

## Proverbs 3:13-35: You Can Find Happiness

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The Book of Proverbs / Proverbs 3:13–35

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### Introduction

- <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/01/us/alligator-kidnapping-georgia.html#:~:text=Wally%2C%20an%20emotional%20support%20alligator,and%20dropped%20in%20a%20swamp.&text=WallyGator%2C%20the%20emotional%20support%20alligator,is%20back%20in%20the%20news.>
- Man finds happiness from emotional support gator gone missing... Where do you find happiness?
- We all long for happiness. According to the U.S. constitution, the pursuit of happiness is a basic, human right.
- While we all long for happiness, many struggle to find lasting happiness. We lack happiness. We lack joy.
- We live in an era where people increasingly struggle with depression and anxiety. Many people simply aren't happy. Is happiness possible? Yes! In a relationship with Jesus, there is real happiness, joy, contentment, and satisfaction.
- Solomon is like any other parent. He wants his son to be happy, but Solomon knows that his son will only find real happiness if he acquires the wisdom of God. The wisdom of God is the true path to happiness.
- This morning, I want you to know that you can find real, lasting happiness as you pursue the wisdom of God. I want to show you two truths from this passage to help you find true happiness.

## Your personal happiness is contingent upon your pursuit of the wisdom of God.

- vs. 13 - Happy is the man who finds wisdom. Some Bible translations “blessed.” A blessed life is a happy life. A happy and blessed life is what we all want.
- We all have an idea of what would make us happy - a loving family, a successful career, enjoyable hobbies, etc.
- Book - *The Anxious Generation* - Chronicles the increase of depression and anxiety in teens since 2010 - the first year the Iphone had a front-facing camera (selfies). 145% increase in girls and 161% increase in boys in anxiety/depression largely attributed to a “phone-based” childhood. Why the rise? In part because of a constant comparison to others on social media who have a “happy life.”
- The struggle with comparing ourselves to others is real. We look at the family who lives in the neighborhood we wished we lived in, or the person who seems to have his act together and think to ourselves, “If I had that life, I’d be happy.”
- Solomon was the wealthiest man in the world. He lacked for nothing, yet he told his son, that the truly happy man is the man who finds wisdom. Happiness is NOT in having the life someone else has. Happiness is found in living in the wisdom of God.
- Solomon expounding on what he already wrote in [Proverbs 2:4](#): wisdom is more valuable than precious metals. You obtain precious metals through hard work - either the hard work of actually mining for and refining the precious metal, or the hard work of making enough money to buy the precious metal. It’s hard work to gain what you find most valuable. Gaining wisdom takes hard work/discipline. A long path of acknowledging God in all your ways leads to growth in wisdom.

- Why should you value wisdom more than precious jewels? Because the disciplined pursuit of wisdom will lead to joy/happiness:
  - Gaining wisdom keeps you from an untimely death (vs. 16). Wisdom has gifts to give in her right and left hands to all who pursue her. Long life in her right hand - We all want a long, enjoyable life. This is NOT a promise that every wise person lives long, but a general principle. If you live wisely, you will avoid making foolish mistakes that could end your life (deadly addictions, reckless living, etc.)
  - Gaining wisdom helps you to have a good reputation. Riches and honor in her left hand. [Proverbs 22:1](#) - Good name better than wealth. It is joyous to have a good reputation among others. Solomon knew what it meant to be wealthy, but Solomon also knew that even better than wealth was to have a good reputation among people. We want people to think well of us so we can point people to the glory of God. (E.g., qualification of a pastor in [1 Timothy 3:2](#).) I want to be able to say to people, "Follow me as I follow Jesus" (e.g., [1 Corinthians 11:1](#)). I am not going to be a successful disciple maker if I'm not living the kind of life that people can follow.
  - Gaining wisdom leads you back to the Garden of Eden. Walking the path of wisdom is pleasant and peaceful (vs. 17). It's simply a better way to live - It's better to live in the light of God than the darkness of sin. It's better to walk with Jesus than to walk with the enemy. Ultimately, walking the path of wisdom is going to lead you to a desired destination: the Garden of Eden. Tree of life used 3xs in Bible. [Genesis 2](#) , here, and [Revelation 22](#). The ultimate hope for Christians is that we will be with Jesus forever in new heavens and new earth - that humanity will return to God's original intention in the Garden of Eden. We keep pursuing wisdom because we know the reward. vs. 18 - If you hold on to wisdom you are happy!
  - vs. 19-20 - Look at creation - see the wisdom of God on display. Creation is ordered, not chaotic. [Gen. 1](#) - All planned by God. If in His

wisdom, He sustains all things, even the water cycle that produces rain to sustain His creation. His wisdom on display. If in His wisdom, God can so intricately work in creation, how might His wisdom work in your life?

- vs. 21-26 - Hold on to lady wisdom - She gives us what we crave - peace and protection. When you pursue the wisdom of God you can rest knowing that you are safe in Him. Doesn't mean you won't face troubles, but it does mean you know that He is with you in your troubles.
- Know what you're thinking. All this sounds good, but is this really what happiness is? What may be keeping you from real happiness this morning is a lack of faith. Do you have a belief problem?
  - **Do you believe the lie that God does not want you to be happy?** Maybe you believe God is too restrictive or God is keeping you from what you desire. You read the Bible and it sounds restrictive to you rather than freeing. If God really wanted you to be happy, wouldn't he let you be you? Wouldn't he let you pursue any lifestyle that makes you happy? God knows that real happiness is you living in His will.
  - **Do you believe the lie that people who pursue happiness apart from Christ are actually happy?** The images flaunted on social media, the lifestyle your friends live, etc. are pursuing happiness and they haven't found it. That lifestyle you envy is not going to give you what your heart desires, only Jesus will give you what your heart desires.
  - **Do you believe the lie that God owes you?** Entitled attitude vs. grateful attitude. "God, I've lived a good life, don't you owe me a little happiness?" Reality - God has already given you more than you deserve - the gift of His grace and wisdom to navigate life well.
- These subtle lies that you tend to believe will still your happiness and joy.

## Your relational happiness is contingent upon your pursuit of the wisdom of God.

- Wise people know that happiness is found in a right relationship with God and in right relationships with others. Wise people pursue healthy relationships.
- Solomon calls his son to use wisdom and discernment in his relationships. Five prohibitions in vs. 27-35 that help us have wisdom in our relationships. These five prohibitions help us to avoid three sins that we commonly fall to in our relationships. (Note use of neighbors - people we're in close proximity to, but we often overlook or ignore.)
- **Flee the sin of withholding (vs. 27-28).** If God has been good to you (and He has), then why wouldn't you be good to others? So busy pursuing our own happiness, that we forget that there is joy in living to be a blessing. Jesus has withheld nothing from you. You have every spiritual blessing in Christ, who are you to withhold from others? Someone in your life needs your time, your love, your wisdom, your patience, your understanding, your grace, etc. "I don't have the time" vs. "I won't make the time."
- **Flee the sin of hurtful judgment (vs. 29-30).** Maybe someone in your life that trusts you but you judge because something about them you don't like, annoys you, etc. A person who trusts you, but you hurt through your words or actions. Someone you might accuse through your gossip, slander, angry outbursts, etc.
- **Flee the sin of envying the fool (vs. 31-35).** That person you envy that looks like they have everything you want, may have gotten it through violence - through manipulation, hurtful words, etc. Instead of envying the fool, know that God is a friend to the righteous. The wise inherit honor.

- Once we get to [Proverbs 10-31](#), the Book of Proverbs will give us much relational advice, but in these verses, we're given some of God's wisdom regarding relationships. Happiness and joy in your relationships requires constantly seeking the wisdom of God. It's hard work. The hard work you must do:
  - You must know you can't do everything for everybody, but you can do something.
  - You must pray for others - even those who are difficult for you to love.
  - You must consider the needs of others before your own.
  - You must grow in your own relationship with Jesus ([Philippians 2](#)). Jesus is the ONE who is the wisdom of God who humbled Himself to the point of death on the cross who is now alive and ascended to the Father. Your relationships will never be what God intended until you have a relationship with Jesus who will teach you to walk in His wisdom. This morning, if you are not a follower of Jesus, will you turn from your sins and give your life to Him?