



LORD, USE ME

“The Path God Will Direct”

Proverbs 3:1-12

May 19, 2013 A.M. Service

The Direction to Take: Remember God’s Commands

The Danger to Avoid: Forget What We Were Taught

The Dividend to Expect: You Have a Full Life & His Peace

“My child, never forget the things I have taught you. Store my commands in your heart. If you do this, you will live many years, and your life will be satisfying.” NLT VS 1-2

The Direction to Take: Put God’s Word Deep in Your Heart

The Danger to Avoid: Let Go of God’s Love & Faithfulness

The Dividend to Expect: We Will Find Favor in the Eyes of God & Man

“Don’t lose your grip on Love and Loyalty. Tie them around your neck; carve their initials on your heart. Earn a reputation for living well in God’s eyes and the eyes of the people.” The Message Vs 3-4

The Direction to Take: Trust in the Lord With All We Are

The Danger to Avoid: Rely on What We Think We Know

The Dividend to Expect: He Will Straighten Our Path

“Trust God from the bottom of your heart; don’t try to figure out everything on your own. Listen for God’s voice in everything you do, everywhere you go; He’s the one who will keep you on track.” Message Vs 5-6

The Direction to Take: Obey the Lord and Turn Away From Evil

The Danger to Avoid: Think We Are Wiser Than We Really Are

The Dividend to Expect: It Brings Healing & Refreshment

“Never let yourself think that you are wiser than you are; simply obey the Lord and refuse to do wrong. If you do, it will be like good medicine, healing your wounds and easing your pains.” GNT Vs 7-8

The Direction to Take: Honor the Lord With our 1st

The Danger to Avoid: Take the Best For Ourselves

The Dividend to Expect: The Lord Will Bless Us So We Can Give More

“Honor the Lord with your wealth and with the best part of everything you produce. Then he will fill your barns with grain, & your vats will overflow with good wine.” NLT Vs 9-10

The Direction to Take: Take Correction & Discipline from The Lord

The Danger to Avoid: Reject It & Being Angry About It

The Dividend to Expect: We Experience the Deep Love of the Father

“My child, do not reject the Lord’s discipline, and don’t get angry when he corrects you. The Lord corrects those he loves, just as parents correct the child they delight in.” NCV Vs 11-12

LORD, USE ME

“The Path God Will Direct”

Proverbs 3:1-12

May 19, 2013 AM Service

We are on a journey this month – asking the Lord to use us, to continue to use us, to use more than ever before in the history of this church, in our lives, in our families, homes, schools, business, community, etc. We have looked at a young King – Josiah who God used in tremendous ways – we must be that kind of person – one Who God Can Use. We must also pray the prayers that God will answer – the prayer like that of Isaiah who prayed that prayer of revival, praying that honest prayer and releasing control to the Potter since we are but mere clay. We move to the third message today and that is what is the path that God will direct – what path do I need to put my life on today that will assure me I am on the right one?

This Scripture includes perhaps the 2 most recognizable verse in Proverbs, so let’s not rush over these or any other of the verses here. In each of these sections we see there is a motivation for following the Lord, there is a dividend if you will and also a danger to avoid as we take the right direction, most are given and a few are implied. Let’s take a look at two verses at a time today and how they apply to our lives. This is obviously very applicable to our graduates today but just as relevant for the rest of us

VS 1-2 “My child, never forget the things I have taught you. Store my commands in your heart. If you do this, you will live many years, and your life will be satisfying.” NLT

The Direction to Take: Remember God’s Commands

Store them, remember them, guard them – it means that we need to be in a place where we can learn and grow – Worship is a part of that, but LifeGroups and ReFuel and other opportunities that are given. What are those commands, they are all found right here in God’s Word. Not our opinions or ideas, but His Word – one of the reasons wanted to do our 1st Super Sunday Night – what does the Bible have to say about _____? The Word of God speaks into our everyday lives and we should walk in them. If we don’t follow God’s Word and His commands for us, we are following an idol – many times is ourselves – and what we want, and what makes us comfortable or happy, or appeals to our flesh and our desires.

These are not mere suggestions or opinions but commands from the Word of God! They are our call to obey not when we want to, feel like it, it's convenient but it's show our love for our Lord when we obey!

The Danger to Avoid: Forget What We Were Taught

Just to help illustrate the point – how many points can you list without cheating from last week's message? We forget so quickly and easily much of that because of the amount of information we are bombarded with today – so today we have to forget the right things and remember the important ones! Find ways to not forget – sermon notes, writing in a journal, listening to sermon again on podcast, etc.

It's easy to forget suggestions or good ideas, but we must be careful to not forget the commands – the clear call of God on our lives of how to live a God-fearing, God-controlled life – it's when we forget them and choose our own path that things don't go well!

The Dividend to Expect: You Will Live a Full Life and Have His Peace

This is huge and you can see it clearly displayed at a high school or college reunion many times... Now the promise here does not mean you will necessarily live a long time, though that can certainly be a part of it, it is more than kind of life – the fullness of our life, the joy of your life if you walk in the Lord's commands, and don't forget what you know to be true. The 2nd part – you will have peace – knowing you have done the right things for the right reason, you are not 2nd guessing yourself, afraid you will get found out or caught, hoping no one will know, etc. – We have peace – God's peace in all situations. If we walk in His ways, we will have His peace that passes all understanding! **It is usually true that those who don't participate on the sin of this world live longer than those that do – always exceptions, but the overall principle is true!**

VS 3-4 “Don't lose your grip on Love and Loyalty. Tie them around your neck; carve their initials on your heart. Earn a reputation for living well in God's eyes and the eyes of the people.” The Message

The Direction to Take: Put God's Word Deep in Our Hearts

Psalmist said he hid God's Words in his heart that he wouldn't sin against God. – We have to soak up the Word, saturate our lives with it, not just a 1 time a week deal – it must be a part of our everyday lives! This echoes from the 1st verse of keeping His commands – how do we keep them what

we do not know or remember? They must be a part of us! I love what the Message says there – carve them on your hearts – **ILLUS: Carving initials on a tree – here forever – may His Word be carved in our lives.**

ILLUS: Jewish culture – Doorposts and wore them on their bodies as constant reminders

The Danger to Avoid: Letting Go of God's Love & Faithfulness

Too often we let go, we lose grip on what matters the most and many things can cause us to do that. We must not let God's of His steadfast love – His Kindness and His incredible faithfulness! It's not about changing God to fit our ways and wants, but about the Lord changing us! It's not about God making us feel better about ourselves with no change – It is about Him making us more like Him! And that is what we need – someone that is steadfast and true, and this world isn't and we aren't, nothing is – only He is! **I love this word in the Hebrew – it is the word Hessed – the word for God's covenant, faithful love and mercy He promises to His people and then our reciprocal love and loyalty back to Him! Aren't you glad that He doesn't let go of us even when we let go of Him – one hand in the world and the other in the Lord – we must have both hands in his HESSED – his faithful covenant love & mercy!**

The Dividend to Expect: We Will Find Favor in the Eyes of God & Man

This is so important – don't miss this – we will have God's favor on our lives which is a big deal and one that we don't have time to go into – but pours our His favor on us! Not only that, our very lives will find favor with other people – isn't that what we should be praying – Lord give me favor with people – not so I can get something, but so I can give them something – the Gospel – Lord give us favor in our community, that people will be drawn to us – why? Because prayerfully they are drawn to us because they see the Gospel richly displayed in our lives and they see something they don't have and they want – we impact our community!

Vs 5-6

“Trust God from the bottom of your heart; don't try to figure out everything on your own. Listen for God's voice in everything you do, everywhere you go; He's the one who will keep you on track.” Message “Trust in the Lord with all your heart. Never rely on what you think you know. Remember the Lord in everything you do, and he will show you the

right way.” GNT

The Direction to Take: Trust in the Lord With All We Are

This is one is so easy to say – well of course I trust the Lord.

ILLUS: My Dad last written journal entry –

Are you truly trusting the Lord with everything you are, with your whole heart? When is the last time you took a risk to obey Christ? The last time you took that leap of faith and just trusted?

Trusting in who He is – we trust His unchanging character and ways!

Trust the Lord is not some giant leap into the dark but into the light.

We don't jump into what we don't know – we jump into the arms of the One that know who loves us and will never let us go! Our

challenge is not to trust Him in some things but in all things, and not just with part of our heart, but with all our heart! It's where we

bring the head and the heart together – we believe the commands, we obey because we know them but here it puts them together – we obey

because we trust and love Him completely! “When the mind is engaged

in an issues the motive is ‘I ought to’; when the will is engaged in an iusse the motive is ‘I have to’; but when the heart is engaged in an issue the

motive is ‘I want to’. John Phillips **ILLUS: Job's life & Moses**

The Danger to Avoid: Rely on What We Think We Know

We live in world of know it all's – got it all figured it out and don't need anyone's help – we see this especially in our teenage years.

ILLUS: Remember how smart my parents got when I went to college!

We think we know best but much like the TV Show title said I mean this with capital letters – Father Knows Best – only our Heavenly Father has

what we need, and we cannot rely on ourselves on what we think we know – we cannot know it all – only He can!

Trusting means that we don't rely on our wisdom to try and figure

this life out, the good and the bad, the easy and the difficult, our call is simply to trust! Is that always easy – no because our human nature we

want to figure it out and find the answer based on what we think or know... It never works. We only get ourselves into trouble!

The Dividend to Expect: He Will Keep Us on the Right Path

Of course, if we do all of these listed so far and avoid the dangers – the path is clearly given – is it easy to see, and the Lord will make sure we are on it – even when we make the wrong decision with the right intentions!

When we trust Him, and not rely on ourselves and our wisdom and what we think we now, the path becomes clearer, easier to see, it's like a Airport runway at night with the lights on and not off! God does not play cosmic hide and go seek with us – He promises to guide and direct our every step we take!

Vs 7-8

“Never let yourself think that you are wiser than you are; simply obey the Lord and refuse to do wrong. 8 If you do, it will be like good medicine, healing your wounds and easing your pains.” GNT

The Direction to Take: Obey the Lord and Turn Away From Evil

King James says – Fear the Lord – **ILLUS: John Wesley – “Give me one hundred preachers who fear nothing but sin and desire nothing but God, and I care not a straw whether they be clergymen or laymen, such alone will shake the gates of hell and set up the kingdom of God upon earth!”**

How do we fear – revere Him? – We Obey

Easier said than done! Our flesh wants to take over, but the Lord is clear we must make an active decision each day, and many times during each day to turn to the Lord and His ways and away from evil – from sinful choices, thoughts, decision, and actions! **ILLUS: King Jeroboam anointed over 10 northern tribes and led them away by setting up his own religion – no trips to Jerusalem to the temple, no priests and it led to the destruction of the nation – boy that sounds familiar!**

The Danger to Avoid: Think We Are Wiser Than We Really Are (Pride) Satan wants us to think that we are really smarter than we really are – we really aren't that wise! It is the downfall of us all – pride!

ILLUS: Frank Sinatra Song – Elvis recorded it too. “I Did it My Way”

This spirit of pride and self-assurance will destroy you and everyone you love if you do it “my way”. It will simply lead us down the path of destruction and remember Jesus said in Matthew – wide is the road and many are those who are on it! Those who are wise in our own eyes – if you look around the path you are on and there is a crowded highway, you might want to be certain you are on the right path – Jesus also said the way is narrow the way and few are those who find it!

The Dividend to Expect: It Brings Healing and Refreshment

This is a great word – even in the midst of our crazy world we can be healed and refreshed and it doesn't require us being at the beach or in the mountains, it simply found in the presence of our Savior as we turn to Him, walk in His ways and turning away from evil. Medical studies have concluded in different areas of life, that those who have strong faith usually live longer, outlive grim diagnosis, are happier and more at peace and have less overall medical issues from stress, anxiety, depression, worry, and on the list goes.

Vs 9-10

“Honor the Lord with your wealth and with the best part of everything you produce. Then he will fill your barns with grain, and your vats will overflow with good wine.” NLT

The Direction to Take: Honor the Lord With the 1st – the Best

We will not park here long at all – we did so in the month of April – but let me just say it again – the Lord's call is clear – We are all called to give him the first of what we have financially and otherwise! The best is the first! **Matthew 6:33** says it best! It is a requirement of the Lord and one of a Christian's greatest privilege – **we are never more like Jesus than when we give – Dr. Johnny Hunt** One commentator says were are the Lord's investment brokers – We invest 10% and He pays us 90% commission!

The Danger to Avoid: Take the Best For Ourselves

We tend to rationalize and think I need this or want this, or I will give it after I do want I want to, or spend what I need or get what I want, etc.

The Dividend to Expect: The Lord Will Bless Us So We Can Give More
The Lord will bless us – it is a clearly given promise! Not so we can have more to hoard more, but so we can give more away! He will not only bless us in eternity but also bless in right here and right now. Sometimes it is materially and other times it is in other ways that aren't necessarily measurable by \$ and cents!

ILLUS: 3 Families in our Church in OutLive Your Life

Vs 11-12

“My child, do not reject the Lord's discipline, and don't get angry when he corrects you. The Lord corrects those he loves, just as parents correct the child they delight in.” NCV

“But don't, dear friend, resent God's discipline; don't sulk under his loving correction. It's the child he loves that God corrects; a father's delight is behind all this.” THE MESSAGE

The Direction to Take: Take Correction & Discipline from The Lord

This is one we would all like to avoid – no one likes discipline or correction, yet it is a necessary part of life and one that helps us. We all need it! We all get off the path and take our own way. The Lord will allow and even bring things into our lives to correct us and discipline us to help us and allow us to grow deeper and become more like Him! His love for us will bring pain into our lives for our good and benefit to make us more like Him!

The Danger to Avoid: Reject It & Being Angry About It

We act like children and we pout, and cry and we bow up and say I won't take it! Children and students listen closely here – this is for you as well as your mom and dad. It applies to our earthly parents and to us and our Heavenly Father!

The Dividend to Expect: We Experience the Deep Love of the Father

The Father only disciplines those whom He loves – the greatest display of a parent is disciplining their children – it's hard to do – causes us great pain yet we know what it will bring in their lives in the end! The Lord knows the same it is true for each for us.

Questions to Close:

Are you walking and following after the Lord's Word and His commands He gave to us?

Who are you trusting in today? Is the Lord completely and totally?

What path are you on today – your's or the Lord's?

Are you being wise in your eyes or are you seeking Him in everything you do? Are you walking away from evil and your own wisdom? Are you doing it your way or the Lord's Way?

Are you honoring the Lord with your time, talents, and treasures?

Are you experiencing the discipline of the Lord right now? Accept it, walk in the love of our Heavenly Father!

Dad's Journal Entry

2012 promised to be a memorable year—my 50th tax season and the 11th anniversary of successful kidney cancer surgery. But in early January, I developed this persistent, irritating cough that wouldn't go away. Because of my family history of bronchial cancer, I visited my primary care physician on January 23rd for help. Chest x rays, blood work, EKG and lab work revealed no abnormality. With a history of reflux, the course of action was to take Prilosec and used Advair to try and relieve the problem. Neither worked, so in late March, at the direction of my primary care physician, I visited with my pulmonologist who prescribed a more aggressive course of action including Morphine cough medicine and prednisone. I experienced some improvement in week one, but by the end of week two, I was coughing even worse than before. On Friday, April 13, the pulmonologist arranged for another chest x ray which revealed a spot on my lung. This was followed by a CT scan which indicated an enlarged lymph node in my lung and something else close to my trachea. The radiologist and pulmonologist both agreed that a thoracic surgeon should perform a bronchoscopy and perhaps another procedure to determine exactly what we were dealing with. That was done on April 19th, and it revealed a squamous cell tumor that was pressing against the trachea, causing the cough and hoarseness that I was experiencing. It did not show up on the initial X Ray because of its location in the middle of the chest. Surgery was not an option because of the location, so I was referred to an oncologist who set a regimen of chemotherapy and radiation to address the problem. The good news is that it is treatable.

So here I am again, just like 11 years ago, sitting on a roof and holding on for dear life, filled with anxiety and fear. It was then that I discovered the secret to that “peace which passes understanding” about which the Bible speaks. The secret? You have to let go of the roof and jump. And just as I would catch our boys when they were caught on the roof trying to get tennis balls out of gutters, so did my Heavenly Father catch me. It was only then that I experienced that peace about which I had head knowledge, but not heart knowledge.

This time I've already jumped and know the God who catches me, walks with me minute by minute, knows the number of my days, and loves me (in spite of my lack of obedience and trust) will once again work His miraculous will in my life.

My prayer is that this journal will chronicle this physical experience in my life as God uses it to impact the spiritual lives of those with whom I come in contact. It's not that I don't want this cup to pass from me—I do, with all my heart. But true surrender of life to Him comes only as we die to self and allow Jesus to live in and through us by the power of His Holy Spirit. I want to be able to say with Paul, *for me to live is Christ and to die is gain.*

Please pray for my sweet wife of almost 45 years and our children and grandchildren that they will experience the peace that comes only from resting in Him.

For those of you who know Jesus, I pray this will inspire you to want to love Him more, know Him more deeply, and follow Him more closely.

And for those of you who don't know Jesus as personal Lord and Savior, I pray that you will give your heart and life to Him today. At the end of this life, it is all that really matters.

Bill

And now, the end is here And so I face the final curtain
My friend, I'll say it clear I'll state my case, of which I'm certain
I've lived a life that's full I traveled each and ev'ry highway
And more, much more than this, I did it my way

Regrets, I've had a few But then again, too few to mention
I did what I had to do and saw it through without exemption
I planned each charted course, each careful step along the byway
And more, much more than this, I did it my way

Yes, there were times, I'm sure you knew
When I bit off more than I could chew
But through it all, when there was doubt
I ate it up and spit it out
I faced it all and I stood tall and did it my way

I've loved, I've laughed and cried
I've had my fill, my share of losing
And now, as tears subside, I find it all so amusing
To think I did all that And may I say, not in a shy way,
"Oh, no, oh, no, not me, I did it my way"

For what is a man, what has he got?
If not himself, then he has naught
To say the things he truly feels and not the words of one who
kneels
The record shows I took the blows and did it my way!

Yes, it was my way