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Proverbs

Chapter 3 - A Most Valuable Heritage Unforgettable Favor (vs. 1-4)

Proverbs 3:1-4: My son, do not forget my teaching,
But let your heart keep my commandments;

For length of days and years of life
And peace they will add to you.

Do not let kindness and truth leave you;
Bind them around your neck,
Write them on the tablet of your heart.

So you will find favor and good repute
In the sight of God and man.

We come to the Book of Proverbs, and we have a father, seemingly talking to a son, preparing him to reign; as God has prepared us to reign. Wonderful thing, isn't it? We will reign with Him, as Timothy says. What kind of person does God want to reign? Well, what Proverbs is going to reveal to us is that reigning isn't grabbing for power and authority. It is somebody that really becomes a servant. There are a lot of voices out there that are calling us to think a certain way or do a certain thing. They inundate us, oftentimes from the world, which the interesting picture is, "Son, you're going to have influences in your life. Those influences will try to draw you in." Therefore, the picture that he gives is a feminine picture of a woman calling or beckons. You fundamentally, in the book of Proverbs, have two women that are calling the young man. The one is the wise; the wise woman or wisdom itself is caring and faithful, and it's looking out for the good of the man. Then, you have the wily, who is cunning, who is deceptive, and who is taking advantage and looking for opportunity for self-gratification. Two of those voices are calling. The question is, what are you going to be listening to, who you're going to be listening to? More specifically, what is it that you love? Because it's your affections that will draw you in. As James so aptly puts it in James 1, it's your lust that causes you to fall. You can't blame the sources. It's because you love.

I oftentimes think of the testing of Christ, and one of the passages that it's found in is Matthew 4. You read that and people oftentimes use the phrase, "the temptation of Christ," but I would say it's the testing of Christ, because Christ was never tempted. He was tested, but in order to be tempted you have to long for something, and Christ never longed for those things. That's the point really, of the Book of Proverbs, that if your heart's right, if you have the right affections, you'll long for the right things and you'll be attracted to the right woman. If in fact you find yourself loving the wrong things, you're going to find yourself with the wrong people; you're going to find yourself doing the wrong things, and that is clear in Proverbs 1.

When you go into Chapter 2, it then begins to segue from that into the treasures that you seek; will obviously be the right or the wrong treasures, and if you will seek the right treasure, then, look at all the benefits, but you have to seek. There has to be some sense of investment in your life.

So, the way that he puts it is,

(Proverbs 2:2) "Make your ear attentive to wisdom,
Incline your heart to understanding;

(Proverbs 2:3) For if you cry for discernment,
Lift your voice for understanding;

(Proverbs 2:4) If you seek her as silver..."

So, what is your treasure? Because where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. He begins to explain at the very end of this chapter, Chapter 2, investing in the wrong treasure will not only bring you disappointment and depression, but it will bring you death and destruction. So, where's your treasure?

Now, we come into Chapter 3, and as we look at this particular chapter, he is talking about a heritage and once again the things that you value, that which you love are all caught up into what will you inherit. If you look at the end of Chapter 3 with me, it ends this way in verse 35,

(Proverbs 3:35) "The wise will inherit honor,
But fools display dishonor."

So, really what we begin to see is, what is the most valuable heritage that you could receive?

One of the passages that's going to be mentioned in the Book of Proverbs is that a wise man leaves an inheritance for his children. The question is what kind of inheritance? And what we're going to be seeing in Proverbs Chapter 3 is the kind of heritage that has value, because really, we're going to be talking about and identifying what is a wonderful and wealthy heritage.

We come to this passage, and he starts off once again in that personal discussion with his son. "My son," he starts off that way. You can hear the connection, and you can hear that there's a purpose in him saying that. He is very concerned that his son will forget certain things and he doesn't want him to forget. So, in verses 1 through 4 we're going to be talking about the things that you should not forget. More specifically, if you were to define that word in the Hebrew, the things that you cannot ignore; the things that you cannot not care about. You know, there are just some things that you say, "Well, it's not that important." He goes, "You can't feel that way." It's not just a matter of losing your memory about something, but what he's talking about is a purposeful ignoring, because once again we go back to the fundamental principle that you'll remember the things that you love. So, where your heart is, see, that's what you'll remember. You'll always remember that.

So, "My son, do not forget," is really conveying, "Don't ignore what I'm saying and don't ever lose sight of how valuable this is. Let your affections always be for the things that I'm telling you."

Now, there will be fundamentally 4 things that he tells him not to forget. The first will be, don't forget who gives you this direction. If you look at the passage, in verse 1, it starts off,

(Proverbs 3:1) "My son, do not forget my teaching..."

So, what we're really talking about is the source of where the teaching is coming from; don't forget where it's coming from.

We have oftentimes read the passages in 2 Timothy 1:5 and 2 Timothy 3:14, that Paul deals with Timothy and talks to him about his mother and his grandmother. His statement in 1 Timothy 1 is, "Don't forget the sincerity that your grandmother and mother displayed, the sincerity of their faith." He's drawing upon that sense of connection that Timothy has with his mother and grandmother, and the connection because of their sincerity in their faith. There are a lot of people that you shouldn't listen to, but the people that you should listen to, you should listen to for all the right reasons; not because they are relatives, but because of their walk with God.

One of the interesting statements in Zechariah 1 is that God declares, through Zechariah, "Do not listen to your fathers." He actually states that within the text, because they went the wrong way. So, as we look at this, we begin to realize that there is a reason why.

I've thought about that passage in Philippians 2, remember when Paul is going to send Timothy to help minister, and he says, "I'm going to send Timothy to you." And remember the reason why? Because, "There's nobody else that has a kindred spirit like Timothy, and everybody else is looking out for their own business, but Timothy will look out for your self-interest." You begin

to realize that here's a person that you should listen to. Why? Because he cares for you. Once again, it goes back to, "Why would you listen to the words of wisdom?" Because wisdom is not only faithful, wisdom is actually looking out for your good, and that's why you should listen to it. So, you have this sense of source of who you're going to listen to.

There's a passage in Matthew 5 that we oftentimes draw upon. If you look with me in Matthew 7, we'll turn to Chapter 7 and jump on ahead a little bit further. His statement is in verse 13 that you and I need to enter by the narrow gate. You know the passage.

(Matthew 7:13) "... for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction..."

The text is telling us that there are a lot of people going the wrong way. So, don't go with popular consensus. A lot of people get their information from "What do most people think about it?" And the bizarre thing that's been happening in recent days is, even the news will get on there and they'll say, "And now we want to know what you think." So, you actually get to text in whatever you think, and I guess they develop their news according to what you think. I don't know. I don't think they're really going for facts.

"Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it."

(Matthew 7:14) "For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it."

So right away, he's telling us don't go with popular.

Then he says this in verse 15,

"Beware of the false prophets..."

Now, false prophets are just people that are proclaiming that they're being sent by God. So, they're saying that they're fundamentally mouthpieces of God. So, just because somebody says that they're a mouthpiece of God does not mean that they are. The question is, how do you discern? And the passage is very clear how you discern.

"Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing..."

So, obviously it's not the clothing that they wear.

"...but inwardly are ravenous wolves."

And we know that if somebody wears sheep clothing, what are they saying that they are? A shepherd. They're saying they're a shepherd. That's what shepherds wear, sheep's clothing.

(Matthew 7:16) “You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they?”

(Matthew 7:17) “So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit.”

So, you actually have one tree bearing bad fruit. What would that be? Thistles, or thorns. You know, some people you walk away from, you go, “Ow!” You know, it's just really a very unpleasant meeting, and you realize that those people are not only not out for your best interests, but they're out to take advantage of you and to harm you; even though they may come under the guise of following God, but you're walking away not being encouraged or strengthened. You're not closer to God because of your relationship with them. In many respects, you feel that the whole thing was undermined.

(Matthew 7:18) “A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit.

(Matthew 7:19) Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.”

Here's the conclusion:

(Matthew 7:20) “So then, you will know them by their fruits.” (By their actions)

Once again, you go back to Timothy and his mother and grandmother, “You know.” In fact, the statement that that he says is, “You know what they taught you.” So, he will tell him in 2 Timothy 3, “Be consistent in the things that they told you because you knew of their reputation; the way that they lived their lives.” Why would you listen to somebody? Well, you listen to Timothy because of his reputation, and he's the one that you go along with.

Proverbs 26, if you look with me, there are some people that I guess might be easy to listen to, mainly because they tell you what you want to hear, and those would be called, let's see, I'm trying to think of the name, “liars.” Yeah.

(Proverbs 26:28) “A lying tongue hates those it crushes...”

So, what are we talking about in this particular passage? A liar. If you know somebody's a liar and they come up to you today and say, “Hey, I've got some news, I've got some advice.” Can you really believe them, and should you trust them?

The way that it's put here in Proverbs 26:24,

“He who hates disguises it with his lips,
But he lays up deceit in his heart.

(Proverbs 26:25) When he speaks graciously...”

“Ah, he’s such a nice guy.” Yeah, those are called antisocialists, sociopaths, psychopaths. Those are nice people; some of the nicest people that you ever meet are psychopaths.

“... he speaks graciously, do not believe him,
For there are seven abominations in his heart.

(Proverbs 26:26) Though his hatred covers itself with guile,
His wickedness will be revealed before the assembly.

(Proverbs 26:27) He who digs a pit will fall into it,
And he who rolls a stone, it will come back on him.

(Proverbs 26:28) A lying tongue hates those it crushes...”

The passage is telling us that there are people that you listen to, there are people that you don't listen to, and you don't want to forget the source where the information is coming from.

The way that it's stated in Proverbs 3:1, “My son, do not forget my teaching...” Actually, the word “teaching” there, you might want to mark it, is the word Torah; which fundamentally means the Scripture of the Old Testament. So, what we know is that he's teaching, but here again, we know the source that is teaching it, and that's really the emphasis.

If you look with me in Jeremiah 2, I know we're hopping around a little bit, but just to kind of give you this sense of understanding of this passage. In Jeremiah 2, the concern of this is God saying, “You forgot the source. You forgot who led you. You forgot who cared for you.” And the wonderful thing about this particular passage in Proverbs 3 is you're dealing with a father who is coming before a son, and he's fundamentally saying, “Son, you know I love you. You know I care for you. So, everything I'm telling you, you understand that it's good.” Because, quite frankly, everything that somebody tells you that loves you, you don't necessarily completely understand. I mean, there's a lot of Scripture that you can read, and you go, “Man, I don't fully understand what God means by that.” But you don't need to. What you need to understand is who it is that’s speaking, and if He's telling you to do something, though you might say in your brain, “I don't know how that's going to work out,” you stop there and you go back to who is talking, and it's the God who loves you. It's the God who gave Himself for you. It's a God who will raise you up through Him. So, in Jeremiah 2, the great concern of God within this particular passage is you forgot who it was that you were listening to. So, you began to listen to everybody else.

Jeremiah 2 starts off and God says,

(Jeremiah 2:2) “...proclaim in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, ‘Thus says the LORD,
“I remember concerning you the devotion of your youth,

The love of your betrothals,
Your following after Me in the wilderness,
Through a land not sown.”

In other words, there's kind of a subtle hint at this juncture that “Didn't we have a close relationship when I was taking care of you in places that you really needed Me. You turned to Me in the desert. I was the one that made sure you had water coming out of a rock. I made sure that you had bread coming out of the sky.”

In fact, the way that He puts it in 5 is,

“Thus says the LORD,
“What injustice did your fathers find in Me,
That they went far from Me
And walked after emptiness and became empty?

(Jeremiah 2:6) They did not say, ‘Where is the LORD
Who brought us up out of the land of Egypt,
Who led us through the wilderness,
Through a land of deserts and of pits,
Through a land of drought and of [fn]deep darkness,
Through a land that no one crossed
And where no man dwelt?’

(Jeremiah 2:7) I brought you into the fruitful land
To eat its fruit and its good things...”

“I mean, you didn't make those things happen. Do you know who's been doing this all along?”
And He's bringing it back to the source.

So, then you come towards the end, He goes, “You've committed two evils.”

(Jeremiah 2:13) ““For My people have committed two evils:
They have forsaken Me,
The fountain of living waters,
To hew for themselves cisterns,
Broken cisterns
That can hold no water.””

“I mean, are you looking at the people that you're listening to? Because they're not good sources.” So, His ultimate question is, “You have problems now because, well, you've actually done this to yourself.”

He states in verse 17, “by your forsaking the LORD”.

Then he says in verse 18,

“But now what are you doing on the road to Egypt...Or what are you doing on the road to Assyria?...”

The point is that you're listening to the wrong people. Consider the sources; consider what these people have done to you in the past; consider how they've treated you in the past. I mean, why would you go to Egypt, to the ones who had put you in bondage? It doesn't take a brain surgeon, does it? I don't know how bright brain surgeons are, but it doesn't take a lot of thinking to come to that conclusion that you don't want to go to a place that uses people and oppresses people. Nevertheless, don't forget.

So, he starts off in this in this passage in Proverbs 3, “My Son, do not forget my Torah; my direction; my teaching.” And clearly, he's coming from the perspective of the word of God and the direction of God.

He goes on and says, “But let your heart keep my commandments.”

Now, once again, it's just a fundamental point that you have to keep the commandments from the heart, because if you don't keep them from the heart, you're not going to keep them. You'll jump through hoops for a time and then when it no longer becomes convenient, or, as Paul will say, when he writes a letter, he goes, “I'm so thankful that you're obedient to God, even when I'm not there.” However, there are people that just do the right thing when the audience is there, and they'll forsake. Let your heart keep the commandments. Now, I just want to emphasize “commandments,” *“mišvâ”* that is used within the passage, is always emphasizing the sense of God telling you what you can't do. So, what makes that interesting is that you're dealing with prohibitions. In other words, God saying, “You can't do this. You shouldn't do this. You shouldn't do this.” And so, a father's saying to his son, “Son, don't do this. Don't do this. Don't do this.” And you go, “I hate all those don'ts.” And God goes, “You know, you should love them with your heart.” Because you're considering the source. I always liken this to my grandfather because we'd often go out in the woods and he would say, “Don't step there.” And I just knew don't step there. Then he would pull out his cane and catch the rattlesnake, but you just realize, don't step there, and that's all I had to hear from him, because when he told me, “Don't,” that was good for me. I had great confidence in the fact that everything was going to be ok by me not doing something. The passage is dealing with a sense of heart, and the heart, *“lēb,”* always deals with the focus; always deals with the center of your affections. It is not simply dealing with the fact that you're going to do something because you care about it, but that you're going to do something in the way that all of your emotions are tied to it. You feel emotionally in on this, and the emphasis is very clear.

(Proverbs 3:1) “My son, do not forget my teaching,
But let your heart keep my commandments;

(Proverbs 3:2) For length of days...”

Now, he not only doesn't want you to forget the source that's really proclaiming the message, but he doesn't want you to forget literally where this path leads. If you look with me, where does it lead?

“... length of days and years of life...”

I know we've all talked to people that go, “I don't want to live very long.” So, I don't know if they're going to trash this particular passage or not, but “length of days” doesn't merely refer to the sense of living a long life. Now it will, in some ways, tie into that, but that's not the emphasis of it.

The passage reads, “for length of days and years of life.” You might want to underline “years” because the word in itself is not years. It has a connotation of revolving; of revolutions. What it's talking about is, as a year goes by, there's a revolving of the seasons and things like that. So, one of the reasons why the word “years” is put in there, but it's talking about as you live your life and as the days revolve, and you revolve around your different paths and the things that you do, things will go well as your days go by.

(Proverbs 3:2) “... And peace they will add to you.”

and peace, they will add to you. If you look at the word “add” within the passage, it would be another way of saying, “peace will come again, and again, and again.” So, you have this picture of your life revolving every year, and God says, “Every year.” “Peace,” “*šālôm*” is not just simply saying that you're not going to have wars. It's emphasizing that there's going to be well-being; that you're going to have a good life.

When it talks about “length of days,” if you look with me in Psalm 23, I think most of you are kind of familiar with that Psalm. If you look at the end of this particular Psalm, it uses that same word. It is the Hebrew word, “*ōreḵ*”. If you look in Psalm 23, it says at the end of this passage,

(Psalm 23:6) “Surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow me all the days of my life,
And I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.”

It's the same word, “length of days.” Now, the fact that it's actually translated “forever,” is emphasizing as well that God will make sure that you live forever.

It starts off, if you remember, in Psalm 23:1, “The LORD is my shepherd”. That would be the teacher, right? He's the one I'm going to listen to, and what's the next phrase?

"I shall not want."

"I'm not going to want," meaning, "I'm not going to be without." What are you not going to be without? And this is really the tie in.

If you drop on down to verse 6, "Surely goodness and loving kindness will follow me". See that? I call goodness and loving kindness life lengtheners, because the goodness and loving kindness of God lengthens life.

One of the statements that's made in the Book of Ecclesiastes is that the wicked and the foolish will actually die before their time. That's the quote, "will die before their time." There are life lengtheners. So, he's not only making reference to that, but he's also making reference to the fact that you're going to live forever. If God's your Shepherd, you won't be without life. Life will always be there for you because God is life, right?

There's another passage that uses this in particular, and if you look with me in Psalm 91. In Psalm 91, it reminds us that God is protecting us, and God will protect us because He is our Shepherd. The passage reads, "I'm not going to be afraid of anything. I mean, 10,000 could go at my right hand. It's not going to approach me. I'll only look on with satisfaction."

(Psalm 91:14) "Because he has loved Me..."

We'll put your name in there or you in there, "Because you have loved Me."

"... therefore I will deliver him;

I will set him securely on high, because he has known My name.

(Psalm 91:15) He will call upon Me, and I will answer him;

I will be with him in trouble;

I will rescue him and honor him.

(Psalm 91:16) "With a long life..."

"With an eternity." According to Psalm 23.

"...I will satisfy him

And let him see My salvation."

So, when it's dealing with that, it's dealing with not only God is going to give you life, but it's dealing with the fact that everything that happens to you, your life as it revolves every year by year, you're going to see the goodness of God come in different ways and a sense of well-being will literally wrap around you. Surely goodness and mercy will follow me. It's following me. His point is that you can't forget where this is going to lead. I mean, it's one thing to listen to somebody and you know, of course obviously there's things that we could do that bring

immediate gratification, but where does it lead in the end? See. So, you can have a moment of a buzz that makes you feel good, I get that, but where does that lead at the end? In this passage, he goes, "Son, you cannot forget where it leads you."

The third thing that he doesn't want you to forget in verse 3 is,

(Proverbs 3:3) "Do not let kindness and truth leave you; Bind them around your neck..."

Now, what he's actually wanting him not to forget within this particular text is don't forget what needs to be near and dear to you. That's the best way to put it, "around your neck." Don't let it leave you. If I could describe it this way, don't ever forget what really is important to God. We get wrapped up into doing certain things.

There's a passage, Matthew 23, that will probably explain this better than I could just off the top of my head. Matthew 23, if you look with me, God, obviously in this particular chapter is upset with the Pharisees and the scribes, who love to be noticed by men. (Matthew 23:5)

(Matthew 23:6) "They love the place of honor at banquets..."

(Matthew 23:7) and respectful greetings..."

I don't know if anybody ever interviewed them or not, but an interesting interview would be to a Pharisee, "So, why are you doing this?" But I think people actually forget why. "And do you actually believe what is important to God? Do you understand what is important to God? What He values more than anything else?" Because they're robbing the widows; they're taking advantage of the widows. They're hypocritical, obviously. He'll repeat that over and over again.

"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites..." (Verse 13)

"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites..." (Verse 14)

"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites..." (Verse 15)

I don't know if you're getting the point, but the point is that they're doing all these things that are seemingly religious, and God says, "You're not doing one thing that I really like."

If you'll drop on down, the way that he will put it in Matthew 23:23 is,

"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cummin, and have neglected the weightier provisions of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others."

(Matthew 23:24) "You blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!"

This is fundamentally what we oftentimes do. We get so wrapped up in the list that we neglect, and his point is, "My son, you cannot forget what God loves. You cannot forget what is really important to God, because the moment that you forget that, it will take you off path." And if you look, what really is important to God, he pronounces it so clearly here in Proverbs 3:3, "Do not let kindness and truth leave you." "Kindness" is oftentimes translated in the Hebrew, "lovingkindness." It is the lovingkindness of the Lord that we wait for. It is that picture of, yes, mercy, it is a picture of goodness, it is a picture of caring; of truly loving somebody. Therefore, it is "*hesed*," the word that is used repeatedly throughout Scripture of God's loving kindness. The loving kindness of the Lord never ceases; His mercies never cease. So, the point is that you can't stop loving. Have you ever been involved in a ministry, and you find yourself getting mad at people in the process of ministering? And God goes, "Stop. Do you remember what's really important to Me? It's not as much what you accomplish here." I mean, God had to remind Mary and Martha the whole thing, right? "It's not as much what you accomplish here, but it is the heart in which you accomplish, and your demeanor towards people is what I'm looking at." God is concerned with our kindness, and what's the next word that he uses? Truth. Now, truth will oftentimes be directly connected to fidelity or trustworthiness. God wants you to be sure, steadfast, not only in your faith, but faithful with the people that you're with.

He states in verse 3, "Bind them around your neck." That's a picture of putting something in a conspicuous place, but it's also a picture of being unashamed. It's also a picture of somebody seeing it very obviously. In other words, every time they see you, they can see kindness. They say, "That's a faithful person. That's a trustworthy person." By the very actions that you do, they can see that's the kind of person that you are. So, it's an interesting picture of piling around your neck and the fact that you're writing them or inscribing them on the tablets of your heart is telling us that you're not just performing; this is something that you love. Initially they can't tell if you really love them or not, but ultimately, they can tell if in fact that love was a part of who you are, and that fidelity was actually who you are. The point is, "My son, don't forget what God loves. Let those things direct you."

Then the last point is probably one of the most encouraging texts, in verse 4,

"So you will find favor and good repute..."

Another way of putting "good repute" would be "good success."

So, "You will find favor and (good success) in the sight of God and man."

God will give you successful days, beneficial days; days that you'll not be sorry about. I'll often thank God for thrusting me into certain things because I wouldn't normally volunteer. Have you ever had those things that God kind of pushed you? I look back and I go, "Thank you. I certainly would have wasted my life today. Had You not done that, I would have pursued my own

desires. Probably I would have had a great day in the sense of it was fun, but I would have looked back on that day, and go, 'Another day wasted.'" God won't let us do that. The favor that comes from God is that He's going to let your life count in such a way that you're going to bring about a response from those around you, and they might even come up to you and say something like, "I'm so thankful how the Lord uses you in my life." And you go, "Where did that favor come from?" What's also interesting about this is he's fundamentally saying, "My son, don't forget where the origin of blessing comes from." I oftentimes think that the origin of blessing is me. So, if I can do something that I like, then I'm the I'm the source of my blessing. I'll be blessed. The passage is saying that blessing comes from favor. So, whether it's the favor of God or of man, God is the source of that favor, and it's the source of His favor that brings that blessing upon me. This is why my heart has to be right; this is why I can't just do these things outwardly. I have to do it with my heart.

The very interesting Psalm, Psalm 90 is the Psalm of Moses. There's not too many of those, are there? If you look with me in Psalm 90, this has been a particular passage that has caused me to reflect upon my life and the significance of my life. God wants to bring success to our life. He wants there to be benefit and one of the ways that you're going to comprehend that, is that you'll sense the favor of God upon you, and God will also display the favor of man upon you. God will show you. On those particular days, you go, "Thank You, God."

In Psalm 90, if you can see at the very top, "A Prayer of Moses, the man of God." This is fundamentally his prayer. When I think of the different prayers that Moses could have prayed, I don't think I would have necessarily thought of this one, because this is a very humble prayer. Had we not had the name of Moses over it, we wouldn't have thought that it was actually his prayer; we would have thought it was somebody else. Scripture does tell us, and actually the way it reads in the Old Testament is, "Now, Moses was the most humble man on the face of the earth." Now, what we know by that is, he wasn't humbled because he submitted to every Tom, Dick and Harry; he was humbled because he submitted to God. This is why both James and Peter will reiterate, "Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God and He will exalt you." True humility is not acquiescing to everybody around you. True humility is submitting to whatever God wants and doing it with your whole heart. That's true humility. So, as we come to the passage, he comes into this text and he kind of reminds himself, he's probably up on one of the mountains at the time, and he goes, "Wow, before these mountains ever existed, You've always been." So, we feel in the whole Psalm this sense of time. Do you remember where it leads, or did you already forget? Long life, length of days. Ok. So, what he's talking about within this particular Psalm is "You're the one that lasts forever. You last forever."

(Psalm 90:1) "... Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations.

(Psalm 90:2) Before the mountains were born
Or You gave birth to the earth and the world,
Even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God."

"But not me," he says, "I go to dust." Look at the way it reads,

(Psalm 90:3) "You turn man back into dust
And say, "Return, O children of men."

(Psalm 90:4) For a thousand years in Your sight
Are like yesterday when it passes by,
Or as a watch in the night.

(Psalm 90:5) You have swept them away like a flood, they fall asleep;
In the morning they are like grass..."

James will say that in James 1, "All flesh is like grass." Peter will say that in 1 Peter, "All flesh like grass." They're actually quoting from Isaiah. "All flesh is like grass."

(Psalm 90:6) "In the morning it flourishes and sprouts anew;
Toward evening it fades and withers away.

(Psalm 90:7) For we have been consumed by Your anger
And by Your wrath we have been dismayed.

(Psalm 90:8) You have placed our iniquities before You,
Our secret sins in the light of Your presence."

Would you think of Moses praying a prayer like that, "God, you know my secret sins"?

For 40 years, we're not real sure how Moses lived his life. We're not real sure. 40 years. That's a long time, and for 40 more years, he'll be with sheep, and we're not real sure what he did during that time. Now he's 80, and the Lord will call him to lead the people into the promised land for another 40 years. "Well, God, You see our secret sins."

(Psalm 90:9) "For all our days have declined in Your fury;
We have finished our years like a sigh."

That doesn't sound like length of days or peace or any of that. His point is, "How transient I am and how I look back at my life and how time goes by so quickly. What difference did my life make?" What an interesting picture, "like a sigh"; it's a breath that was here for a moment, then gone.

(Psalm 90:10) "As for the days of our life, they contain seventy years..."

I'm getting really close to that one. We have finished our years like a sigh.

“... Or if due to strength, eighty years,
Yet their pride is but labor and sorrow;
For soon it is gone and we fly away.”

How transient life is; how seemingly meaningless it is. You know, you stick your finger in water, you pull it out, and that's about how significant your life is, right?

(Psalm 90:12) “So teach us to number our days,
That we may present to You a heart of wisdom.”

Well, that's what we're praying for in the Book of Proverbs.

(Psalm 90:13) “Do return, O LORD; how long will it be?
And be sorry for Your servants.

(Psalm 90:14) O satisfy us in the morning with Your lovingkindness,
That we may sing for joy and be glad all our days.

(Psalm 90:15) Make us glad according to the days You have afflicted us...”

You know, in a way what he's saying in the passage is, “Don't let my life be defined by my sins. Let my life be defined by the good things that I do and the benefit that I bring. Let my life bring praise and glory and good in the lives of people around me.”

“Make us glad according to the days You have afflicted us,
And the years we have seen evil.

(Psalm 90:16) Let Your work appear to Your servants
And Your majesty to their children.”

It's verse 17 that I read this whole Psalm for and that I wanted you to focus on. Read it with me.

(Psalm 90:17) “Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us;
And confirm for us the work of our hands;
Yes, confirm the work of our hands.”

Underline the word “confirm.” It means to establish. Fundamentally, what he's talking about is, make it lasting and meaningful. When the father's talking to his son, he's turning to him and he says, “Now, son, there is a path that if you'll take, it will lead to a lasting and meaningful life, length of days. This is the path, hang onto loving kindness and truth. Don't ever let them leave you, and everything that I tell you to do, want to do it with your heart; desire to do it with your heart, and you're going to find the favor of God is going to be upon you. God will bring significance out of your life; your life will have meaning.” In other words, literally the days of

your life will be established. The way James will put it in James 4 is God gives greater grace. Well, you and I have been saved by grace, right, but He gives greater grace. He's opposed to proud, but He gives grace to the humble. Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God, and He'll lift you up and He'll cause your days to be meaningful and productive. You'll influence people in a good way, and you'll walk away going, "You know what? I didn't waste my life." This is a concern of every father or should be concern of every father; it should be a concern of every son. "God, I don't want to waste my life. I want to look at the end of the day and would You just do this for me, would You make my days lasting?"

The psalmist writes this in Psalm 147:11,

"The LORD favors those who fear Him,
Those who wait for His lovingkindness."

In that same Psalm, he says, "He does not delight in your horsepower, and He is not impressed by your Olympic Games, but He delights in those who fear Him and wait for His loving kindness." We put our trust in the Lord. We put our trust in His Son. "This is My beloved son, in whom I am well pleased." It is the favor of God that we seek. We know that if we will put Him first and with all of our heart, that He's going to make our days productive, and we won't waste our life.

Closing Prayer:

Father, we give You thanks for Your word and the encouragement that You give us; the strength that we draw from these words; the direction that You point us to. All of these things bring us to a place of true productivity, length of days; years of good revolving around us. Surely, goodness and mercy will follow us all the days of our life.

With your heads bowed and your eyes closed, what we're asking you to do is, once again, as the father is asking the son, "Be all in on this, son. Realize what the true treasure is. Don't ever get off course here. Let these things be obvious and be embraced, the things that are really important; the things that God loves." If you'll stay on this track, if you'll continue to walk in this path, blessings are yours and 10,000 beside, for great is God's faithfulness.