BIBLE CONNECTIONS WITH JOSEPH

Proverbs 3:5–6 (read in 3:1–12)

A companion study from the set Bible Verses for Anxiety, Through the Six Steps · Bible Connections with Joseph

> This study walks Proverbs 3:5–6 (read in 3:1–12) through the six steps: 1 Read It — the passage and what's around it · 2 Cross Over — who wrote it, to whom, and what was happening · 3 Stand in Their World — hear it the way they heard it · 4 Verify It — hold it up against the fullness of Scripture · 5 Come Back — put what you found into today's language · 6 Carry It Home — what it asks of you, and how it points to Jesus.
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> If it's heavy, pray about it and talk to someone you trust (or the friend who gave you this sheet). If you don't have anyone yet, a local church is a good place to ask.
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> Keep your own Bible open; this page sends you into the passage rather than printing it. It quotes the Christian Standard Bible (CSB); where you see LORD in capital letters, that is how the CSB prints God's personal name. A reference like 4:6 means chapter 4, verse 6; 'v.' means verse.

1 · Read It — the passage and what's around it

Verse 6 is the line people reach for: "he will make your paths straight." Open your Bible to Proverbs 3 and read verses 5 and 6 together. In the CSB they are one sentence, and verse 6 finishes what verse 5 starts. Verse 6 ends with what God does; verse 5 says how you walk the path He makes straight: "Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding." That sentence is the line this whole page follows: trust the Lord with all your heart rather than your own understanding, and He makes your paths straight.

Now read the paragraph it sits in, verses 1 through 12. A father is talking to his son, and he teaches in pairs, two verses each: an instruction, then what comes of it or why. Read it as six pairs, and watch for that shape as you go. Here they are in plain words:

Verses 1–2: don't forget my teaching; keep my commands in your heart. What comes of it: a long, full life and well-being.

Verses 3–4: keep loyalty and faithfulness close; tie them around your neck and write them on your heart. What comes of it: favor and a good name with God and with people.

Verses 5–6: trust the Lord with all your heart, don't rely on your own understanding, and know Him in all your ways. What comes of it: He makes your paths straight.

Verses 7–8: don't be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and turn away from evil. What comes of it: healing for your body and strength for your bones.

Verses 9–10: honor the Lord with what you own and with the first of your harvest. What comes of it: barns and wine vats filled to overflowing.

Verses 11–12: don't despise the Lord's discipline or resent His correction. Why: in the CSB, "the LORD disciplines the one he loves," the way a father disciplines the son he delights in.

Look at where the center line sits among the pairs. Verses 5 and 6 are the third of the six, and the pairs before and after it are trust in another form: holding on to His teaching, refusing to be wise in your own eyes, giving Him the first of what you have, and taking His correction from His hand. Notice too that the last

pair is the only one that gives a reason instead of a result. The father ends this run of teaching by telling his son what kind of father the Lord is.

◆ **Write down what verse 5 asks of you before verse 6 promises anything. Then read verses 7 and 8: what does "This" at the start of verse 8 point back to?**

2 · Cross Over — who wrote it, to whom, and what was happening

The book opens under Solomon's name (Proverbs 1:1), the king of Israel remembered for the wisdom God gave him (1 Kings 3). This chapter opens with a father speaking to his son, and in verse 11 he calls him his son again: a father teaching his son how to live wisely. Proverbs is wisdom literature: short, memorable sayings, shaped to be learned by heart, about how life under God generally goes. A proverb tells you the way things usually run in God's world; it is a saying to live by, not a contract that covers every case. That matters for every "what comes of it" in verses 1 through 10, and the father makes the point himself: in verses 11 and 12 he tells the same son, in the same paragraph, that hard correction is coming too.

Read that way, the pairs paint a picture of a life lived with God over many years: a long life, a good name, a straight road, a whole person, full barns. Faithful people have always known seasons that don't look like that picture, and the father knows it too, which is why he finishes with verses 11 and 12. The picture and the hard seasons belong to the same life, under the same Father.

In Proverbs a straight path is a right path: the righteous path, and we walk it with God. That is why verse 5 comes first. When verse 6 is handed to you on its own, it tells you what God does and leaves out how you walk with Him. And the pairs around verse 5 show what walking with Him looks like in a real household: what the son remembers (verses 1–4), what he refuses to lean on (verses 5–8), what he does with his money and his harvest (verses 9–10), and how he takes it when God corrects him (verses 11–12).

◆ **Read Proverbs 3:1–4. Who is speaking, and to whom? What has the father already asked his son to keep before he ever gets to verse 5? How does that change what "he will make your paths straight" is offering?**

3 · Stand in Their World — hear it the way they heard it

Most of the verses people reach for on anxiety were written to people under real pressure: Philippians 4:6–7 and 2 Timothy 1:7–8 from a prison; 1 Peter 5:7 to believers scattered and suffering; Joshua 1:9 to a nation on the edge of war; Psalm 94:19 under oppression by the wicked; Hebrews 13:5–6 to believers who had faced mockery and seized property. Proverbs is different. This one is a father's calm teaching to a son, handed over before the pressure comes, so the son carries it into whatever comes next. A son raised on

this book also heard verse 7's "fear the LORD" as the place wisdom starts (Proverbs 1:7; 9:10). It's reverent trust in God, and it's the one fear in this passage that he is told to have.

Now hear the pairs the way that son heard them. When the father said to know Him "in all your ways," he meant more than knowing about God. It meant bringing God into every part of his life and asking for His direction, in the plain decisions as well as the hard ones. Philippians 4:6 tells us to do the same thing in prayer. When the father said to give the Lord the first of the harvest, the son lived in a household that ate from one year's crop to the next and knew it depended on God for the next one; the first of it went to God because God comes first. And when the father spoke of discipline, he used a word that covers teaching and correction together, the kind a son gets from a father who cares what becomes of him. Every one of those is trust, said in the language of a home.

Think about what discipline meant in that home. A son who was taught, corrected and trained by his father was a son his father had not given up on. The teaching showed him the road, and the correction kept him on it. That is how verse 12 puts it: the Lord disciplines the one He loves, the way a father does with the son he delights in. The son heard discipline as part of being raised, and he heard it from someone on his side.

◆ **Read verses 5 through 12 as the son. What is he told to do, what is he told to stop leaning on, and what is he told to expect, including the hard part in verses 11 and 12?**

4 · Verify It — hold it up against the fullness of Scripture

So far the reading is this: verse 6 promises the righteous path, verse 5 is how you walk it, by trusting the Lord rather than your own understanding, and the pairs around it show what that trust looks like: keeping His teaching, refusing to be wise in your own eyes, honoring Him with what you have, and taking His correction. Verse 8 gives the proverb's picture of where a life lived in the fear of the Lord tends: it reaches the whole person, body included.

Now hold that reading up against the fullness of Scripture, and be ready to adjust it. If you get stuck, ask a pastor, or open a commentary, a book that explains Proverbs verse by verse.

Start inside the passage. Proverbs 3:11–12 tells the same son to expect the Lord's discipline, and Hebrews 12:5–6 quotes those verses to Christians, speaking to them as God's children. Read Hebrews 12:5–11 and write what it says discipline is for and what it produces. Jeremiah 17:5–8 sets the person who trusts in the Lord beside the person who trusts in people; read what the trusting one's tree still goes through. 2 Corinthians 4:16–18 comes from a man whose outer person was wasting away while his inner person was being renewed day by day.

Then take one check from the Westminster Confession of Faith (a 1640s summary of Bible teaching used by Reformed churches; a tool, not an authority over the Bible). It says God is to be "feared, loved, praised, called upon, trusted in, and served, with all the heart" (chapter 21, section 1): trust and fear held together, with all the heart, the way verses 5 and 7 hold them. Keep in mind what kind of book Proverbs is: sayings about how life under God generally goes.

Now let Hebrews 12 settle what verses 11 and 12 mean, since it quotes them and explains them. Hebrews calls this discipline training, the way a good father raises his children. It says God does it because they are His children, that He does it for their good, so they can share His holiness, and that afterward it produces righteousness and peace in the people it trains (Hebrews 12:7–11). A few verses later it takes up the picture of verse 6 and tells tired believers to make straight paths for their feet (Hebrews 12:12–13). So the discipline of verses 11 and 12 belongs to the straight path. This correction comes from a Father's wise love, not from a judge handing down a sentence. For anyone who belongs to Christ, the penalty for sin has been dealt with: Romans 8:1 says that for those in Christ Jesus there is no condemnation. When the Father trains His children, He is raising sons and daughters He has already welcomed.

Scripture also shows you that not every hardship is correction for something you did. In John 9:1–3 the disciples see a man born blind and ask whose sin caused it, his or his parents'. Jesus answers that it was neither, and that God's works would be shown in him. In the book of Job, Job's friends spend chapter after chapter insisting that his suffering must be punishment, and at the end God says they did not speak rightly about Him (Job 42:7). Some hard seasons are a Father's correction, and many are simply hard, part of life in a world that is not yet made new. Scripture doesn't ask you to work out which one yours is before you bring it to Him. Proverbs 3:11, as Hebrews 12:5 gives it, says the same for either: don't make light of it, and don't lose heart.

◆ **Does the reading square with all of Scripture? Write what holds. Then write what these passages make you rework about verses 8 and 10: is each a guarantee for every case, or a picture of what trust does in a person over a lifetime?**

5 · Come Back — put what you found into today's language

Verse 8: "This will be healing for your body and strengthening for your bones." It lands on you, not on your circumstances working out. "This" points back to verse 7, fearing the Lord and turning away from evil. Verse 5 says don't rely on your own understanding, and verse 7 says don't be wise in your own eyes: the same life with God, said twice. Verse 8 then gives the proverb's picture of where that life tends over the years: it reaches the whole person, body and bones, the whole frame of you. A life that has stopped propping itself up on its own understanding, that fears the Lord and turns from evil, tends to grow steadier, inside and out.

Hold that picture the way step 2 taught you to hold every proverb: as a description of how life under God generally goes, not a promise about any one body. Faithful people in Scripture grew weary and worn; Paul wrote that his outer person was wasting away (2 Corinthians 4:16). So read verse 8 as a picture of what God is growing in His people across a lifetime, and keep verses 11 and 12 right beside it, the way the father did, so you never mistake it for a promise that nothing will hurt.

Behind "make straight," the Hebrew suggests a road made plain and level: a right road to walk, not always a short or easy one. A road kept true can still wind, and it still arrives. As the video this study goes with ("7 Bible Verses for Anxiety (What They Really Say)" on the Bible Connections with Joseph YouTube channel)

puts it: “Trusting in the Lord is where we let go of what we think should be and allow Him to take us on a righteous path.” And when that path doesn’t match what you thought you needed, the video answers from verse 5: “We have to let go of our understanding and learn to rely on our trust in God.”

If you have come through a hard year, verses 11 and 12 may raise a question: is God punishing me? Here is what the passage and Hebrews 12 give you. The discipline in these verses comes from a Father to a child He loves and delights in. It is training, given for your good, and it keeps you on the road. If you belong to Christ, God is not paying you back. And not every hard season is correction at all. You don’t have to sort out which kind of season you are in before you pray. Bring it to Him as it is, and trust Him with it, the way verse 5 says.

What does knowing Him in all your ways look like on an ordinary day? Put simply: begin, carry on and finish your work with God, and ask His direction in every case, however plain. Take what follows as an invitation rather than a checklist, and start with one piece of it. In the morning, before the day’s list starts, ask Him to lead you through it. When a plain choice comes up, a message to answer, a conversation to have, where your evening goes, bring it to Him in a sentence of prayer; you don’t have to wait until a decision is hard. When something goes well, thank Him for it. When something goes against you, tell Him that too, and tell Him you are trusting Him with it. At night, hand Him what is still undone. That is Philippians 4:6 across a whole day, and it is verse 5 in practice: leaning on Him rather than on your own understanding, one decision at a time.

As step 1 showed, it’s the same shape six times: an instruction, then what comes of it or why. Trust Him and know Him, then straight paths. Don’t be wise in your own eyes, then a whole person made well. Give Him the first, then His provision. Take His correction, because He loves you.

◆ **Has anyone ever handed you one of these verses on its own? Which one? Now write the six pairs in your own words, the way you’d say them to a friend.**

6 · Carry It Home — what it asks of you, and how it points to Jesus

Verse 5 asks for all your heart, and verse 7 asks you to stop being wise in your own eyes. Where is your trust resting this week: on the Lord, or on your own understanding? If your trust feels small right now, verse 5 is where it grows. Pick one ordinary part of tomorrow and bring it to Him before you start it. Then look at verses 9 and 10 the same way: what is one thing you could give Him first this week? This passage hands you a reason to trust God more deeply, one step on the path at a time. And if the path He’s leading you on doesn’t match what you thought you needed, read verse 5 again, then verses 11 and 12, and write down what verse 12 tells you about the Father’s heart toward His child. If what you’re carrying is heavy, talk to someone you trust: a pastor, a teacher, a mentor.

For the second question below, here are some connections to weigh, not something these verses say by themselves.

Later in this chapter the father praises wisdom (verses 13–20); read 1 Corinthians 1:30 and see what Paul says Christ Jesus became for us. Then read verse 4 beside Luke 2:52: verse 4 promises favor with God and

with people, and Luke says the young Jesus grew in favor with God and with people. And read Hebrews 12:2–3, the verses just before Hebrews quotes verses 11 and 12: notice where it tells you to look while you run.

◆ **What does this passage ask of you this week? And how does it point you to Jesus?**

> This study is one of eight in Bible Verses for Anxiety, Through the Six Steps. The full set: bibleconnectionswithjoseph.com/companions/anxiety-verses/

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