



FAITH NOT FEAR

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CODkids section—Find the key terms from Proverbs 3:1-12

F H W S G E D U M I P S R F R
 R M O R B O R O H E A R T R T
 D H V K N R D T H E H S W U T
 R Y Q J M S E Q O F P J H E H
 O T Y C I A I V O H H G I O X
 L H S W T Z C P O H R S Q N N
 J J G R H T U R T R P A R K R
 D R U P M U W A V P P N E R X
 T S Q I E Y P A A Q T O K F R
 T S T B R Y H F L R N M C A Q
 E Z I Y C O F S Z J K O O L G
 D L S W Y Y D L G K E L H E S
 H A Z J K Z R A S M A O U G S
 F R G W P H G J Q U F S N G Z
 V I G Z E O D T Q B F D B I R

FEAR
 GOD
 HEART
 HOKMA

LORD
 MERCY
 PATH
 PROVERBS

SOLOMON
 TRUST
 TRUTH
 WISDOM

What's the fuel our bodies run on? If you were to watch most of humanity and even many Christians, you might conclude the fuel we run on is fear and anxiety. We live in a culture of hurry and worry, and our bodies were not created to endure this lifestyle. Fear and anxiety cause elevated blood pressure, heart disease, lowered immune system, digestive problems, changes in blood chemistry, memory loss, etc. Our bodies were not made for a life of anxiety and fear; they were made for something else. They were made for faith, to trust our Creator. A doctor from John Hopkins said, "We are inwardly constructed in nerve and tissue, brain cell and soul, for faith and not fear. God made us that way. To live by worry is to live against reality."

In one of the most famous sections in all of Scripture, Solomon describes the wisdom that we were made for: faith, not fear. The first 12 verses of Proverbs 3 lay out the cause and effect when we choose faith over fear. The "odd" verses describe our act of faith and the "even" verses describe the result of that faith. Verses 1-4 are the if/then statements--if God's wisdom becomes a way of life, then you will experience the blessing He desires for you. Verses 5-12 are the "how to" part of the paragraph and in it are four commands—trust, lean, acknowledge and make straight.

<p>¹ My child, <u>do not forget</u> my teaching, but <u>let your heart keep</u> my commandments</p> <p>³ <u>Do not let truth and mercy leave you; bind them</u> around your neck, <u>write them</u> on the tablet of your heart.</p> <p>⁵ <u>Trust in the LORD with all your heart</u>, and <u>do not rely</u> on your own understanding. ⁶ <u>Acknowledge him in all your ways</u>,</p> <p>⁷ <u>Do not be wise in your own estimation; fear</u> the LORD and <u>turn away</u> from evil.</p> <p>⁹ <u>Honor</u> the LORD from your wealth and from the first fruits of all your crops;</p> <p>¹¹ My child, <u>do not despise discipline</u> from the LORD, and <u>do not loathe</u> his rebuke.</p>	<p>² for they will provide a <u>long and full life</u>, and they will <u>add well-being</u> to you.</p> <p>⁴ Then you will <u>find favor and good understanding</u>, in the sight of God and people.</p> <p>And <u>he will make your paths straight</u>.</p> <p>⁸ This will <u>bring healing to your body</u>, and <u>refreshment to your inner self</u>.</p> <p>¹⁰ then your <u>barns will be filled completely</u>, and your vats will <u>overflow with new wine</u></p> <p>¹² For the LORD <u>disciplines those he loves</u>, just as a father disciplines the son in whom he delights.</p>
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Solomon says make mercy and truth an intimate part of your life. When Solomon says, "Let your heart keep my commandments," the term keep is also found in Isaiah 27:3 where God is the protector of the vineyard. It says, "I, the LORD, protect it; I water it regularly. I guard it night and day, so no one can harm it."

"Don't let truth (emet) and mercy (hesed) leave you", Solomon asserts. Emet is the idea of faithfulness, integrity. When truth is a part of your character, you speak truly and you honor your promises. Hesed is this great Hebrew term that describes the unrelenting, inexplicable, overwhelming grace of God for His covenant people. It is this quality of God's character that causes Him to honor His covenant regardless of His people's many failures. Solomon proclaims, "Don't let emet or hesed leave you. Bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart." God had a way of ensuring that grace and truth would never leave us (see John 1:14, 16-17). When you allow God's truth and mercy to take up residence in your life, you will experience amazing peace, prosperity and well-being. Your life has the opportunity to be protected from the harsh conditions of a rebellion against God's best for you.

In verses 7-8, Solomon tells us to not be wise in our own estimation, fear the Lord and turn away from evil. When this happens, our bodies heal and you can actually experience physiological change. When someone is no longer carrying a burden (that they were never intended to carry), it brings healing and refreshment to his/her inner self.

In verses 9-10, Solomon says, "Honor the Lord from your wealth and from the first fruits of all your crops." Honor means to view it heavy, or have weight. To give God weight in your finances, it means to give of your "first-fruits." If you do, "your barns will be filled completely and your vats will overflow with new wine." God abundantly provides for your every need (2 Cor. 9:8). The writer of Hebrews says, "For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love you have demonstrated for his name, in having served and continuing to serve the saints" (6:10). In verses 11-12, Solomon says we must not reject or shrink back from God's discipline. The surest sign of our Father's love and delight in us is His desire to correct us and protect us from unwise and sinful decisions. In verses 5-6, there are four active verbs: "trust, lean, acknowledge" which are our jobs, and "make straight" which is God's part of the covenant.

Trust is similar to an Arabic word that means literally, "to throw oneself down upon his or her face." It's a posture that conveys complete dependence and submission. It means casting all hopes for the present and the future upon Yahweh; finding provision and security in Yahweh.

Solomon says there are 3 ways to trust God:

- 1) Without reservation--with all your heart
- 2) Exclusively--not leaning on your own understanding
- 3) Extensively--in all your ways acknowledge him

When we trust Him with all our hearts, exclusively and extensively, He will make our paths straight or smooth. It is an allusion to the ancient practice of highway building. They cleared obstacles, filled in gaps, leveled hills and cut straight pathways into the sides of mountains.

Many of us this morning are exhausted and overwhelmed, because all week long we have tried to work out our own problems with our limited viewpoint. We chase down all the possibilities and paths and we inevitably hit a dead-end, and we still, unfortunately, seek a man-made solution. Let confidence in God's character, power, plans and past faithfulness be the foundation of our decision making.

Leaning on our own understanding is exhausting and not how we were created to function. Our bodies were simply not made for a life of anxiety and fear. Solomon describes the wisdom that we were made for: faith, not fear. In anxiety my being is gasping for air. In faith, I breathe freely. When we trust Him with all our hearts, exclusively and extensively, He will make our paths straight.

How is God asking you trust Him today with all your heart and not lean on your own understanding?