. That's what the word means. The fools get disgrace.

They overreach for disgrace. They exalt themselves for disgrace. The wise receive honor as an inheritance, not by reaching and grasping for it, fighting tooth and nail for it, but receiving it from God because they belong to God as His children.

[38 : 16] It is their rightful inheritance. We receive that freely from God. In contrast, the wicked, they're always providing for themselves, securing for themselves, grasping and fending for themselves, and in the end, what they acquire from themselves is not riches and honor, it's disgrace.

This is the principle of salvation as well. God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. That's a quotation in James 4, 6-8 and 1 Peter 5, 5-10 from this verse.

Proverbs 3, 3. James and Peter both refer to it in order to tell us to humble ourselves before God instead of seeking to live in autonomy, instead of seeking to save ourselves, instead of seeking to fight this spiritual battle in our own strength, humble yourselves, trust in God instead of contending for yourself.

The word favor in verse 34 is a word that often gets translated as grace. unmerited favor, a bestowed gift. That's what ultimately salvation is.

That's what eternal life is. That's what reconciliation with God is. It's not something that we earn but something that we receive from God as a gift.

[39 : 45] And how does God give it to us? Verses 18-19 promised us wisdom is a tree of life to those who lay hold of her.

Those who hold her fast are called blessed. The Lord by wisdom founded the earth by understanding he established the heavens. Colossians 1-16 tell us by what exactly God founded the earth and he tells us that by Christ all things were created in heaven and earth.

Jesus Christ is the word of God. Jesus Christ is the wisdom of God. 1 Corinthians 1 says that. God the Father founded the earth, established the heavens, and broke open the deep by Christ.

He is the wisdom of God and so he is the tree of life that imparts eternal blessing, eternal life.

Remember once again Adam and Eve how they sought wisdom and understanding.

They did seek wisdom and understanding. Remember what the tree that they were not supposed to touch was called. It's the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Doesn't that sound like something that you should know?

[40 : 57] Something you should have? Sounds like something that a wise person would eat from and follow? They were commanded not to eat from it because God wanted them to know they are not to be morally autonomous, independent, sovereign beings deciding for themselves what is right and good but rather they were to take from God's word from what he says this is right and this is wrong.

They were to cultivate trust in him, depend on him and live with that kind of faith in him. That's what God envisioned for people but instead Adam and Eve overreach.

They exalt themselves and they grasp hold of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, eat it and through that they are cut off from the garden of Eden which possesses the tree of life.

and so God sends Jesus from paradise to our wilderness so that Jesus might die on the cross to pay the penalty of our sins that he might make way for us back to God that he might teach us how to humble ourselves before God again.

He pays for our sins on the cross and he says all who would believe in me all who would repent of their sins and believe in me would be granted eternal life that they shall not perish but live forever.

[42 : 24] Revelation chapter 2 verse 7 says to the one who conquers I will grant to eat the tree of life which is in the paradise of God. And how do you conquer?

How do you conquer evil? How do you conquer Satan? How do you conquer sin and death? Revelation chapter 12 tells us in verses 10 to 12 by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony.

It is the blood of the Lamb blood of Jesus Christ and our persevering faith in Him and witness to Him that enable us to eat of the tree of life and live forever.

Because we were sinners cut off from God this is the only way for us to return to God and we must receive that freely as our heavenly inheritance rather than overreaching for it trying to get righteousness of our own self-righteousness trying to make ourselves good enough in God's eyes instead we humbly confide in God and receive His grace.

It's only by doing that that we become good neighbors because we trust Him that we don't need to fight and fend for ourselves against our neighbors.

[43 : 44] Take a moment to reflect on that truth for some time or just a few moments. more. Thank you.

Thank you.