

Trust

Series: Deep Dive Treasures: The Way of the Lord

Proverbs 3:3-6

September 12, 2021

Welcome again to worship today.

The San José was a 64-gun, three-masted galleon of the Spanish Navy. Launched in 1698, ten years later, on June 8, 1708, it was the flagship of a treasure fleet composed of three Spanish warships and 14 merchant vessels sailing from Panama to Colombia. It encountered a British squadron, leading to a battle known as Wager's Action. During the battle, the powder magazines of San José detonated, destroying and sinking the ship. Of the 600 people on board, only 11 survived. Three hundred years after the battle, in 2015, the wreck was discovered on the ocean floor. In its cargo holds were gold, silver, emeralds and jewelry worth in today's money over \$14 billion.

As a kid, I was fascinated with undersea treasure, buried treasure, and treasure maps where "X" marks the spot. I thought all I had to do was dig and I would find gold. Got in trouble one time when I dug up my dad's tomato plants.

This morning, we are going to start a new series. Initially, it will be short – just 2 sermons. But later, I will pick it up again.

The series is called Deep Dive Treasures. It will be different than my other series. Usually, my messages look at passages of Scripture that involve multiple verses, even entire chapters, where we examine keys to the Christian life.

But if you look at John Wesley's sermons, often times, he would preach on a single verse; a whole sermon on 1 verse. He would take a deep dive into a passage to find the treasures hidden within.

So, our series Deep Dive Treasures will do just that: deep dive into passages to learn their lessons for our lives.

This go around, we are going to focus on the "Way of the Lord." If you are online, open your spiritual journal, as well as your Bible to Proverbs 3. And if you are in the sanctuary, turn to page 5 in your bulletin.

We are going to look at Proverbs 3:5-6. Now, I almost did not do this passage, because, if you haven't noticed, we have not studied a single New Testament passage all summer. We did the 12 chapters of the book of Daniel in 8 weeks. Just recently, we looked at 5 psalms in 5 weeks. I've never done that before, preach solely from the Old Testament. Often, we will look more at the New Testament. In fact, last Sunday was my 500th sermon here at Germantown, and three-fourths of my sermons are based on New Testament passages. But not this summer; all of them have been in the Old Testament.

So, I thought we should get back into the New Testament. But then, I couldn't not take a look at one of the greatest, if not the greatest proverb in all of the book of Proverbs: Proverbs 3:5-6. And once again, it is not a lectionary passage, so you may not have ever heard a sermon on these two verses, but you just might know it:

Trust in the LORD with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take.¹

Before we take a deep dive, and by way of overview, let's consider three things:

¹ Proverbs 3:5-6 (NLT2)

First, this portion of Proverbs was written by Solomon.

Solomon lived nearly 3,000 years ago and was the son of David and the third king of Israel. At the time, he was considered to be the wisest man who ever lived. He wrote many of the proverbs, including:

*Fear of the LORD is the foundation of wisdom. Knowledge of the Holy One results in good judgment.*²

*A wise child brings joy to a father; a foolish child brings grief to a mother.*³

*Riches won't help on the day of judgment, but right living can save you from death.*⁴

Now, I don't know if he was always the wisest man in the world, for by the time he died, he had 700 wives and 300 concubines. That's pretty dumb in my mind, or as Forest Gump would say, "Not a smart man, Jenny."

Second, Proverbs could be boiled down to this truth: Obedience starts with faith.

Obedience to God begins first and foremost with faith in God.

Joshua 1:8 reads:

*Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.*⁵

The Apostle Peter said:

*God the Father knew you and chose you long ago, and his Spirit has made you holy. As a result, you have obeyed him and have been cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ.*⁶

Foolishness is trusting in your own mind and heart, as Proverbs 28:26 says:

*Those who trust their own insight are foolish, but anyone who walks in wisdom is safe.*⁷

Wisdom starts with recognizing that you don't have it, so you look to God in humility for it. The way that seems right to humans ends in death. We think that what is best for us is autonomy and the power to choose what to do with our own lives, but Proverbs says that is suicidal. What seems right to us usually ends up wrecking us. Obedience starts with faith.

Third, the words in Proverbs 3:5-6 are imperatives = commands.

Imperatives are commands.

"Go and make disciples" from Matthew 28:19 are imperatives, commands.

"Be holy as the Lord is holy" is an imperative, a command.

"Pray without ceasing" is an imperative, a command.

The words in Proverbs 3:5-6 are imperatives, commands.

Okay, let's deep dive into the passage now, and the lessons from the commands of Proverbs 3:5-6 are threefold:

First, Dependence.

² Proverbs 9:10 (NLT2)

³ Proverbs 10:1 (NLT2)

⁴ Proverbs 11:4 (NLT2)

⁵ Joshua 1:8 (NIV)

⁶ 1 Peter 1:2 (NLT2)

⁷ Proverbs 28:26 (NLT2)

*Trust in the LORD with all your heart;*⁸

This is complete dependence upon God. It is faith in God's Word and God's wisdom and God's ways.

This is a most important precept: God is the fountain of all good. He has made His intelligent creatures dependent upon Himself. He requires them to be conscious of that dependence. He has promised to communicate what they need. He commands them to believe His promise and look for its fulfillment. And to do this without doubt, fear, or distrust; "with their whole heart."⁹

Trust in the LORD is necessary for fulfilling any of the wise ways of life taught in Proverbs. And notice, it is to be with your whole heart. You don't trust God only one hour on Sunday. You are to trust Him with everything: your heart, your plans, your life. Everything. Ask yourself how much you trust the Lord by looking at how many times you prayed about a decision you needed to make this week, or if you said the word "worry" this week.

Adam Clark wrote, "True religion consists in considering God the fountain of all good, and expecting all good from Him."¹⁰

Second, Deference.

*do not depend on your own understanding.*¹¹

There must be deference to God's ways and word and wisdom. He knows best.

The Hebrew literally means "do not prop oneself." It is on God, not on ourselves, that we are commanded to depend. He who trusts in his own heart is a fool.

There is the wisdom of God, and there is the wisdom of humans. The world says that it's wise to live together before marriage, but God says that you can't practice true intimacy without a covenant commitment where you're actually connected to each other.

The world says it's wise to hoard your possessions, but Proverbs 11:24 says:

*Give freely and become more wealthy; be stingy and lose everything.*¹²

The world says that it's OK to hold a grudge. After all, how will the person know that what they did hurt you so badly if you let it go? But the Bible says forgive your enemies.

The world says it's wise to promote yourself, but that's not what Proverbs says:

*Let someone else praise you, not your own mouth— a stranger, not your own lips.*¹³

Here's the key: don't be wise in your own eyes. That's the root of foolishness going all the way back to the garden of Eden. Instead, you should fear the Lord. Thinking that you are wise is foolishness. Wisdom and folly boil down to humility and pride. Submit every area of your life to the Lord, and He will produce wisdom in you. If you do veer off the right path, Proverbs 3:7 says repent—turn away from evil. Recognize your sin and foolishness and turn from it to God.¹⁴

⁸ Proverbs 3:5a (NLT2)

⁹ Adam Clarke's Commentary, Proverbs 3:5

¹⁰ Adam Clarke's Commentary, Proverbs 3:5

¹¹ Proverbs 3:5b (NLT2)

¹² Proverbs 11:24 (NLT2)

¹³ Proverbs 27:2 (NLT2)

¹⁴ Christ-Centered Exposition - Exalting Jesus in Proverbs 3:5-6

John Butler said this: “Failure to know the will of God is often a result of our failure to do the commands.”¹⁵

Third, Devotion.

*Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take.*¹⁶

We are to be ever mindful of God and serve Him with a willing and faithful heart. In everything we do, we must consider the Lord and His desires.

Begin, continue, and end every work, purpose, and device, with God. Earnestly pray for His direction at the beginning; look for His continual support in the middle; then trust Him in the outcome so that all may end in His glory. For:

*We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.*¹⁷

And when it says, “and he will show you which path to take,” or in the King James, “He will make your paths straight,” it means to make the course of the person’s life one that continually progresses toward a goal. In Proverbs, the emphasis is on the moral quality of one’s life path.¹⁸ God will also the obstacles from your pathway and bring you to His desired goal.

Sometimes, when we have an important decision to make, we feel that we can’t trust anyone—not even God. But God knows what is best for us. He is a better judge of what we want than we are! We must trust him completely in every choice we make. We should not omit careful thinking or belittle our God-given ability to reason; but we should not trust our own ideas to the exclusion of all others. We must not be wise in our own eyes but be willing to listen to and be corrected by God’s Word and wise counselors. Bring your decisions to God in prayer; use the Bible as your guide; and then follow God’s leading. He will direct your paths by both guiding and protecting you.¹⁹

When we do that, God’s presence will be there for us. Annie Flint Johnson wrote this:

*He gives more grace when the burdens grow greater,
He sends more strength when the labors increase,
To added affliction, He addeth His mercy,
To multiplied trials, His multiplied peace.
When we have exhausted our store of endurance,
When our strength has failed ‘ere the day is half done;
When we reach the end of our hoarded resources
Our Father’s full giving is only begun.
His love has no limit, His grace has no measure.
His power no boundary known unto men;
For out of His infinite riches in Jesus*

He giveth and giveth and giveth again. (Annie Flint Johnson)

Proverbs 3:5-6 says:

¹⁵ Analytical Bible Expositor - Proverbs to Song of Solomon, Proverbs 3:5-6

¹⁶ Proverbs 3:6 (NLT2)

¹⁷ Romans 8:28 (NRSV)

¹⁸ ESV Study Bible, Proverbs 3:6

¹⁹ Life Application Study Bible, Proverbs 3:5-6

Trust in the LORD with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take.²⁰

To receive God's guidance, said Solomon, we must seek God's will in all we do. This means turning every area of life over to him. About a thousand years later, Jesus emphasized this same truth. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said:

But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.²¹

Examine your values and priorities. What is important to you? In what areas have you not acknowledged Him? You may already acknowledge God in many areas of your life, but the areas where you attempt to restrict or ignore Him will cause you grief. Make Him a vital part of everything you do; then He will guide you because you will be working to accomplish His purposes.

²⁰ Proverbs 3:5-6 (NLT2)

²¹ Matthew 6:33 (NIV)