

Selah: Stop, Look, Listen – August 8, 2020

The Lord be with you.

Oh decisions, decisions. Life seems filled with decisions, doesn't it? Should I quit this job? Where should we live? Should we send the kids back to school? Should we down scale? Where does God want me to serve Him?

Well, one might wish for the wisdom of Solomon... Well, it is Solomon's wisdom, we're going to draw on today. The wisdom of Solomon that fills a Book of Proverbs. As we want to see what Solomon would advise us about making decisions. Today we're looking at Solomon's wisdom in Proverbs Chapter 3, Verses 5 and 6. You might have seen these verses on a plaque or I even even memorized them. As these verses have been a help to so many people, I read them. Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will make straight your path. Now, there were three verbs here, I want to look at three things for you and me to do as we make a decision, three verbs, trust, do not rely, acknowledge. And then as we do these three things, here's what the Lord will do for us, and He will make straight your paths.

I met with a man this morning needing to make a decision about a job and... And I found these verses helpful as we talked, there's a first thing Solomon says, when making a decision, he says, Trust. Trust in the Lord with all your heart, that is, don't be half-hearted about this, but Trust in the Lord with all your heart. The Hebrew word here, translated trust, it has the root idea of to hide for refuge, and that gives us a good word picture here. As it went from the idea of hiding out for refuge to the idea of putting your trust in a person as you transfer trust from yourself onto, trust in God, and you do that with your whole heart is where the Hebrew people, the heart represented, the whole inner person, the mind, the emotions, the will... So Solomon is saying that with everything you have in you put your trust in the Lord when making a decision. And that takes all the heat off of you, as you trust in God's goodness, you trust in his grace, you trust in his un-merited favor. You trust in his many promises to you, as you're not making the decision all on your own, the Lord is in this with you as you trust in him.

That takes us then to the second verb, Solomon says, do not rely on your own insights. And here again the Hebrew verb gives us a good word picture as a word translated rely in do not rely that that word is oftentimes translated as to lean on... For instance, in 2 Samuel 1:6, it's used of King Saul, who exhausted from battle he leans on, that's our word, he leans on, he rest his weight on his spear, it's what is holding him up as he leans on it, he relies on that, and so when you're making a decision, Solomon says, do not rely, do not lean on your own insight, don't rely on your own smarts, your own abilities. Now, as you look at the rest of Proverbs, you know that that does not mean, don't do your homework, it doesn't mean that you don't plan, it doesn't mean that you don't seek wise counsel, Proverb says to do all those things, rather, what it does mean is that you do not lean, you do not put the weight of your decision, you do not put the weight of its outcome onto you, but you put it on to God, you lean on God. And I find a lightness in doing this, I find a freedom in this when making a decision not to have to rely on my own insight because you know what, I don't have enough insight, I don't know the future.

And that takes us then to the third verb, the third thing for us to do when making a decision,

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Solomon says, in all your ways acknowledge the Lord. In all your ways acknowledge the Lord, that that means wanting what God wants... Yes, in this decision, but also wanting what God wants in all facets of your life, in all your ways, to want what God wants for you. That means in the best way that you know how to do that, you take the hands off the steering wheel and you turn the steering wheel over to God, you acknowledge Him in all your ways. And when you do that, when you do that, look at what happens. And He will make straight your path.

Now, that does not mean that God will always make the way, it does not mean that God will necessarily make the way easy, but what it does mean is that God will take you straight, straight to true success. He won't let you get off track in this life, and the life to come. Perhaps you heard the story, the man who climbed to the top of the ladder, and then at the top of the ladder, he discovers the ladder was leaning against the wrong wall. God won't let that happen to you. When you're trusting in Him, when you're relying, when you're leaning on Him, and you're taking God into account in all parts of your life, the Lord, the Lord will make straighter path to true joy and success.

I like how The Message version translates these verses, trust God from the bottom of your heart. Don't try to figure out everything on your own, listen for God's voice and everything you do everywhere you go, he's the one who will keep you on track.

That is the wisdom of Solomon. I hope it's been helpful to you as you make decisions.

And the Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you. The Lord looked up the light of His countenance upon you and give you peace.

I am Tim Smith, a fellow traveler on the pilgrim way.

Thanks for listening until next time.

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