

## How To Avoid Sinning – Proverbs 3:5-12

In this passage of Proverbs, God is telling Solomon how to tell his son to avoid the pitfalls of life, specifically sin and the continual draw of sin. Verses 3 – 4 tell us that God will show favor on us if we obey the verses that follow. Those are the verses that we will focus on today. Now while Solomon is mainly speaking to his son here, this is really an application for anyone who is interested in making sure that they do not fall into the traps the devil has set for them to sin. In these verses there are 7 things we need to learn and then do.

1. **Trust in the Lord – vs. 5a** – Nothing happens until we make Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior through salvation. Putting your trust in God is not just the onetime event that we go through at the time of our conversion; it is the day to day process of constantly committing ourselves to Him and being always aware of our need for Him. Without this trust in the Lord He has no requirement to help us at all. God says that “He will never leave us or forsake us”. But the “US” there are only his children. Don’t forget that everyone on this earth can claim to be one of God’s creations, but only those who have accepted God’s invitation of salvation can be called His Children.
2. **Do not lean on your own understanding – vs. 5b** – (Prov 15:15; 11:14; 14:12; 16:25)  
You know how often you do the things that you know you really should not do. We do those things because we don’t always ask for advice or help for several reasons.
  - a. **Stubbornness** – We know it all. We think that we have had to make our own way for a long time that we have arrived and we can do it without anyone’s help. We just don’t need others. We are as good as they are, so why ask.
  - b. **Pride** – I’ve done it before and it turned out fine. I don’t need anyone else; after all, I am my own person. No one knows me better than me.
  - c. **Laziness** – Why should I waste the time? It is too much trouble to go through the process and after all I believe that we just “live and let live”. I don’t bother anyone and no one should bother me. Just leave me alone!
  - d. **Uninformed** – Sometimes, and often, it is just that we do not know better. We may not have had an opportunity in the past or growing up to seek wise counsel from someone. Maybe it is just that we have not read the Bible as we should so we do not understand the danger of certain behavior. Maybe it is just that we like the idea that, “if I don’t know, I can’t be held accountable”. That is false. You are accountable regardless if you know or not. More on that later.
  - e. **Disappointed or hurt by others** – This is so often the excuse I get on this. In the past you may have had someone you know or trusted give you advice and it

backfired on you. Maybe they were the one you trust with your closest secret and they told someone else. Or maybe they talked you into something you really did not want to do. Whatever the case, while the Bible says that there is “wisdom in many counselors”, it also cautions us about being foolish and believing others unless they have proved themselves faithful. James 1:5 says, “If we lack wisdom, we just need to ask God for it”.

3. **In all your ways acknowledge Him – vs. 6** I will tell you the truth. If you are constantly thinking about your relationship with Jesus and constantly in prayer as Paul says we should, you will find it hard to sin. The trouble is, we do not try to always think about Jesus. We deliberately do things, think things, go places, say things, and get others to do things that Jesus doesn't want any part of. We exclude Him so we feel better about what we are doing. Paul said, “Pray without ceasing”. ! Thes 5:17
4. **Do not be wise in your own eyes – vs. 7a** Now this may sound like poor advice, but let's look at it from God's perspective. From the world point of view, we are good enough and our own person, so we are as smart and competent as anyone else so we don't need any advice from others. What God means here is that we are not to use our fallen human nature to be the judge of wisdom. If we did just what our human nature wanted, God says that is not wise. Prov. 12:15; 16:2; 21:2 We see that the fear of God and obedience is the beginning of wisdom and knowledge. How many times have we gotten into a situation and said, “I wish I had talked to someone first?”
5. **Turn away from evil – vs. 7b** This may seem like a no brainer, but it really does catch most of us off guard. When we want to stop sinning, most of us need to stop doing what it is that makes us sin. Like the drunk who wants to quit drinking needs to stay away from the bar and the friends who still drink. The same with drugs, sex, or anything else that pulls you that way. It may mean that you have to change friends or end relationships. I know that one is a hard one. But if you must interact with someone who you think may try to bring you down, don't go by yourself. Take someone with you. James the brother of Jesus says a very interesting statement in 4:7 “Resist (that means run from) the devil and he will flee from you.”
6. **Honor the Lord with your wealth – vs. 9-10** This is one of the great principles of faith that is often missed. We look at tithing as just something we do if we have more money than we need. God says to give to Him no matter how much or how little we have. So many times we do not have money for tithing because we spend it on things we should not. If you spend your money on drugs, alcohol, tobacco, and other things you shouldn't buy, you will always be short. When I was single, I had a lot of toys. I took trips to Europe, Bahamas, skiing; I went on white water trips, skydiving adventures and many other things. It was my “beer and cigarette money. What others spent on those things, I spent the same amount, but on my toys. Therefore, I had the greater fun. Especially after my fun, I didn't have a hangover. Also, this allowed me to take many of my friends to dinner or camping or something else and I paid for it. So be careful not to

ignore the tithe. No matter how big or small, the tithe is something you need to make a habit in your life. God will reward your faithfulness, I promise. Verse 10 promises that you will have enough if you do give back to God.

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7. **Do not reject God's discipline – vs. 11-12** this is the hardest for all of us. I hate this one. We do like punishment or negative consequences. In fact society as a whole today tells us that we should only emphasize the positive consequence to reinforce the positive behavior. It says that we should never tell someone they are wrong or they lost. I call it "Everyone gets a trophy" syndrome. They say it might damage the self-worth of the individual or harm the esteem and cause someone to become depressed or worse. Here is the truth; The Bible says, "If the Lord loves you, He will discipline you." Period. Heb 12:5-10 Psalms also says that, if we spare the rod we will spoil the child, and since we are God's children, we can expect God to discipline us. Now we must be wise in our discernment not to confuse God's discipline with Satan's attacks. Here is where it gets complicated and we can get into trouble. If we think we that we are under attack from Satan and it is really God's discipline, we complain about having to suffer we will tend to ignore it and suffer through it. Then we will never address the real problem and root cause. On the other hand, if we assume that all of our trials and troubles are from God, we can lose our peace and continually struggle to please God when it is not us but Satan trying to steal our faith in God.