

FAMILY LESSONS ON
THE PATH OF FREEDOM

Based on Proverbs 3:5-6

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LESSON #1
THE SHORTCUT

**“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding;
in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.”**

Proverbs 3:5-6 (NIV84)

Many years ago, I visited Rocky Mountain National Park with my high school youth group. During one of our activities, we hiked to Emerald Lake, a beautiful, glacier-fed body of water surrounded by snow-capped peaks. It was late in the afternoon when we started our two mile hike back to the bus. Our group had been given clear instructions to stay together and stay on the trail. But two boys decided to take a shortcut. Unfortunately, their path began to twist and turn, and before long they were completely lost. We had already experienced an amazing display of weather that day, including rain, sleet and hail. Soon it began to get dark and the temperature grew colder by the hour. When our group got to the bus, the two boys were not there and our leaders were very worried. Park rangers were contacted and went out to search. Getting lost in the wilderness is serious enough, but at night in the cold, it can quickly turn to disaster. After several hours in the dark, the park rangers finally returned with the two boys looking very cold and scared.

Why do people take shortcuts? Isn't it because they think it will get them to their destination faster? Or maybe they think it will be less work. But God's Word and experience teach us that shortcuts are not always faster or easier; and sometimes actually lead us away from our destination. When Solomon wrote about the "straight" path, he used a word that means "level, smooth, or even." In other words, he was speaking of a path with fewer obstacles to make us stumble or get lost. We live in a world that bombards us with shortcuts; shortcuts to wealth, happiness and success. But those are paths that promise what they can never deliver. They take us on paths that wind and wander away from our goal, which is peace and fellowship with God. The Bible says that trusting God is the only way to find the right path and the only way to stay on that path. It may not be the shortest path, but it is the one that will get us to our destination without getting lost along the way.

See how Solomon contrasts the straight path and the crooked path (Proverbs 2:12-15 and 4:11&26).

For additional study materials on the Bonus Verse and a copy of the "Ten Step Bible Memory Method for Life," go to www.csv.org/student-life/bonus-verse on the Immanuel Christian School website.