

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION
Proverbs: Topical Applications of Proverbs
II. Motivational Commands, Proverbs 1:8-9:18
B. Things To Pursue
1. Gaining Certainty By Pursuing God
(Proverbs 3:1-12)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

A lot of stress in today's world is created by uncertainty:

(1) Uncertainty over the rising cost of living affects many older adults: "A new AARP survey of residents aged 45 and older shows deep concern about rising living costs . . . Nearly 50% say they have tapped into savings to cover rising costs. Forty-two percent have stopped saving for retirement altogether. Thirty-six percent struggle with monthly bills. Thirty percent have difficulty affording food. Thirteen percent report skipping medications due to cost . . ." (Andrew Fowler, "Taking affordability seriously," Republican-American, March 11, 2026, p. A7)

(2) Uncertainty is resulting in escalating mental health problems: "While the increase (in mental health crises) is worse in cities, where people are poorer and more stressed, the whole country seems more frazzled . . . The surge in inflation likely to result from war-related impairment of oil supplies may drive many more people over the edge." (Chris Powell, "Greens would cripple democracy in guise of making state cleaner," op. cit., p. A6)

(3) Uncertainty affects Connecticut homeschoolers: "Committee hearings" at the capitol "on . . . contentious bills before the state legislature drew one of the largest crowds seen yet in the 2026 General Assembly session (March 11). The legislation up for hearings concerned increasing oversight of homeschooling, setting state immunization standards and carving out an exception to the state religious freedom law for school immunizations, and placing more restrictions on firearms and gun owners. . . . The stakes for supporters and opponents of those bills were high and the passions . . . of opposing camps were equally so . . ." (Paul Hughes, "Crowd of 2,000 gathers at state capitol," op. cit., March 13, 2026, p. A1)

(4) Uncertainty affects us in religious realms: (a) "(T)he phrase, 'Christ is king' sums up a core tenet of the Christian faith . . . But" it "can morph into something political, controversial or even sinister . . . Brian Kaylor, president . . . of Word&Way . . . said the phrase is often used as 'a declaration . . . that 'the nation should be brought under the dictates of Christ' . . . (and) Carrie Prejean Boiler" of "the Religious Liberty Commission . . . has reposted announcements," one being "a Spanish-language statement that translates to 'We will not rest until we convert the USA into a Catholic nation.' The post concluded in English with 'Christ is King!'" (Peter Smith, "'Christ Is King': Why this phrase is becoming a political rant," op. cit., March 6, 2026, p. B8) (b) Another concern is . . . AI-generated videos, called deepfakes" that are "imitating pastors to spread false messages and scam congregants out of their money." (Lauren Constantino, "Pastors warn congregations about AI deepfakes," op. cit., p. B9)

Need: *So we ask, "How are we to handle the uncertainty we face in today's world?"*

- I. Since Proverbs 1:8-9:18 provides motivational commands to get readers to align with God's "wisdom," His *hokmah*, or fixed eternal moral order for success and blessing, Proverbs 3:1-12 reveals that pursuing a relationship with God aligns with His *hokmah* and results in six comprehensive, stabilizing blessings.
- II. Those six comprehensive, stabilizing blessings and just how they are obtained are described as follows:
 - A. We gain a relatively long life and prosperity by heeding our parents (and/or the Lord), Proverbs 3:1-2 et al.:
 1. Solomon told his son to heed his instruction for a long life and *shalom*, what in Hebrew means "welfare, health, prosperity." (Kittel, Bib. Heb., p. 1157; B. D. B., A Heb. and Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 1022-1023)
 2. We Christians in the dispensation of the Church are not promised automatic wealth and health like Israel was promised under the Law (cf. Deuteronomy 28:1-68 versus 1 Corinthians 4:9-13), and we might have been raised by ungodly parents. However, if we obey God's Word, we enjoy the longest and most prosperous kind of life God intends for us to have, for the Proverbs are general principles for us Christians.
 - B. We gain a good reputation with God and man by exhibiting loyal love and faithfulness, Proverbs 3:3-4: If a believer exhibits "loyal love" (*hesed* in the Hebrew text, Kittel, loc. cit.; H. A. W., Theol. Wrdbk. of the O. T., vol. I, p. 305-307) and faithfulness in relating to God and man, he will gain favor both with God and man and gain a positive reputation of being prudent. (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, fn. to Proverbs 3:4)
 - C. We gain success in life's endeavors by relying fully on the Lord and not ourselves, Proverbs 3:5-6:

1. If we fully trust (*batah*, B. D. B., op. cit., p. 105) in the Lord with our whole inner man and not “lean upon” (*sha’an*, op. cit., p. 1043) our own understanding in our endeavors in life, thus acknowledging the Lord’s will, He will “smooth” (*yashar*, op. cit., p. 448) our paths from obstacles to success.
 2. For success and blessing in any endeavor we undertake in life, we must thus not trust ultimately in our own understanding, but completely rely on the Lord, letting Him take the lead in every realm of life.
- D. We gain relatively good health by humbly respecting the Lord as a way of life, Proverbs 3:7-8:
1. The Hebrew text emphasizes the need to avoid viewing ourselves as wise as a way of life if we would enjoy a way of life that enjoys relative good health: It states that we should not “exist” (*hayah*, Kittel, loc. cit.) as being wise in our own eyes, but to revere the Lord and depart from evil, what in turn will “exist” (*hayah* again, Ibid.) as health to our body and nourishment to our bones.
 2. Thus, God directs us **constantly** to stay humble in revering Him so as to depart from evil to enjoy **ongoing** relative good health, another directive that provides relative positive blessings for today’s Christians.
- E. We gain livelihood provisions by giving to the Lord out of our income, Proverbs 3:9-10:
1. Solomon directed his son to obey God’s Word in giving the firstfruits of his agricultural income to the Lord, and God would then provide what the son needed for his own material needs, Proverbs 4:9-10.
 2. This promise is reflected in 2 Corinthians 9:6-10 for Christians, so a believer today should realize that any income he receives comes from God’s hand that he might donate some of that income to the Lord with the assurance that God will amply compensate for the donation so that the believer might meet his own needs.
- F. We gain God’s blessings in life by accepting and heeding His discipline, Proverbs 3:11-12:
1. Solomon taught his son not to despise God’s discipline nor to “dread, loath, abhor” (*qus*, B. D. B., op. cit., p. 880-881) His rebuke, for God corrects whom He loves, and as an earthly father He disciplines the son in whom He delights, Proverbs 3:11-12.
 2. The Lord knows what we need to clear up in terms of unrighteousness in thought and deed to obtain His blessing, so God faithfully corrects us believers to lead us to repent so that He can bless us!

Lesson: *By pursuing righteousness and obedience to the Lord, a believer gains comprehensive blessings that result in greater longevity, prosperity, reputation, success in life’s endeavors, health, income and personal godliness.*

Application: *(1) May we trust in Christ Who died as our Atoning Sacrifice for sin that we might receive God’s gift of eternal life, John 3:16; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11. (2) May we pursue righteousness and obedience to the Lord to gain the comprehensive blessings in life that God desires for us.*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message and/or provide additional guidance . . .)

Proverbs 3:1-12 provides edifying answers to the issues of concern raised in our introduction (as follows):

(1) On the uncertainty over the rising cost of living and its ensuing escalating mental health problems, obeying godly parents, or heeding God’s Word if we did not have godly parents (Proverbs 3:1-2), relying fully on the Lord and not our own understanding (Proverbs 3:5-6) and giving of our income to the Lord to where He compensates by providing all we need (Proverbs 3:9-10) will set a believer up for his livelihood concerns to be met!

(2) On the uncertainty over homeschooling in Connecticut, heeding the training of our parents or God’s Word if there is a difference between them (Proverbs 3:1-2), exhibiting loyal love and faithfulness to God and man to preserve a good rapport with all people, including those who try to put homeschooling under unedifying government control (Proverbs 3:3-4) and relying fully on God versus our own understanding for success (Proverbs 3:5-6) will set concerned parents up for God’s guidance and blessing in handling whatever homeschooling challenges they face.

(3) On the uncertainty over the use of the “Christ is king” phrase in religious circles to unbiblical ends, exhibiting loyal love and faithfulness to God and man to keep a good rapport with even errant religious folk (Proverbs 3:3-4), relying fully on the Lord instead of our own understanding for success in navigating the religious scene (Proverbs 3:5-6), what will include resting in Christ’s promise to build His true Church so that the gates of Hades will not prevail against it (cf. Matthew 16:18), will make our pathway cleared of problem obstacles in handling this issue.

(4) On the uncertainty over AI-generated deepfakes that misrepresent pastors, heeding our parents or God’s His Word if there is a difference between them (Proverbs 3:1-2) will supply the discernment to identify deepfakes. Specifically, godly pastors will not scam their congregants out of money since doing so violates 2 Corinthians 9:7, and 2 Timothy 3:13-17 promises that Scripture gives all the discernment we need to identify deceptions in our era.

May we trust in Christ Who died as our Atoning Sacrifice for sin that we might receive God’s gift of eternal life. May we pursue righteousness and obedience to God to gain His comprehensive blessings for us.