

**Sermon Series: Extraordinary Direction**

**Sermon Title: The “Do Not Lose” List!**

**Sermon Text: Proverbs 3:1-6**

**Sermon Presenter: Pastor Larry McEwen**

**Sermon Summary:** These proverbs, as a soul compass, point to a list of items a person should never lose, how we can hold onto them and why we don't want to lose them. It is my prayer that those who hear or read this message will be inspired to never lose the teachings of God, love and faithfulness, trust, and humility! Each of these things put us in a position to experience God's extraordinary direction for our lives.

## **Introduction**

Ever lose something important, and you just can't concentrate on anything else until you find that thing? It may not be that crucial, but if it's important to you, it can be disconcerting.

One of the tragedies of our day is the fact that we've lost some of the most critical things once used by humankind to give guidance to life. And sometimes we simply forget things, important things, valuable things, life changing things, life saving things! God has offered to give us His extraordinary direction through our soul's compass, the Bible. However, we have to want His direction, receive it and hang on to it! When it comes to God's extraordinary direction the writer of Proverbs gives a short list of things we should hang on to and never lose. He also tells how to hold on to them and why it's so important to do so! Let's look at what items the writer of Proverbs says should be on our “do not lose” list, how not to lose them and why we don't want to lose them.. Proverbs 3:1-6

Prov 3:1 My son, do not forget my teaching, but keep my commands in your heart,

Prov 3:2 for they will prolong your life many years and bring you prosperity.

Prov 3:3 Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart.

Prov 3:4 Then you will win favor and a good name in the sight of God and man.

Prov 3:5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding;

Prov 3:6 in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.

Prov 3:7 Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and shun evil.

Prov 3:8 This will bring health to your body and nourishment to your bones.

Solomon's wisdom to his son gives us an important list of things we should never lose, how we can keep from losing them and the benefits of not losing them! Let's look at his “do not lose list.”

### **1. What not to lose: The Teachings of God!**

Prov 3:1 My son, do not forget my teaching...

Teachings - ideas or principles taught by an authority. Oxford

Teachings are an important item on our “Not to Lose” list! Without life's lessons, we are bound to repeat missteps and mistakes over and over again. Some people call this the school of hard

knocks, but I've known people who don't even learn from the school of hard knocks. They're insane and think doing the same thing over and over will somehow eventually produce different results. It will not! We cannot hope to grow as an individual, or as a society if we forget our hard learned lessons. But in our text Solomon specifically references his teaching to his son. And because we find this in Scripture we know that God placed it there for us as well! Which brings up an important question: What are your sources for life's lessons?

Is it God and His Word? Is it your parents? Is it your school teachers? Is it Hollywood and the media? Is it your peers? Is it someone who has earned your respect?

Make no mistake about it, each of one these sources has an agenda. Some are good and noble and some, not so much. First the "good and noble" then the "not so much"

The "Good and Noble!"

Isa 48:17 This is what the LORD says-- your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: "I am the LORD your God, who teaches you what is best for you, who directs you in the way you should go.

So first and foremost, if we allow God to be our teacher we can know and trust His motives are good and noble. There are also others who have good and noble motivations when they try to teach you because they love and care about you. Parents, teachers and spiritual leaders and some of your friends may fit into this category. I realize there are exceptions, but my prayer is that you have some people in your life who are seeking to be Godly mentors to you! We're going to have a whole sermon on this coming up in this series in a message titled: Mentoring 101! I want to reiterate something we talked about last week, but God's Word should be our principle, foundational, standard when it comes to spiritual and moral teaching! I believe the Bible to be the best and most amazing source of good teaching and truth on planet earth! The reason why is found in these verses we read last week...

2 Timothy 3:16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,

2 Timothy 3:17 so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

So there's sources that are good and noble for us to follow and listen to, and then there's...

The "Not So Much!"

There's so many philosophies and religions, and self-help gurus out there, along with a never ending supply of books hitting the shelves on a daily basis that give you the latest and greatest secrets and formulas for living life! But are their teachings true? Can they be trusted? Just because it showed up in a Google search, does that mean it's true? And while other sources may contain some truth, when it comes to spiritual things, God's Word doesn't just contain truth, it is truth and that's what sets it apart from other wisdom writings in the world. And when it

comes to spirituality, the world has come up with an ideology it would never try to apply to any other school of thought! When it comes to the spiritual realm, the world says you can just make up your own truth! Spirituality is whatever you want it to be! They teach that all paths lead to God! My friends, that is simply not true and the results of getting this wrong are huge and everlasting! I mentioned last week that many people have decided they no longer believe in absolute truth. But here's the deal: they only apply that to spiritual and moral things. Maybe that's because they want to believe what they want to believe rather than what is the truth. Most rational, and sane people with at least some level of education, know that there's mathematical absolutes, physical absolutes, chemical absolutes, and the list goes on. We couldn't build safe bridges, buildings, cars, airplanes, etc, if we had no absolute standards of truth to go by. So why in the world would we think that our souls, our morals, and life principles can just be pulled from thin air. We are deceiving ourselves when we believe such things.

1 Tim 4:1 The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons.

1 Tim 4:2 Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron.

These are the ones who teach you things because, as I said last week, misery loves company and they don't want to be alone in their misery, while some are just plain devious! I hope you'll outright reject the teachings of those who don't really love and care for you. I hope you'll get your teaching from those who want what's best for you, especially our Lord, and never lose it! In fact we should pray with the Psalmist...

Psa 25:4 Show me your ways, O LORD, teach me your paths;

Psa 25:5 guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long.

### **How to not lose God's Teachings - Keep His commands in your heart!**

Prov 3:1 My son, do not forget my teaching, but keep my commands in your heart,

Commands that come from God are given for our good. Commands are like the points on a compass. They show us the right way to go, the right way to act, the right way to be, the right way to live our lives! We are to keep God's commands in our heart so we don't lose them. Solomon's dad, David, put it this way in Psalm 119...

Psalm 119:9 How can a young person stay on the path of purity? By living according to your word.

Psalm 119:10 I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands.

Psalm 119:11 I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.

Psalm 119:12 Praise be to you, LORD; teach me your decrees.

Psalm 119:13 With my lips I recount all the laws that come from your mouth.

Having a compass in your pocket when on a hike in the wilderness could come in very handy if you get lost and seem to be going in circles. In the spiritual realm, we all need the compass of God's commands tucked away in our hearts so we can pull them out when we face temptation! Without God's principles in our heart, we lose a strategic advantage over sin. The proverbs again mention the importance of not losing sight of the commands of God...

Prov 7:1 My son, keep my words and store up my commands within you.

Prov 7:2 Keep my commands and you will live; guard my teachings as the apple of your eye.

Prov 7:3 Bind them on your fingers; write them on the tablet of your heart.

There's good reason to read, study and memorize God's Word...

### **Why we should never lose His teachings: There's Benefits**

Prov 3:1 My son, do not forget my teaching, but keep my commands in your heart,

Prov 3:2 for they will prolong your life many years and bring you prosperity.

God's commands are meant to protect, and guide. When the writer says they will prolong your life, it's because God's teachings are designed to help us live! And when he talks about prosperity, he's not just talking about money, but a prosperous life!! A life that has meaning and purpose. A truly prosperous life in the Old Testament was more about being in a covenant relationship with God, than having things! And the teachings of God's Word are not meant to stifle, cause pain, or to bind us. They are meant to free us as we live our lives. God's commands are designed to keep us free from the horrible consequences of sin. When you don't follow His commands you lose the benefits! And what a loss! R.G. Lee, the pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, Tn, and once a pastor in New Orleans, wrote this back in the 1930's...

"Sin promises us substance and store if we will but walk its deceptive streets, and then, having pierced our feet with thorns, it leaves us to stumble on to the dungeons of hell. The stag pursued by hungry hounds with open mouths is not more miserable than the man who is pursued by his sins. The bird taken in the flower's net and laboring vainly to escape is less wretched than the woman who, yielding to sin's enticement, has woven about herself a web of deception."

You might be tempted to say, "But I just can't keep the commands of God, I'm just not good enough." This is true, you can't keep the commands of God. None of us can, but Christ in us can and He will if we allow Him control of our lives. Listen as Paul talked of his struggle with the same thing...

Rom 7:21 So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me.

Rom 7:22 For in my inner being I delight in God's law;

Rom 7:23 but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members.

Rom 7:24 What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?

Rom 7:25 Thanks be to God--through Jesus Christ our Lord!

And then Solomon reminds us of a couple of items we dare not lose...

## **2. What not to lose: Love and Faithfulness**

Prov 3:3 Let love and faithfulness never leave you;

It seems today that more and more people only love when it's convenient or easy. Faithfulness, for many, is a thing of the past. It's just not something that seems important in this modern dog eat dog world. However, our soul compass, the Word of God, is clear on how important love and faithfulness are. Why do love and faithfulness go hand in hand? When you love someone you want to be faithful to them. When you're faithful to someone, your love for them grows, and it creates an environment that is conducive for them to love you in return! And on top of that, love and faithfulness find their origin in God.

Psa 86:15 But you, O Lord, are a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness.

It is because God loves us and has been faithful to us even when we've not been faithful to Him, that we have forgiveness.

Prov 16:6 Through love and faithfulness sin is atoned for; through the fear of the LORD a man avoids evil.

Genuine love is the motivation that causes one to be faithful! God is once again our greatest example of love and faithfulness...

Psa 36:5 Your love, O LORD, reaches to the heavens, your faithfulness to the skies.

Psa 36:6 Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains, your justice like the great deep. O LORD, you preserve both man and beast.

Psa 36:7 How priceless is your unfailing love! Both high and low among men find refuge in the shadow of your wings.

Can you describe faithful love? What does it look like? Where could we find the definition of faithful love? How about our Soul Compass the Bible?

1 Cor 13:4 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.

1 Cor 13:5 It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.

1 Cor 13:6 Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.

1 Cor 13:7 It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

In a word, love is faithful! We can talk about love and say we love, but if our actions aren't faithfully proclaiming our love then something is terribly wrong and amiss!

### **How to not lose Love and Faithfulness: Be intentional about keeping them!**

Proverbs 3:3...bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart.

In other words, loving God and faithfulness to God should be priority #1 in our lives! Priority #2 should be loving others and being faithful in our commitments to them! This should be what motivates everything we do! By the way, Jesus said so...

Matthew 22:37 Jesus replied: " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.'

Matthew 22:38 This is the first and greatest commandment.

Matthew 22:39 And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'

Matthew 22:40 All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

But how do we hang on to love and faithfulness? I believe the best way is by remembering what Jesus did to show His love and faithfulness to us...

1 Peter 1:18 For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors,

1 Peter 1:19 but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.

1 Peter 1:20 He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake.

1 Peter 1:21 Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God.

1 Peter 1:22 Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for each other, love one another deeply, from the heart.

### **Why we should never lose love and faithfulness! There's Benefits!**

Prov 3:4 Then you will win favor and a good name in the sight of God and man.

When you are loving and faithful, God is pleased with you and it opens the door for a wonderful fellowship to exist between you and Him! It also allows God to pour out His blessings upon you. The Psalmist put it this way...

Psalm 1:1 Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers,

Psalm 1:2 but whose delight is in the law of the LORD, and who meditates on his law day and night.

And when it comes to people, they may not agree with you or even like you, but you can win favor with them when they know they can trust you and your word is your bond! When others are unloving, unfaithful, and even hateful, you have no control over their behavior, but you do have control over your behavior. And when you continue to love the unlovable, God uses it to convict their hearts and draw them to the truth. They may even despise your love and faithfulness, but in their hearts they know the truth. Love them and put the rest in God's hands! That's what Jesus did!! Look at this Jesus connection

Ephesians 4:32 Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

Ephesians 5:1 Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children

Ephesians 5:2 and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

And the only way to do this is found in the next thing on our do not lose list...

### **3. What not to lose: Trust**

Prov 3:5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart...

Trust - 1 firm belief in the reliability, truth, ability, or strength of someone or something. Oxford

Faith is believing God can, and trust is believing God will! If you lose trust, you've lost the basic building block for all relationships! Without trust there is no foundation for a relationship. You can love someone with all your heart, but if you can't trust them, then the relationship is going to be troubled! I told my kids growing up, "I will always love you, but my trust in you depends on your behavior. I will love you no matter what, but if I can't trust you, then our relationship will be affected. I'll always be your parent, but if the trust is broken then our fellowship will not be as it should be. In our world today, trust is a scarcity. Trust in marriage, trust among family, trust among friends, and trust in business are hard to come by. That's why every other advertisement you see is for lawyers. And thank God there are some good Christian lawyers when you need someone you can trust to follow God's laws and principles. But it's sad that there is such a need for their services. But it's even more sad that many people in our world believe, if there is a God, He can't be trusted. Why? Because they've experienced hardship or pain in this world, so they've decided it's all God's fault and He can't be trusted. Once this attitude has been established, without a change of heart, real fellowship with God is out, and you're on your own to face whatever the world throws at you.

But our compass for the soul states this...

Psa 9:9 The LORD is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble.

Psa 9:10 Those who know your name will trust in you, for you, LORD, have never forsaken those who seek you.

So trust in the Lord with all your heart! 100% trust.

### **How not to lose Trust in God: Realize your Dependence on God**

Prov 3:5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding;

Prov 3:6 in all your ways acknowledge him...

What word could sum up “lean not on your own understanding” and “in all your ways acknowledge Him”?

Dependence - “the state of relying on or being controlled by someone or something else.”  
(Oxford Dictionary)

Dependence many times has a negative connotation, but when it's God you are depending on and when you are allowing Him to be in control of your life, that's never a negative thing! When we realize that our understanding is always limited in scope, insight, and knowledge, then we can acknowledge that God is unlimited in scope, insightful beyond our imagination and has knowledge we can't even begin to fathom! It's then that we can discover God's extraordinary direction for our lives! In fact, in order to acknowledge God for who He is and in order to clearly see the direction His soul compass is pointing us, we must acknowledge our dependence on Him! The Psalmist certainly confessed his dependence on the Lord!

Psalm 18:6 In my distress I called to the LORD; I cried to my God for help. From his temple he heard my voice; my cry came before him, into his ears.

### **Why we should never lose trust in God: There's Benefits**

Prov 3:5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding;

Prov 3:6 in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.

*Trusting God gives us His Direction*

Some translations say, “And He will direct your path!” I want God to direct my path and to help me stay on the straight and narrow path! I depend on God and trust in God to show me His will for my life and to give me extraordinary direction in everything. In my preaching, in my counseling, in my living, in my family, in my goals, in my future, in my everything!

Isaiah 41:13 For I am the LORD your God who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you.

*Trusting God gives us His provision along the way!*

Paul the apostle spoke of trust when he wrote to the Romans...

Rom 15:13 May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Did you notice...

Trust is the foundation for, Hope, Joy, Peace, Power

Hope is an attitude and spirit made possible because we trust that God is good and will bring good to us even in the bad times. Joy is the excitement our heart feels because we know our hope is not misplaced. And our joy is not based on circumstances, but on the unfailing promises of God and His precious Word! Peace is the comfort our hearts and minds have in a crazy and confused world and it is due to the fact we have a soul compass that can be trusted! And this trust gives us a power and a confidence that can be gained from no other source in the universe.

*Trusting God also gives us His protection along the way!*

Listen to these Psalms...

Psa 33:20 We wait in hope for the LORD; He is our help and our shield.

Psa 33:21 In him our hearts rejoice, for we trust in His Holy Name.

Psa 33:22 May Your unfailing love rest upon us, O LORD, even as we put our hope in You.

#### **4. What not to lose: Humility**

Proverbs 3:7 Do not be wise in your own eyes;

We must humble ourselves and be willing to look to Him. The writer of Proverbs states this:

Prov 11:2 When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom.

Prov 15:33 The fear of the LORD teaches a man wisdom, and humility comes before honor.

Prov 18:12 Before his downfall a man's heart is proud, but humility comes before honor.

Prov 22:4 Humility and the fear of the LORD bring wealth and honor and life.

And then there is the Scripture we've seen several times over the last few months...

Phil 2:3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves.

Phil 2:4 Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

Phil 2:5 Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus...

If we lose our humility we lose our ability to learn God's teaching, to follow His commands, to experience His love, to know His faithfulness, to perceive His trustworthiness, and to recognize our dependence on Him.

### **How not to lose Humility: Fear the LORD and shun evil.**

Proverbs 3:7 Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and shun evil.

#### *Fear the Lord!*

Psalms 111:10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all who follow his precepts have good understanding. To him belongs eternal praise.

I've said it before, but fear of the Lord is not being scared of God, but having a healthy fear of God! He is almighty, all knowing, righteous, holy, powerful and so much more! When we see God and recognize God for who He really is, then humility follows. When we refuse to see God for who He is and recognize His authority and prominence in all things, we become prideful. Nehemiah spoke of this as he spoke to the Lord about the wayward Hebrew people...

Neh 9:29 "You warned them to return to your law, but they became arrogant and disobeyed your commands. They sinned against your ordinances, by which a man will live if he obeys them. Stubbornly they turned their backs on you, became stiff-necked and refused to listen.

If we are to stay humble we must fear the Lord and we must...

#### *Shun Evil!*

A humble person shuns evil and avoids it at all cost! When we think we can handle sin and temptation and believe it won't get us, then we have become prideful. When that happens this happens...

Proverbs 16:18 Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall.

Proverbs 16:19 Better to be lowly in spirit along with the oppressed than to share plunder with the proud.

### **Why we should never lose our Humility: There's Benefits!**

Proverbs 3:7 Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and shun evil.

Proverbs 3:8 This will bring health to your body and nourishment to your bones.

This doesn't mean you'll never get sick, but it does mean that God will bless you with all the health and strength and nourishment you will need to accomplish His will for your life. And just having that knowledge can help you live a more healthy life because you won't be worried about your health. And I think we all know that worrying and being anxious is not good for our health!

Do what you can to be healthy and live a life of humility and righteousness and put the rest in God's hands. In fact the Psalmist agrees...

Psalm 147:11 the LORD delights in those who fear him, who put their hope in his unfailing love.