

Parent Study Guide – Bonus Verse 2011-12

THE PATH OF FREEDOM – Proverbs 3:5-6

Passage: *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)

Theme: THE PATH OF FREEDOM – True and lasting freedom only comes by trusting God.
Metaphor: LIFE IS LIKE A PATH -- It can be straight, direct and even; or crooked, wandering and hard.
Message: GOD WILL DIRECT OUR PATHS -- if we trust and acknowledge Him completely.
Action: TRUST GOD IN EVERYTHING – with all of your year and all of your ways.

Discussion Questions: Answers are Underlined

1. Why is trust so important? Is it possible to live without trust? – We were designed to be dependent upon others and ultimately upon God. We cannot live without trust (Ps. 22:9-10 and Ps. 71:5-6).
2. How do we trust in the Lord? Should we always trust Him? – We trust God by obeying Him (Deut.7:9 ; Ps. 78:7).
3. Do we have to trust people? Should we always trust them? – Life constantly forces us to evaluate the trustworthiness of others. But sometimes people let us down and betray our trust. (Ps. 41:9 and Ps. 118:8-9).
4. How is trusting people different from trusting in the Lord? – God clearly warns us that trusting in man will lead to disaster, but blessing will come to us by trusting in Him. God alone is completely trustworthy (Jer. 17:5-8).
5. What does it mean to trust God with *all* your heart? – To obey and follow Him “wholeheartedly” (Josh. 14:7-9).
6. Why does God tell us not to *lean* on our own understanding? – Our own understanding at first seems right but soon will mislead us and deceive us (Prov. 12:15 & 21:2).
7. Is our understanding important when we exercise trust? – We are always to seek wise counsel and advice (Prov. 1:5 and 19:20), and God will make us know wisdom in our own heart (Ps. 51:6).
8. What does it mean to *acknowledge* something or someone? – The Old Testament view of knowledge is both relational and experiential. To acknowledge God meant to know Him personally and to obey Him (Hos. 6:6)

9. How do we acknowledge God in *all* our ways? – By studying & meditating on His Word & obeying Him (Ps.1:1-3).
10. What is the difference between a straight path and a crooked path (Prov. 11:5 and Isaiah 59:8)? – The way of the righteous is ultimately smoother and easier, but the way of the wicked is crooked, devious and hard.
11. Who has a tendency to wander off the path (Isaiah 53:6)? – All of us, like sheep, go astray. It's in our nature.
12. What is the relationship between following God's path and a heart that is free (Psalm 119:32 & 45)? God sets us free from the bondage of sin, the hard road of rebellion, and the delusion of self-reliance.
13. What did John, Paul and Peter say about freedom (John 8:32; Rom. 8:2; 1Pet. 2:16)? – The truth will set us free; Christ sets us free from the law of sin and death; and we are to live as "free men" rather than as prisoners.
14. What did James say about God's law, freedom and blessing (James 1:25)? – God's Word is the perfect law that gives freedom, "the law of liberty."

Biblical & Theological Background:

1. We are designed by God to trust and depend on Him (Psalm 22:9-10 and 71:5-6).
2. We are commanded to walk by faith rather than by sight (2 Cor. 5:7).
3. God is the only completely trustworthy being in the universe because of His unchanging character (James 1:17), eternal power and divine nature (Rom. 1:20).
4. Freedom from sin comes by renewing the mind & transforming the heart (Rom. 12:1-2; Eph. 4:23-24).