

**Proverbs 3: 1-4; “Your Heart & God’s Commands”, A Devotional Bible Study given  
on the evening of September 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020, by Pastor Paul Rendall,  
for those gathered to listen at his home.**

Here in these verses we find two sets of commands and two sets of promises of what God will do, if you keep His commands. The 1<sup>st</sup> set of commands and promises relate to remembering and keeping God’s law. The 2<sup>nd</sup> set of commands and promises relate to binding His commands around your neck and writing them on your heart. Let’s see if we can come to terms with what this means for every Christian who who know God better and walk with Him more closely.

**1<sup>st</sup> of all – The importance of remembering and keeping God’s law.** (verses 1 and 2)

From the way that Solomon words verse 1, we can see that there is a certain forgetfulness that can come to a young man in regard to the word of God, which is called “my law”, and “my commands”. However, we should not simply think of these verses in relation to young men, but we should think of them in relation to ourselves, whatever our age is. Solomon is speaking on behalf of God Himself here, and he is speaking as representing God Himself, in terms of his teaching his own son what God would have him to do and how He would have his son to live. This leads me to say that parents ought to think of their input into their child’s life in just this way, for it is the way that your child, if you have children, will come to know the Lord, according to His mercy and His grace.

For your personal law and your personal commands to your children, as a parent, ought to be communicating God’s law and His commands to them first of all. They ought to know that the commands that you are giving to them are not simply arbitrary, saying – Obey me, my son, because I say so. But you ought to be communicating to them the truth that the reason that they should obey you is that they have the higher obligation to obey God Himself. You are their assigned and appointed helper, as long as they are in your household, to teach them the will of God for their life. Such is God’s way for the parent and the child. We also ought to note, here, that Solomon was asking his son for his heart; that he would let his heart keep his commands. In other words, he was asking his son not to forget his law and commands because he should understand that he loved him and wanted the very best things in life to come to him; those good spiritual things which only God Himself could give him.

He specifically lists these good things for us as long life, length of days and peace would be added to him, if he kept them. Now, we must ask ourselves: Where have we heard those phrases spoken, elsewhere in the word of God? And the answer is found first of all, in the fifth commandment of the Decalogue. So turn over to Deuteronomy 5, verse 16 with me. God, speaking to Moses and through him to all the nation of Israel, says this: “Honor your father and your mother, as the Lord your God has commanded you, that your days may be long, and that it may be well with you in the land which the Lord your God is giving you.” This is a very straightforward and plain commandment which God gave to all children, really; all children who hear of it. Honor your father and your mother. Why? Because God commands it, so that your days may be long.

Now, this is important because many children do not realize that God holds the number of their days in His great hands. And one of the considerations that God gives to giving any person long life is the way that they have either remembered or forgotten that this command is important. How you view parental authority as a child and a young person is how you will continue to view the authority of God Himself when you get older. If you have thought it was not a good thing to submit to a godly parent’s authority, you are making a tremendous mistake. For God may decide to shorten your life. Psalm 55: 23 – “But You, O God, shall bring them down to the pit of destruction; bloodthirsty and deceitful men shall not live out half their days;

but I will trust in You.” So, you see that God is well able to shorten a person’s life or extend it, according to how they view Him and their keeping of His commandments. You see this truth confirmed in Psalm 34, verse 11-14. “Come, you children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord.” “Who is the man who desires life, and loves many days, that he may see good?” “Keep your tongue from evil, and your lips from speaking deceit.” “Depart from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it.”

So, we see here that the fear of the Lord; that is, having regard for Him, to keep all of His commandments to do them, is something that we are, or we should be, taught by our parents first of all. And if that child or young person desires life, if they love the idea of living many days, they will keep their tongue from evil and their lips from speaking deceit. That is, they will not speak against their parents, those who are in authority over them in their life, that is their teachers in church and even in government if they are morally discerning. They will not lie to them, or try to sneakily deceive them, but they will depart from that kind of evil. They will seek peace and pursue it. According to our text, if this commandment is kept, it will mean that long life, length of days and actual peace will be added to you.

Look at Psalm 37: 37-40 – “Mark the blameless (or the perfect) man, and observe the upright; for the future of that man (the end of that man – KJV) is peace.” “But the transgressors shall be destroyed together, the future of the wicked shall be cut off.” “But the salvation of the righteous is from the Lord; He is their strength in the time of trouble.” “And the Lord shall help them and deliver them; He shall deliver them from the wicked, and save them, because they trust in Him.” You can see the direct correlation between being blameless in God’s sight; free from charge or accusation in your conduct. A blameless man walks uprightly before God. He is always conscious in himself, whether he is keeping God’s commandments, and trying to learn what is pleasing to Him. In this particular sense he is perfect; not that he is perfect in himself, but he is perfect in that he is living according to God’s truth, seeking to always do His will by the grace which He supplies through Christ. That man’s future is peace. He will be blessed with the Lord’s peace because he is staying His mind upon the Lord and the grace that He can bring to him in every situation. The end of that man is peace because he has peace with God, and the peace of God.

Romans 5: 1 – “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Christ has reconciled us to God by His blood. Now as we go about to keep God’s commandments peace is added to us. Philippians chapter 4, verses 6- 9 – “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. These verses show us the connection between anxiety and prayerlessness. The reason that we as Christians become anxious is because we do not seek God in prayer in relation to the things that are causing us to be anxious. It is like we forget that God is our strong tower to which we can run and be safe. It is like we forget that God is able to bring us peace in our most difficult situations.

Here we are told not only to bring our supplications and our requests, but we are told to bring them with thanksgiving. It is when we do this that we will find Him communicating to our mind and heart the peace that we will need which will help us to put away all those anxieties. Keeping this command brings peace to your heart. God’s peace which He will communicate to you, according to this promise, surpasses all understanding. You can be calm in the midst of the fray of difficulties, trials, oppositions, and even persecutions, because you have this peace. It is so important to remember that God tells us this; that we should not be anxious. For the remedy is right at hand, and He will personally communicate to your soul. This peace of God, it says here, will guard your heart and your mind through Christ. It will help you to deal with all of

your fears, and give you the ability to think about how you can do what is right and what would most glorify God in any particular situation that you are in.

**The 2<sup>nd</sup> set of commands and promises relate to your binding His commands around your neck, and your writing them on your heart.** (verses 3 and 4)

“Let not mercy and truth forsake you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart, and so find favor and high esteem in the sight of God and man.” Now, how is it that we Christians can come to the place where mercy and truth forsake us? For it is not written here – You should not forsake mercy and truth, but rather you let them forsake you? How is this possible? Well, the picture here is of mercy and truth as living personages who will leave you, who will forsake you unless you hold them continually to yourself. These words are often joined together in the Scriptures. Psalm 25: 10 – “All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth unto such as keep His covenant and His testimonies.” Psalm 89: 14 – “Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne; mercy and truth go before Your face.”

So these virtues of your having mercy and truth, of showing them forth before God and other people as a Christian, are something which God Himself leads you into. Here in these verses we are told to bind them around our neck and write them on the tablet of our heart. This is the same picture which is given in those famous verses which are found in Deuteronomy 6: 4-9 – “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one!” “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.” “And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart.” “You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.” “You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.” “You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.” In other words, it is in loving God with all of your heart that you will remember His precepts and you will exercise mercy and live out the truth of His word before Him and other people around you.

You can see how they would forsake you if you will turn with me over to 2<sup>nd</sup> Chronicles 15: 1-9. “Now the Spirit of God came upon Azariah the son of Oded.” “And he went out to meet Asa, and said to him: ‘Hear me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin.’” “The LORD is with you while you are with Him.” “If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will forsake you.” “For a long time Israel has been without the true God, without a teaching priest, and without law; but when in their trouble they turned to the LORD God of Israel, and sought Him, He was found by them.” “And in those times there was no peace to the one who went out, nor to the one who came in, but great turmoil was on all the inhabitants of the lands.” “So nation was destroyed by nation, and city by city, for God troubled them with every adversity.”

“But you, be strong and do not let your hands be weak, for your work shall be rewarded!” “And when Asa heard these words and the prophecy of Oded the prophet, he took courage, and removed the abominable idols from all the land of Judah and Benjamin and from the cities which he had taken in the mountains of Ephraim; and he restored the altar of the LORD that was before the vestibule of the LORD.” “Then he gathered all Judah and Benjamin, and those who dwelt with them from Ephraim, Manasseh, and Simeon, for they came over to him in great numbers from Israel when they saw that the LORD his God was with him.” So you can see the principle here that mercy and truth, which are found essentially in God will forsake you if you forsake Him. But if you act as good king Asa did, seek Him, He will be found by you. A Christian simply needs to hold fast to God Himself and His precious word of truth, and spiritually speaking that person will be binding God’s truth around the neck of their heart, and writing these things upon his own spirit by faith in God and His word. And favor and high esteem in the sight of God and men came to Asa, and favor in the sight of God and men will come to you also if you let your heart keep God’s commands.

