

## Proverbs Week #21 (3:3)

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*Proverbs 3:3 "Do not let kindness and truth leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart."*

These two things (kindness and truth) are to be written on our hearts and bound around our necks. They are to be with us always and to be inside us. Have you ever heard the phrase "take these things to heart?" What does that mean? I do not know exactly how to put this idea into words. You might say this when you feel something very deeply -- when you become very stubborn about something and you will not let go of it. In this case the things you are supposed to hold onto very strongly are kindness and truth. How exactly do we do this? See if you can hear these ideas as you listen to the apostle Paul's direction he gave to Timothy about love and holding onto the truth.

*"As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain men not to teach false doctrines any longer nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies. These promote controversies rather than God's work—which is by faith. The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. Some have wandered away from these and turned to meaningless talk. They want to be teachers of the law, but they do not know what they are talking about or what they so confidently affirm." 1 Timothy 1:5-11*

Paul was directing Timothy to stay in Ephesus and he was giving him the hard task of setting men straight who were teaching false doctrines. These men were placing too high a priority on searching out genealogies and were teaching things that were false. They were making confident affirmations. Paul reminds Timothy of the importance of remembering the goal of God's work. The true message of the Torah will bring about God's desired results. The fruit of God's commandments being received correctly is evidenced by devotion to God and to one another expressed as genuine love.

Paul ends his first letter to Timothy saying, "Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to your care. Turn away from godless chatter and the opposing ideas of what is falsely called knowledge, which some have professed and in so doing have wandered from the faith." (1 Tim 6:20,21)

Teaching can be on target or off target. Instruction can be aimed at a worthy goal or can be aimed at godless, false, and unfaithful ends. If we hope to teach the Bible to our children and each other we need to learn the difference! The writer of the book of Hebrews speaks this way "...the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil." (Heb 5:14) By our practice (the very ways we choose to live our lives) we should learn to discern good from evil. At all times we must act maturely as we model to our children what it means to be wise and godly.

Today's lesson from Proverbs is an introduction to these two themes (love and truth). I hope to expand on them over the next few weeks. Yeshua teaches us about what it means to be a true disciple and He teaches that if we know the truth it will set us free (John 8:32). Each of us will either be a slave to sin or set free by God. The freedom that God gives is something worth understanding and valuing. He treats us as His children and desires that we know Him and His ways.

Lord willing, next week we will study in more depth the Hebrew word *chesed* (love or lovingkindness) and try to understand more of what it is we need to tie around our necks and write on our hearts. Parents I encourage you to talk to your children this week about this theme. It is my hope that our study together will help you in instructing your children in God's wisdom.