

PROVERBS

Ignoring Details Can Cost

One of the most life-threatening situations that I have experienced came about because someone ignored something that was very important. One Easter I traveled with my friend Socra and his family to a beach several hours north of our village in a rickety old Datsun pickup held together by wire, rope, and lots of prayer. On the way home, the guys rode in the bed of the truck; Socra's parents and sister rode in the cab.

Everyone became concerned as the truck began to shake wildly down the dark highway (especially those of us in the bed of the truck)! We managed to slow down to about 45 M.P.H. before the tire broke free from the truck and spun uncontrollably across the ditch and down the highway in the opposite lane. Sparks showered the back of the pickup. Women screamed. Men cried. As soon as the truck came to a halt, Socra jumped out and chased down the rogue tire. When he returned, all he could do was pull his hair and say, "Las tuercas! Las tuercas!"

Socra realized that he had ignored something very important a few hours earlier that led to our problem. Shortly before our

return trip, we experienced some brake problems so Socra had removed the tire and tinkered with the brake line. He replaced the tire, and spun the lug nuts loosely into place when we called him in for supper. He decided that the lug nuts could wait to be tightened and came inside. When we loaded up and started out for home, the lug nuts had never been tightened!

Socra ignored the details of finishing his job and it nearly cost all of us our lives. Proverbs 3:1-2 shows us that when we forget or ignore the wisdom and instruction of God, we take a great risk. To those who remember the instruction God sends their way through personal study, fatherly instruction, and the encouragement of fellow believers, their life will be lengthened and given peace in every circumstance. This is a biblical truism—a principle that will usually prove to be true. If you follow wisdom and heed God's instruction, you will lead a life that God favors and blesses. Although trouble may come, His perfect peace will be with you. Ignoring the details can cost you more than you can afford to pay.



LOOK CLOSELY

observation

Proverbs 3:1-2

1 My son, do not forget my law, But let your heart keep my commands; 2 For length of days and long life And peace they will add to you.

Mark the actions in v 1.

Circle the word 'But' in v. 1 and 'For' in v 2.

Mark the word "heart" in v 1.

Mark the three benefits given in v 2.

Mark the word 'add' in v 2.

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

The word **forget** does not refer to a lapse of memory—like a thought that passes from consciousness. Rather, to forget is a willful and deliberate action. To forget the father's instruction means to intentionally ignore it—to view it as unnecessary, irrelevant, and without value and therefore turn away from it.

The word **keep** indicates careful watching or guarding. The implication for the child is to commit to a heartfelt devotion to observe, hold to, and follow parental commands.

The Hebrew word for **heart** refers to the seat of the mind, will and emotions. Rather than following one's heart, Proverbs continually urges us to direct our heart toward the right things. Obedience therefore is to be understood as an issue of the heart.

length of days, long life...this is the expectation for the person who persists in following the instruction of wisdom from their heart. It is a reiteration of the promise in the Decalogue for the child who honors his parents (Deuteronomy 5:16).

The general meaning behind the word **peace** is that of completion and fulfillment—of entering into the settled state of harmony or rest. The implication is that following parental instruction not only provides rest and fulfillment, but continues to add to that rest and fulfillment throughout one’s life due to the wisdom that is applied.

Summarize some ways God can be forgotten from the following passages: Deuteronomy 8:11, Deuteronomy 8:19, Psalm 106:13.

Describe how the heart keeps God’s commands.

Make a list of the actions related to the “heart” from Proverbs: 2:2; 3:5; 4:4, 23; 6:21; 23:12, 17, 19, 26.

Compare the benefit of a long life in v 2 with the benefit of a long life in Deuteronomy 5:16 and 1 Kings 3:14. What conditions are placed on this benefit in these passages?



RESPOND WISELY

application

What obstacles prevent you from consistently focusing your heart on God's Word?

What course of action should you consider as a result of these verses?

How could you incorporate these verses into prayer for yourself, your family and others?

In what ways are you as a parent instructing your children in God's Truth?

Read Deuteronomy 6:4-9.

What are parents commanded in this passage?

How are parents directed to teach their children?

List some differences between how you might instruct a 3 year old and a 13 year old?

Help your children see the value of heart-obedience by discussing with them the three benefits given in Proverbs 3:2.

Identify some ways your children might experience the addition of peace in their lives as a result of your instruction.