

# Teaching Proverbs 3.5-6

NASB: <sup>5A</sup> Trust in the LORD with all your heart / <sup>5B</sup> And do not lean on your own understanding.  
<sup>6A</sup> In all your ways acknowledge Him, / <sup>6B</sup> And He will make your paths straight.

## I. Understand the Literary Form

- † Proverbs are written in Hebrew poetic form.
- † What is the relationship between 5A and 6A?
- † What is the relationship between 5A and 5B?
- † How is 6B related to the rest of the proverb?

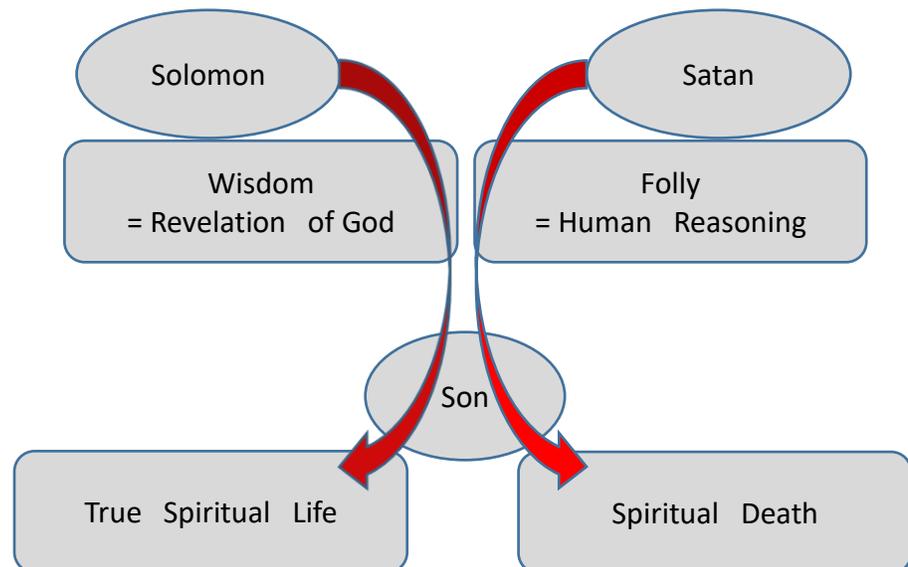
## II. Study the Key Words

- † What are the typical meanings of words like “trust,” “lean,” “acknowledge”?
- † What is the biblical usage of “LORD” or “your own understanding”?
- † What is the symbolism of “heart” or “paths straight”?
- † Why say “all your heart” and “all your ways”?
- † When you have answered these questions, rewrite the verses with expanded meanings that make clearer sense to you [see \* below].

## III. Understand the Context

- † This passage is part of Proverbs 1-9, a letter Solomon wrote to his son about living a successful life.

- † In Proverbs 1-9, Solomon is advising his son to rely on the woman called “wisdom,” which symbolizes the revelation of God, because that will lead to true spiritual life. Solomon is countering the counsel of Satan, who advises the son to rely on the woman called “folly,” which symbolizes human understanding and leads to spiritual death.



- † In all the biblical wisdom literature, the “fool” rejects God’s revelation and follows his own corrupted thoughts and desires, while the “wise person” acknowledges God’s revelation as wisdom and follows it.

#### **IV. Interpret the Theology and then Seek Application**

- † \* In my own interpretive language, I would rewrite this proverb: “Trust completely in Yahweh and his revelation in the Bible, and don’t rely on your own faulty thinking; know Yahweh intimately in every aspect of your life, and he will bring you on the straight path of true spiritual life.”
- † Will we rely on God’s revelation, God’s wisdom? Or will we rely on our own worldly understanding?
- † All theology in the Bible leads to application and all application comes from the Bible’s theology. We have theology that scripture is God’s revelation and thus wisdom, and our own understanding without scripture is limited, corrupted, and thus not the best tool. How can we apply these truths?

#### **V. Use resources**

- † The more you prepare, the better you will understand God’s revelation, so the better you can teach.
- † At the least, you should pray for help, study the text in its context best you can on your own, reflect prayerfully on its meaning and application, and then consider how best to teach it.
- † Ask pastors for commentary suggestions and other resources [or even insight!].
- † Use free online resources like Bible.org or BibleGateway.com.
- † Expand your resources with study Bibles [Life Application, Zondervan], atlases [Schlegel, Carta, Moody, Zondervan], Bible dictionaries [Zondervan, Unger’s, Holman], and basic theology books [Ryrie, Grudem].

#### **VI. Teach!**

- † If possible, use humor, illustrations, visuals.
- † As much as possible, use interactive dialogue, get them involved.
- † It is better to teach fewer truths well than more truths poorly. Keep it short, work on creative delivery, provide extra content at another time, through the squad meeting, or in a handout.