

## PROVERBS

### Enough for Us

Throughout the book of Proverbs, we are told the many benefits of wise living. To live wisely is to fear the Lord, understanding that life was beautifully designed to take place in obedience to His commandments. Substitute your own self-conceived “wisdom” for this intended way of life, and you will suffer in many ways. One undesirable result of living apart from the fear of the Lord is a negative effect to your physical well-being. Solomon brings this aspect of unwise living to light in Proverbs 3:7-8. He would have been intimately familiar with his own father David’s experience in straying from the fear of the Lord, and the physical suffering that was associated with his sin.

David wrote of his suffering, “When I kept silent, my bones grew old through my groaning all the day long...my vitality was turned into the drought of summer (Ps. 32:3-4).” Because David was unrepentant of his sinful detour from the will of God, his physical well-being was impacted. He described his condition as deteriorating, wasting away, and drying up. He understood his condition as spiritually-induced and observed a two-fold reason for his feeble state: “There is no soundness in my flesh because of Your anger, nor any health in my bones because of my sin (Ps. 38:3, emphases added).” He had sinned, and God was angry toward his sin.

Solomon counsels his son to turn from being

wise in his own estimation and instead to fear the Lord. He writes, “It will be health to your flesh, and strength to your bones (Prov. 3:8). The word for strength used in this passage is used only twice elsewhere in Scripture. In both cases it means “drink.” The idea is that to walk in the fear of the Lord is to give dry and weary bones, deteriorating in the futility of unwise living, a restorative drink of the Lord’s pleasure and care. You can probably remember a time when all you needed was a long drink of water.

I recall a time backpacking in Canada, when at the peak of the afternoon and after hiking for many hours, we came across a mountain spring of pure water. It was one of the most beautiful things that I had ever seen – not only because it bubbled and danced over a bed of white rocks, but because I was incredibly thirsty. When I filled my canteen from that spring and took a long draught of cold water, my strength was restored, and it was enough for me. As the disciple Philip pleaded of the Lord Jesus Christ, “Show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us (John 14:8),” we too ought to seek the Father as the all-satisfying One. We see the Father most clearly in the scriptural portrait of Jesus Christ, and by walking as He walked, we keep God’s commandments and know that we are in Him (1 John 2:4-6). To fear the Lord and live according to his commandments should be enough for us.



## LOOK CLOSELY

*observation*

### Proverbs 3:7-8 (NKJV)

<sup>7</sup> Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and depart from evil. <sup>8</sup> It will be health to your flesh, And strength to your bones.

Mark the negative action in the first part of v 7.

Mark the two positive actions in the rest of v 7.

Mark the words in v 8 that describe the benefits of the positive actions.

#### Identification Key

Develop your own key for identifying the various words and phrases in the text provided. Use different colored pencils, circles, boxes, underlining, etc., but be consistent from week-to-week.



## THINK CAREFULLY

*interpretation*

Being **wise in your own eyes** refers to a flawed self-evaluation marred by pride. True “wisdom does not come from within, but from without – from God (Proverbs 2:6)” (John A. Kitchen, *Proverbs*, Mentor, 77.).

The **fear of the LORD** is the antidote for pride. Solomon is urging his son to **fear of the LORD**, and thus depart from the evil of having an arrogant self-estimation.

Is Solomon saying that a right view of self and a right view of God provide physical health and strength? It seems that he is using these blessings to refer to spiritual health and strength since verse 7 refers to spiritual perspectives. So **health to your flesh and strength to your bones** is synonymous of spiritual vitality.

Explain what it means to be “wise in your own eyes.”

Read Proverbs 12:15; 21:2; 30:12 and Isaiah 5:21. In your own words, write a summary of what these verses teach.

Read Proverbs 15:33. Why is humility an essential component in fearing the Lord?

Read Psalm 32:3-4 and Psalm 38:3-8. How can a failure to protect our spiritual vitality (see above) affect our physical vitality?



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## RESPOND WISELY

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## *application*

We often go to great lengths to stay physically healthy. What are the steps you take now to stay spiritually healthy? What changes, if any, might you be willing to make?

As a family review some of the ingredients of spiritual health.

Time in the Word

Prayer

Confession

Forgiving others

Self Denial

Others

As a family memorize Proverbs 3:7-8 and James 1:5-6