

A Father's Day Guide to Happiness

Proverbs 3

"Happy is the man that finds wisdom, and the man that gets understanding." (Proverbs 3:13)

Imagine going into your local bookstore or library to look for a book on happiness. You might find titles such as, "How can I be happy?" "Your blessed life now." "Five helpful steps to finding happiness." "Find a blessing and be a blessing." Note: before you rush to our bookstore to find these titles, remember that I said they were imaginary. And though you might find those exact titles somewhere, the promises that they might make to you are also probably imaginary. But just imagine if you were to go to a shelf in your local library and find true books about finding blessed happiness. Would you like that? Well today, we can find a short list here in the Book of Proverbs. Notice that the first word in verse 13 is "happy" or "blessed." And as you read through these verses, you see that the same word appears in Proverbs 3:18: "happiness" or "blessedness." And the statements in between those two phrases help you to take hold of true happiness. As you read on in the Book of Proverbs, you will see why this is so. So, on this Father's Day 2022, this message is not so much to fathers as from fathers. If the men in our church could step up to the pulpit to exhort all of our families here, their message would probably sound very much like the message this morning. And the message starts with this very first verse: "Happy is the man who finds wisdom, and the man that gets understanding" (Proverbs 3:13).

Hebrew Poetry

The poetry of the Hebrews was not a poetry with sound alike rhymes like many of our languages today. No, their poetry placed lines side by side that expressed a similar concept in two different ways. Or sometimes the parallel could be seen over several phrases placed in beautiful balance. Proverbs is full of two line statements like the one in verse 13. Wisdom and understanding are very similar. And the process of "finding" and "getting" are also much alike.

The Source of Wisdom

What is "wisdom" and "understanding?" Many would say that wisdom is contained in a set of principles. By using the word "principles" they refer to a rule or law by which one would govern his or her life. Or some would point to the absolute principles by which all of life is governed. But the best answer is this: Wisdom is, first and foremost, a characteristic of God; Wisdom is one of His attributes. In Romans 16:27, the apostle referred to the Lord as "The only wise God." His characteristic of wisdom naturally leads to other personal characteristics. Wisdom is the divinely blessed way that God does what He deems best. The ultimate example of revealed Wisdom is God Himself in the Person of Jesus Christ. He is the perfect power of God and the perfect wisdom of God (1 Corinthians 1:24). This is why the pastor at Jerusalem wrote in James 3:7, **"But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated [easy to appeal to], full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy."**

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Wisdom is represented by a human form (a literary device called "personification") in Proverbs 8:22-31. This is why Proverbs 3:4-6 says, **"Let not mercy and truth forsake you: bind them about your neck; write them upon the table of thine heart: So**

shalt thou find favor and good understanding in the sight of God and man. Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." The first verse says, "Don't let mercy and truth forsake you." Can you see how these are personal characteristics of God? So the goal is to trust Him and get to know Him in all your ways. So what is the source of wisdom? Wisdom is, first and foremost, a characteristic of God. Think of it this way: it is a lot easier to follow a person than to follow a set of principles. In fact, Psalm 119:15 shows us the connection between principles and the Person of God: we carefully think through His principles with the ultimate goal of learning His ways.

Bookends of Blessed Happiness

According to verse 13, "Happy is the man who finds wisdom;" and in verse 18, "happy is the man who retains her (or holds on to her)." So as we look at this shelf with these two blessed bookends, we ought to ask, "What is in between that is so blessed?"

"Happy is the man who finds wisdom, and the man that gets understanding" (Proverbs 3:13). Why? Consider verses 14-18.

--- Gaining wisdom is better than all the gains of silver or gold, v. 14

--- Wisdom is more valuable than precious jewels, v. 15

--- Wisdom is so valuable that nothing you can even desire can be compared with it! v. 15

--- Wisdom is like an extremely wealthy Person whose arms are full of benefits such as long life, riches and honor, v. 16

--- Now you might think that these incredible benefits would make someone miserable. But, in fact, the ways of Wisdom are the ways of pleasantness, and the path to genuine peace, v. 17

--- Wisdom is a tree of life – within your reach – but you must take hold of her, v.18

--- Those who lay hold of Wisdom are happy and blessed! v.18

Now that we have seen the benefits "on the shelf" between verses 13 and 18, are you interested? This is like a Father's Day guide to happiness! Who wouldn't want all these benefits? In a world where equities and currencies are crashing, wouldn't you want something that would last forever? Mr. Do Kwon of South Korea was so proud of his cryptocurrency called "Luna" that he even name his daughter after it. He called his crypto investors "Lunatics." Luna's total value rose to more than \$40 billion dollars! But within the last couple of months, Luna and Kwon's other cryptocurrency, TerraUSD have come crashing down.¹ In a world where equities and currencies are crashing, wouldn't you want something that would last forever? Wisdom is the wealth that will not be lost, but it will last.

Real Wisdom in the Real World

By the Lord's Wisdom, He founded the world

The LORD by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding hath he established the heavens.
(Proverbs 3:19)

In a world full of foolish fantasies, we desperately need the wisdom to come to grips with reality. Here is real wisdom: The God of all wisdom created this world; by His understanding He hung the heavens. The opening words in the Bible put it this way: **“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth”** (Genesis 1:1). If you want to find true blessed happiness, begin here. The world was created, and you were created. Your Creator made you – the same Creator who made the remarkable scenery of this world, and the spectacular imagery that we can see in the night skies via telescope. It is a foolhardy fantasy to believe that this incredible creation, with all its complexity simply sprang into existence by chance. Anything built on a foundation of foolishness will only produce foolishness. Those who believe that God created the world believe that the earth is relatively young. Other belief systems hold that the earth is billions of years old.

Those who insist that the world is billions of years old have some very hard questions to answer. They insist that the world came about by chance, or those called “theistic evolutionists” say that God used evolution to create the world. In either case, they have to account for how the world could be billions of years old. And they encounter significant hurdles. Here are two to consider:

- Why is there so little sediment on the sea floor of the world’s oceans? Every year, 20 billion tons of sediment and rock erode from the world’s continents to rest on the sea bottom. An inch or two of sediment is absorbed by shifting tectonic plates each year. But that still means that 1300 feet of sediment would accumulate in a mere 12 million years – far less time than necessary for evolution to work.ⁱⁱ
- The earth is surrounded by a magnetic field that protects plants, animals and mankind from solar radiation. (It is most easily recognized when “the northern lights” occur.) Scientists began to measure this magnetic field in 1845. Since then, they have discovered that the earth’s magnetic field is decaying at a rate of 5% each century. If the earth were billions of years old, the magnetic field would no longer exist.ⁱⁱⁱ And plants, animals and man would be long gone.

The founding fathers of these United States of America understood the central role of God the Creator in a civil society. They referred to “the laws of nature and nature’s God;” that “men are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights;” they made their appeals to “the Supreme Judge of the world,” and “their firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence.”^{iv} These founders of our country understood that the recognition of the existence of God-given rights is essential for our nation, or any nation to succeed. It is because the all wise God created this world and each of us.

By the Lord’s Knowledge, He flooded the world

By his knowledge the depths are broken up... (Proverbs 3:20)

Science and Scripture come together with evidence and the expressed details of a worldwide flood. 2 Peter 3:6 describes the world that was completely covered with a flood of waters. Only Noah and his family were spared along with the animals that were gathered in the Ark, according to Genesis 6:13-7:24. Recent scientific tests have raised serious questions about the age of bone collagen found in fossils. In studies conducted by Brian Thomas, Ph.D., he proved that the tough, stringy protein that we call collagen would have broken down in far less than a million years. At a temperature of 59° F, the bone collagen had a half-life of only 21,012 years. He concluded, “If Noah’s Flood deposited the fossils only 4,500 or so years ago as the Bible indicates, then we might expect some biomaterial to remain. No wonder scientists keep finding collagen in fossils.”^v

By the Lord's Knowledge, He provides for the fullness of the earth

and the clouds drop down the dew. (Proverbs 3:20)

All of this discussion about the origins of the world and the worldwide flood may seem like the distant past. But God's wisdom can also be seen on a daily basis in the morning dew. When you step outside in the early morning and see the dew glistening on the grass, you are seeing God's wisdom on display. We now understand the water cycle (hydrologic cycle) by which water circulates between the world's oceans, the atmosphere and the land. In a marvelous process of evaporation and transpiration along with condensation in the form of rain, snow and ice, the water cycle continues. Each night as the air near the earth cools, the moist air deposits dew upon the grass. As Psalm 135:7 says that the Lord causes the vapor to ascend from the ends of the earth. Psalm 104:13 states that the Lord He waters the hills from His chambers: the earth is satisfied with the fruit of His works. Every cool drink of water, every delicious bite of fruit should remind us of the Lord's wisdom as it comes from the clouds.

Practical Advice for Father's Day, v. 21

My son, let not them depart from thine eyes: keep sound wisdom and discretion: So shall they be life unto thy soul, and grace to thy neck. (Proverbs 3:21-22)

The principles of wisdom are evident in God's creation around you. The abundance of fossils (containing bone collagen) remind us about the worldwide flood. The dew upon the grass reminds us that the God who loves us still provides us water for our gardens and water to drink. Don't let these facts escape from you: don't let them depart from your eyes. Hold on to wisdom and discretion. As the proverb says, this will be life to your soul and grace to your neck. Jesus Christ is your Creator. **"All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made"** (John 1:3). Jesus Christ is our Redeemer. **"Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangs on a tree:"** (Galatians 3:13). Christ our Creator entered into the curse for us by dying on the cross of Calvary. And He did it for you and me. He died, was buried and rose again. And this is wisdom. As the prophet wrote, **"And wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times, and strength of salvation: the fear of the LORD is His treasure"** (Isaiah 33:6).

On this Father's Day, listen to the teaching of Proverbs 3 like a Father's Day guide to happiness.

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ⁱ How a Trash-Talking Crypto Bro Caused a \$40 Billion Crash, DNYUZ May 18, 2022 accessed at <https://dnyuz.com/2022/05/18/how-a-trash-talk-ing-crypto-bro-caused-a-40-billion-crash/>

ⁱⁱ Andrew Snelling, Very Little Sediment on the Seafloor, AIG, 10/1/2012, accessed at <https://answersingenesis.org/geology/sedimentation/1-very-little-sediment-on-the-seafloor/>

ⁱⁱⁱ See Andrew Snelling, Rapidly Decaying Magnetic Field, 10/1/2012, accessed at <https://answersingenesis.org/evidence-for-creation/5-rapidly-decaying-magnetic-field/>

^{iv} Nature's God, Founding.com, accessed at <https://foundng.com/natures-god/>

^v Brian Thomas, Collagen Decays Too Fast for Evolutionary Time, July 31, 2019, accessed at <https://www.icr.org/article/collagen-decays-too-fast-for-evolutionary-time> See also, Dr. Tommy Mitchell, "More Soft Tissue in 'Old' Fossils" AIG, 7/1/2011, accessed at <https://answersingenesis.org/dinosaurs/bones/more-soft-tissue-in-old-fossils/>