

Proverbs Chapter Week 1, v.1

The book of Proverbs are writings given to Solomon by the Spirit of God. These verses speak of the importance of following wisdom instead of rejecting it. Solomon requested that God give him the wisdom to govern his people. In answer to his request, God gave Solomon a great amount of wisdom and understanding. (1 Kings 3:5-14)

We all have memories of events or circumstances that provoke certain strong emotions within us. Remember those times you can think back to and immediately picture where you were, the surroundings, the smells, the people, the feelings.

Why are these memories so easy to recall? Weren't they more important perhaps than what you chose to have for dinner three weeks ago on a Thursday night or what pair of jeans you wore to go grocery shopping last week? Aren't the things that have little significance or effect in our lives easy to forget?

Pr 3:1 My son, do not forget my teaching, But let your heart keep my commandments;

The first instruction we are given is "do not forget my teaching".

What does it mean to forget? Why do we forget things? What helps keep you focused?

I need to give my full attention to important matters. Unfortunately, my mind is sometimes on the next thing that needs to be done rather than on who or what is at hand at the moment.

Forget <shakach> to mislay, to be oblivious of, from want of memory or attention;

To fail or be unable to remember something; neglect or fail to give due attention to something; stop thinking about something; disregard

Two things stand out with the use of the word forget:

- 1) Either we don't remember because we didn't really pay much attention; or
- 2) We disregard information because it is not that important to us to begin with.

We are more apt to remember the people, places and things that have made a significant impact on our lives – the things that require serious consideration.

So what is the criterion for remembering something?

It needs our full attention. It must be important to us. We need to take the time to give it careful thought and examination.

Have you ever talked with a child and they are looking everywhere around the room but at you? This is a great picture of not paying attention. What things pull you from concentrating during your study/prayer time in the Word? What are some things you can do to improve these distractions?

teaching <towrah> law, a precept or statute; the principles set out in the Bible, especially the Pentateuch;

precept: principle – a rule or instruction that guides somebody's actions, especially one that guides moral behavior; statute – established rule

God has given us His divine word in the Bible. We need to remember what we have heard and read so we can practice what we know. **How do we do this?** We honor God through the study of His word, fearing His word, trusting His word, submitting to His word.

David's prayer in **Psalm 119** gives us an example of the importance of God's instruction through His word in our lives.

The second part of **Proverbs 3:1** says "let your heart keep my commandments".

heart <leb>the feelings, will and intellect; the center of anything, understanding, wisdom;

heart: where the deepest and sincerest feelings are located; character, affection; heart and soul – completely, or with the greatest devotion; to take something to heart: to take something seriously; with all your heart: completely, sincerely

The desire to follow God's instruction comes from a heart that has been changed by Him. Sincere obedience comes from knowledge (we need to know who we are to obey and what we are to obey), and conviction – being completely invested in what we believe to be true. It is impossible to

follow God's instruction with the right heart without first submitting to Him as Lord, recognizing whom He is and what He has done for us. Then, with the help of the Holy Spirit, we are able to follow and trust in Him completely.

Think of the trust a child has for their parents. They are incapable of completely understanding every decision made for them yet they trust their well-being to those who love them.

What is our heart to do? Keep God's commandments.

What does it mean to keep something? What kinds of things do you keep? Why?

keep <natsar > to guard, to protect, maintain, obey, observe, preserve; possess, maintain, store something, continue, safeguard information, save something for later use or withhold something from use; be true to something; maintain a record; remain in a particular condition;

guard: to protect against loss by being vigilant and taking defensive measures

Are we ready to give a defense for truth? Are we sensitive to possible errors or misrepresentation of the Bible by others? How do we prepare to do this?

protect: to keep something safe from harm or damage
Is our example honoring or damaging to the truth?

maintain: to continue, or keep in existence, a situation, course of action, or condition without changing or impairing it; to insist on the truth of something in the face of challenge or disbelief; to defend something against criticism

Is our study of God's word an ongoing practice so that we are ready to defend it when challenged? Is it at the center of our thoughts?

obey: to follow instructions; to be controlled by somebody or something; observe; abide by; conform

Do we take God's instructions seriously and apply them to our daily lives? What controls our thoughts and actions?

observe: to notice, especially while watching carefully; watch something attentively; (*intransitive verb [does not have a direct object]*) - to be a spectator, to watch something without taking part); to comply with something; scrutinize, study, examine, conform to; the opposite is to violate

When you attend a sports game you can be engrossed in it watching every play or you can simply be there enjoying the crowds and excitement.

When we read the Bible or we listen to the teaching of God's word, do we take careful consideration on how it applies to us personally? Are we in the thick of things as a player or just watching from the sidelines as a spectator?

It is sometimes easier to see where others need to apply truth instead of looking within ourselves. Approaching the Bible only with intellect as a literary study for information will give us knowledge but not change us. We

have a responsibility to do something with the information God reveals to us.

Do you know anyone who knows the content of the Bible, and may have even studied scripture in the Bible, but has not accepted salvation as a gift?

Let's visit this idea of simply being a spectator verses being a participant. Are our lives changing, being conformed to Christ? Alternatively, has complacency become the description of our Christian walk?

Think – many of us know what it means to have gained a few extra pounds and clothing becomes a bit snug. Spiritually, we should be trying to gain weight on a regular basis instead of just maintaining. Are you staying trim or getting plump in your spiritual growth?

“Keeping” something also means to

preserve: make sure something lasts – to keep something protected from anything that would cause its current quality or condition to change or deteriorate or cause it to fall out of use; safeguard

Do we guard ourselves from influences that will weaken our faith? Are we willing to separate from people and things that have a negative effect on our spiritual growth? Are we even more committed to Christ now than we were a month ago, a year ago?

De 8:1 "All the commandments that I am commanding you today *you shall be careful to do*, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land which the LORD swore [to give] to your forefathers.

De 30:16 in that I command you today to *love the LORD your God, to walk in His ways* and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments, that you may live and multiply, and that the LORD your God may bless you in the land where you are entering to possess it.

De 30:20 *by loving the LORD your God, by obeying His voice, and by holding fast to Him*, for this is your life and the length of your days, that you may live in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them."

Pr 4:13 *Take hold of instruction*, do not let go. *Guard her*, for she is your life.

De 4:9 "Only give heed to yourself and *keep your soul diligently*, lest you forget the things which your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life; but make them known to your sons and your grandsons.

De 6:6-9 "*And these words*, which I am commanding you today, *shall be on your heart*, and you shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. "*And you shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead.*" And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. (Referring to the tassels or fringe (Nu 15:37-41) worn by the Israelites in order to remember God's commands; by the Pharisees, worn only as an outward sign of holiness. It did not reflect their heart.)

De 11:18 "You shall therefore *impress these words of mine on your heart and on your soul*, and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontals on your forehead.

Have you ever heard of the practice to tie a knot around your finger so that you don't forget something? We need help in remembering a great number of things. God knows this about His people so He gave the Israelites visual reminders of His Law. We should be encouraged to use whatever means necessary to keep His instructions at the forefront of our lives.

What are some things you do (or need to do) that help you remember God's word so that you are prepared to "keep" His instruction throughout the day?

Proverbs Chapter 3
Week 1, v.1 – Application Questions

Is there an area in your life where you need to pray and ask God for His wisdom? Have you /will you take the time to look in the Bible for guidance?

Do you struggle with remaining focused during your prayer/reading time each day? What are some things you can change in order to give this time the complete attention it requires?

When you study the Bible, do you look to your own life to apply instruction? Are you willing to apply His word even when it is difficult? Do you see God's word changing your life?

Think of the close relationships you have. Are you encouraged to mature in your walk through these relationships? Are you in any relationships that might cause your walk to weaken? If so, what do you need to do?

What else has been brought to your attention through studying Prov 3:1?

At Home

*Take the time to **review** verse 1, **memorize** it and pay close attention to personal **application**.

*Look at Prov 3:2-4 for next week's study. As you read/study, jot down what you discover. Memorize the passage. Use any reference tools you have to look up a few main words in the passage. What questions come to mind that will help you to apply what you read?