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A MESSAGE FROM A FATHER TO HIS CHILD - (Proverbs 3:1-8) - by Joe Attwater 1.9.2019

“My child, do not forget my teaching, but let your heart keep my commandments, (2) for length of days and years of life and peace they will add to you. (3) Let not steadfast love and faithfulness forsake you; bind them around your neck; write them on the tablet of your heart. (4) So you will find favor and good success in the sight of God and man. (5) Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. (6) In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. (7) Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD, and turn away from evil. (8) It will be healing to your flesh and refreshment to your bones.” (Proverbs 3:1-8)

These are the words of Solomon, a father who messed up his life big time! And I mean big time! Yes, he was indeed the son of David. He was a great, wise, wealthy, and very royal king, but he was also a very busy king, and often busy with his own agenda, and things God had warned him not do. He learnt the hard way. Everyone thought Solomon was fantastic, but he actually suffered a bit of an inferiority complex from his highly esteemed father, and he developed real problems with women and lust. He got mixed up with false religions, caused broken relationships, and made many, many, bad decisions despite God's instruction. This Proverb is possibly written out of remorse, brokenness, agony, pain and reflection on all his failures as a dad, and that also makes it one of the most beautiful pieces of literature. His realisation of failed humanity, and recognition of a perfect God, is what brings the words to life. They are words of an earthly Father who has realised that our Heavenly Father is the only hope we have of knowing a Father who will not fail us. The one good thing we can do as fathers is put all our trust in God alone, and also exhort the generation around us to trust in God. His word is the only eternal truth from the only eternal and sinless God. It is the greatest and best counsel we can ever receive and give. Don't trust in man! Don't even trust yourself! Trust in God! Read His word. It will be the greatest, most liberating thing you have ever experienced. Why? Because man always lets you down. Us humans are all tainted by our own struggles with various sins. God doesn't sin. God keeps His promises. Therefore, He will never lie to you or let you down! His word can be trusted as truth.

I'll never forget my own dad, when he heard me give my life testimony in brokenness and tears, and he came up and said to me, "I'm sorry son, that I wasn't a better dad", and I said, "No!, I'm sorry dad, that I wasn't a better son!", and we hugged, and we cried. You see, Dad told me about God when I was young, the best way he knew how, whilst supporting a busy family. I didn't want to listen, and I found out things the very tough way. God was patient with me. Dad and Mum kept praying for me. Dad knew I was out of his hands, and it was all up to God now. My parents had to trust in the Lord, and leave the future of their son in God's merciful and faithful hands. I'm forever grateful that they did that. As a dad now myself, I can pray for my children, my friends and everyone I know to also pray for each other. We all need prayer and encouragement whether we admit to it or not.

When you read through this Proverb, try not to glance over it like some sort of historic poetry. Read it and absorb it. Imagine it as being written from a father who has asked God to let him write one last letter to his children. What a powerful exhortation. Keep the words close to your heart and memorise them with me, ***“Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.”*** God will never let us down.

Love in Christ,
Joe Attwater