

## 10 Spiritual Not's of Proverbs 3

*by John Isaac Edwards*

A number of times in Proverbs 3 Solomon uses the spiritual word “not” to teach us wisdom. Let’s take a look.

1) **Forget Not.** The chapter begins with these words: “My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments” (Prov. 3:1). God’s law must be kept in constant remembrance. To not forget God’s law is to keep His commandments. Interested in adding years to your life? Proverbs 3:2 says, “For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee.”

2) **Let Not.** Proverbs 3:3 teaches, “Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart.” “Mercy and truth are met together...” (Ps. 85:10). The wisdom book often speaks of mercy and truth. “... mercy and truth shall be to them that devise good” (Prov. 14:22). “By mercy and truth iniquity is purged...” (Prov. 16:6). “Mercy and truth preserve the king...” (Prov. 20:28). So, bind ‘em and write

‘em! Another “let not” is when Solomon says of knowledge, understanding and wisdom, “...let not them depart from thine eyes...” (Prov. 3:21).

3) **Lean Not.** Where have you been leaning? Proverbs 3:5 counsels, “Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.” We need to learn to lean on the everlasting arms! “That thy trust may be in the Lord...” (Prov. 22:19). Would you like to be safe? “...whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe” (Prov. 29:25). Again it is written, “...he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him” (Prov. 30:5).

4) **Be Not.** Many are wise in their own eyes. Proverbs 3:7 advises, “Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the Lord, and depart from evil.” Remember the Period of the Judges? “...every man did that which was right in his own eyes” (Judg. 21:25). “The way of a fool is right in his own eyes...” (Prov. 12:15). Isaiah 5:21 issues this woe: “Woe unto them that are wise in

their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!” Paul penned, “...Be not wise in your own conceits” (Rom. 12:17). Proverbs 3:25 adds this “be not”: “Be not afraid of sudden fear, neither of the desolation of the wicked, when it cometh.” Is the Lord your confidence? He will keep your foot from being taken! (Prov. 3:26).

5) **Despise Not.** “My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord; neither be weary of his correction: For whom the Lord loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth” (Prov. 3:11-12). To despise is to look down upon. The Hebrew writer quoted this in exhorting New Testament Christians to steadfastness (Heb. 12:5-6).

6) **Withhold Not.** Do you have any withholdings? Here’s something not to withhold: “Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it” (Prov. 3:27). Galatians 6:10 teaches, “As we have therefore

opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Gal. 6:10).

7) **Say Not.** Did you know there are some things not to be said? "Say not unto thy neighbour, Go, and come again, and to morrow I will give; when thou hast it be thee" (Prov. 3:28). It's important to have the proper relationship with one's neighbour. The law taught, "Thou shalt not defraud thy neighbour, neither rob him: the wages of him that is hired shall not abide with thee all night until the morning" (Lev. 19:13). Remember the second commandment? "...Thou shalt love thy neighbour as

thyself" (Mt. 22:39).

8) **Devise Not.** Proverbs 3:29 states, "Devise not evil against thy neighbour, seeing he dwelleth securely by thee." Micah 2:1 says, "Woe to them that devise iniquity, and work evil upon their beds! when the morning is light, they practise it, because it is in the power of their hand" (Micah 2:1). Remember ole wicked Ahab and Jezebel, who devised evil against their neighbor, Naboth, to take possession of his vineyard? (1 Ki. 21).

9) **Strive Not.** Another "not" is when Solomon taught, "Strive not with a man without cause, if he have done thee

no harm" (Prov. 3:30). Some are always wanting to strive with somebody over nothing! Matthew 5:22 warns, "...That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment..."

10) **Envy Not.** Finally, Proverbs 3:31 counsels, "Envy thou not the oppressor, and choose none of his ways." This reminds me of Psalm 37:1, "Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity."

These are some "nots" we must not untie!

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