

-Save This Page as a PDF-

Straight Talk about Trust

3: 5-6

A proverb is a short and memorable saying designed to be our blueprint for living in the world that ADONAI has created. It is important to note that proverbs are not promises; they are generally true principles, all other things being equal.

Why are we studying the book of **Proverbs**? Because we need more than ethical principles. We need new hearts. We need **wisdom** deep within, at an intimate level, as we hurry from one complex decision to the next, moment by moment, in the concrete realities of our daily lives. Without **God's wisdom**, many difficulties in life will remain confusing and threatening. But with **God's wisdom** entering our hearts, we get a hang of how life really works, and we come alive more and more. Irenaeus, the early Christian theologian, famously said, "The glory of **God** is man fully alive." That's where **Proverbs 3** wants to take us.

The wisdom of **Proverbs 2** offered to deliver us from evil (**to see link click [Ap - Protection from Wicked People](#)**). It offered protection. But **Chapter 3** is so positive. It is an education in life at its best - how to live well in every area of life, at home, at work. As in **Proverbs 2**, the passage begins with, "**My son**" in **verse 1**. Therefore, **God** is speaking to us through **the father**. **He** is speaking to us as **His** adopted children. **He** was not stuck with us; **He** chose us because **He** loves us, and now **He** is coaching us in how we can be fully alive.⁶⁹

In the previous file (see **[Aq - Don't Forget Wisdom](#)**), **the wise father** encouraged **his son** to cultivate good relationships within his community, which we might call "horizontal relationships. Here, we find **the father**, once again, encouraging **his son**, but this time to maintain a right relationship with **ADONAI**, which is a "vertical relationship." Both describe a cause-and-effect principle not unlike a law of physics or a principle of life. Drop a weight, and it will fall. Eat sensibly, exercise regularly, and your body will be fit. Live within your means, save money, and you will build wealth.

As Charles Swindoll makes clear in his book *Living the Proverbs*, there are **four verbs** in these two verses, four action words that are of special interest to all who want to live beyond the daily grind of worry (**trust, depend, acknowledge, and make straight**). The first three are our responsibility, but the fourth verb - **make straight** - is a simple declaration of **ADONAI'** promise, declaring **His** part of the covenant.⁷⁰



My son, trust in ADONAI with all your heart (3:5a Hebrew). These are the most famous verses in **Proverbs**. What are they saying? They are saying that our confidence cannot be in anything or anyone other than **the Lord Yeshua Messiah Himself. Trust** is a dramatically descriptive word that literally means “to throw oneself down upon his or her face.” To make it as graphic as I can, **trusting** here means to do a belly-flop on **ADONAI** with all our sin, failure, and fears. We stake everything on the Gospel promised of **God**. If **the LORD** fails us, then we are lost for all eternity. However, if **He** comes through, we are saved forever. That’s straight talk. Real **trust** is that blunt and simple.

How can we tell if our **trust** is wholehearted? None of us wants to be halfhearted, as **Solomon** could testify (see the commentary on [the Life of Solomon Cy - The Conclusion of the Matter](#)). You men, when you were ten years old and someone asked you what you wanted to be when you grew up, not one of you said, “When I grow up, I want to be wishy-washy.” No! You said something like, “I want to be a fireman!” or “I want to be a fighter pilot!” And now today we want to be **wholehearted** for **Messiah**. So let’s examine ourselves.

And don’t depend on your own understanding (3:5b NLT). Do you let the Bible overrule your own thinking? Do you merely agree with the Bible, or do you obey the Bible? If you merely agree with the Bible, then your response is not obedience but coincidence. It’s just that the prejudices you have soaked up from

your culture happen to line up with the Bible at that point. But what do you do when the Bible contradicts what you want to be true? If you are looking in the Bible for excuses to do what you want anyway, you have, in fact, rejected **ADONAI**.⁷¹ The danger, of course, is that when we **depend on [our] own understanding** and we miss **the Lord's** will. This warning doesn't suggest that **God's** children turn off our brains and ignore our common sense. It simply cautions us not to **depend on** our own **wisdom** and experience, or **the wisdom** and experience of others. **Abraham** did this when **he** went to **Egypt (Genesis 12:10-20)**, and so did **Joshua** when **he** attacked the little town of **Ai (Joshua 7)**. When we **become wise in [our] own eyes (3:7a)**, then we are headed for trouble.

In all your ways acknowledge Him (3:6a Hebrew). **Acknowledge** comes from a simple Hebrew term meaning *to know*. This kind of **knowledge** is personal. In fact, Hebrew writers used this term as a euphemism for sexual relations between a husband and a wife. **ADONAI's knowledge** of **His** creatures is complete (**Genesis 18:18; Deuteronomy 34:10; Isaiah 48:8; Psalms 1:6 and 37:18**), and **He** wants us to know **Him** just as intimately. Rather than **depending on** the human crutches of our own insights or skills, we are encouraged to know the mind of **YHVH, His** character, **His** values, **His** attributes, and **His** plan.

And He will make your paths (Hebrew: *derek*, meaning way or road) straight (3:6b Hebrew). In the figurative sense, it refers to the choices we make and the experiences we encounter as we go through life. **ADONAI** encourages us to know **His** mind in all those decisions and circumstances. What is more, *derek* can also mean *characteristic manner* as it does in **Proverbs 30:18-19**. **There are three things that amaze me; four that I don't understand; how an eagle glides through the sky, how a snake slithers on a rock, how a ship navigates the ocean, and the way of a man with a virgin.**

One visual image associated with *derek* is that of an archer's **bow**, which has a natural curve to it. **Psalm 7:12** uses the verb form of this root word to picture **the Lord** as having **bent His bow and made it ready**. Knowing **God** and doing things **His** way doesn't mean we must sacrifice our uniqueness or conform to a specific manner of living: we don't need to wear certain clothes, live like our neighbors, pursue only certain hobbies, in other words, stay between the lines. Far from it! Discover who **ADONAI** made you to be and follow your unique **path**. Just don't neglect **acknowledging**, or **knowing God**.

Rabbi Sha'ul was, far and away, unlike any man of **his** time, and there has been

no one like **him** since. **He** made unusual life choices - remaining single, traveling constantly, devoting **himself** entirely to ministry - and took a **path** through life no other could walk. **He** accomplished more in fifteen years than most people achieve in a lifetime. In addition to evangelizing much of the Roman world, **he** wrote more than a third of the B'rit Chadashah. Yet, nothing got in the way of **his** number-one priority: knowing **Messiah**.

But the things that used to be advantages for me, I have, because of the Messiah, come to consider a disadvantage. Not only that, but I consider everything a disadvantage in comparison with the supreme value of knowing the Messiah Yeshua as my Lord. It was because of him that I gave up everything and regard it all as garbage, in order to gain the Messiah and be found in union with him, not having any righteousness of my own based on legalism, but having that righteousness which comes through the Messiah's faithfulness, the righteousness from God based on trust. Yes, I gave it all up in order to know Him, that is, to know the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings as I am being conformed to His death, so that somehow I might arrive at being resurrected from the dead (Philippians 3:7-11).

ADONAI has established a paradigm to help us escape the trap of worry. This cause-and-effect principle is as much a part of creation as the law of gravity. **He** directs three commands to us. They are our responsibility, "**trust . . . depend . . . acknowledge . . .**" The fourth verb, **make straight**, is **God's** promise, **His** part of the covenant. As we trust **Him** instead of our own perspectives and opinions. **He** promises to **make [our] paths straight**. This word picture alludes to the ancient practice of highway construction. They cleared obstacles, filled in gaps, leveled hills, and cut **straight pathways** into the sides of mountains. Figuratively, this phrase means *to facilitate progress or to turn plans into reality*. As we trust **God** and deepen our personal, experiential knowledge of **Him**, **He** will facilitate our progress through life and help us successfully follow **the path He** has marked out for us. **Your eyes could see me as an embryo, but in your book all my days were already written; my days had been shaped before any of them existed (Psalm 139:16)**. Knowing **ADONAI** will keep **your paths straight**, which will keep you off **the crooked path (2:15)**, which leads to **the depths of sh'ol (9:18)**.

Now that we have analyzed all the vital parts, let's put the verses back together in an extended paraphrase: Throw yourself completely upon **the Lord**. Cast all your present and future needs on **Him** who is your intimate **Savior**, and find in **Him** your

security and safety. Do this with all your mind, feeling and will. In order to make this possible, you must refuse to support yourself with the crutch of human ingenuity. Instead, study **the Lord**. Learn about **His** character, discover **His** plans for you and the world, be amazed by **His** love and concern for you in each one of your circumstances. Then **He** - having been granted full control of your life - will smooth out and **make straight** your **paths**, removing obstacles along the way.⁷²

*Dear Heavenly **Father**, praise **You** that **You** are 100% trustworthy! What a joy and a privilege to have **You** as our great and wise **father** who is omniscient in **wisdom**, steadfast in love, almighty and all-powerful! There will never be a time when I cannot trust all that you say with complete confidence! Though it is great to know about how wonderful **You** are, a step up from knowing is to make time in our busy life schedules to spend time talking with **You**, listening to **Your** reply. How wonderful that **You** are always available for me to praise **You**, meditate on **Your Word**, and steadfast love! Though **You** never force anyone to follow **Your** path, it is always the **wisest** and best thing to do to follow You with a fully committed heart. I know that I can have confidence to ask **You** for **Your wisdom**. **But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all without hesitation and without reproach; and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith, without any doubting (James 1:5-6a)**. How great that **You** are a **God** nearby, not far away (**Acts 17:27**). How very special that **You** promise to live within those who trust in **You**. **Yeshua answered and said to him: If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word. My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our dwelling with him (John 14:23)**. Thank you for being such a wonderful heavenly **Father** who always is there to hear and to answer my prayers. Sometimes the answer is "yes," sometimes the answer is "no," and sometimes the answer is "not now." My desire is to align my prayers with **Your** will. **Then you will call on Me, and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you (Jeremiah 29:12)**. In **Messiah Yeshua's** holy **Name** and power of **His** resurrection. Amen*