

# What NOT to Do

## Proverbs 3:27-31

These verses give us several proverbs that can stand on their own if taken out of the context of the Book of Proverbs. They are similar to the section of this book that have one or two verse proverbs as a context. However, when kept in the context of this particular portion of the book we can see them as they relate to wisdom, and our demonstration of wisdom (especially, as "wisdom" is personified in Christ); as well as seeing that they relate to each other.

Our "wisdom," our "understanding," and our "knowledge" is displayed to those around us by our actions. As James put it, "faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone" (James 2:17). This is a Biblical principle found throughout Scripture. Our faith and trust in Christ are supposed to be displayed to the world – and it is displayed through how we react to them.

### I. "WITHHOLD NOT" – vs. 27

#### Speaks to application

**A. *This verse is simple – if we know there is a need then we need to apply action to our words – feet to our faith, so to speak.***

**B. *"Withhold not good" – the "good" can be defined as:***

1. Honor (to those in authority)

[Romans 13:1-7](#)

<sup>1</sup> Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the

powers that be are ordained of God.

<sup>2</sup> Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.

<sup>3</sup> For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same:

<sup>4</sup> For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.

<sup>5</sup> Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.

<sup>6</sup> For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing.

<sup>7</sup> Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.

## 2. Obedience (to those in authority over us)

### Ephesians 6:1

<sup>1</sup> Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.

### Ephesians 6:5

<sup>5</sup> Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ;

### Hebrews 13:7

<sup>7</sup> Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end

of their conversation.

Hebrews 13:17

<sup>17</sup> Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.

3. Money and/or goods to the needy

Galatians 6:10

<sup>10</sup> As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

James 2:15-16

<sup>15</sup> If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food,

<sup>16</sup> And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?

4. "Good works" to those without Christ

Titus 2:14

<sup>14</sup> Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

**C. "To whom it is due"**

1. Literally, to the owners of it
2. This principle is not to be taken as an "all-encompassing" principle – that is, we're not under obligation to give to everyone in the same amount, or with the same

material. All are not deserving of money or goods; all are not deserving of honor; all are not deserving of obedience; but ALL are deserving of our good works.

Matthew 7:6

<sup>6</sup> Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.

Acts 5:29

<sup>29</sup> Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.

***D. "When it is in the power of thine hand to do it"***

1. This is another condition to our "withholding not" principle.
2. We're not bound to giving if we don't have it to give.
3. This particular point shows that the principle taught in this verse has more to do with giving to the poor and needy than the other points referenced above, but it does not exclude the others.

**II. "SAY NOT" – VS. 28**

**Speaks to ability**

***A. The key here is at the end of the verse – "when thou hast it by thee" – if we have the ability to help and we don't then how is that demonstrating "wisdom" to the world – how is that showing them***

## **Christ!?**

**B. Our "neighbor" would appear to be anybody that is in need that comes to us and asks us to help, as well as those that we see that are in need whether they've asked us for help or not. Jesus answered the question as to who our neighbor is in Luke 10:29-37.**

Leviticus 19:18

<sup>18</sup> Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the LORD.

James 2:14-17

<sup>14</sup> What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?

<sup>15</sup> If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food,

<sup>16</sup> And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?

<sup>17</sup> Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.

**C. If we have the ability to help, then we are under Biblical mandate to help – simply put!! 1 John 3:11-24.**

1 John 3:16-17

<sup>16</sup> Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

<sup>17</sup> But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth

the love of God in him?

**D. This passage doesn't differentiate between the saved and lost – it doesn't say we are only to help those of our church, or that are Christians, although the New Testament does reference we are to be especially concerned for other believers and their needs.**

Galatians 6:9–10

<sup>9</sup> And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

<sup>10</sup> As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

**E. Remember, King Solomon was speaking to his son who would be king when Solomon was gone – he was telling him that, as a nation, they were to help those in need. And if as a nation, then we ought to as individuals as well.**

### III. "DEVISE NOT"- VS. 29

Speaks to attitude

**A. The word "devise" (תָּרַשׁ, תַּתְּרִישׁ) is an interesting one. It has two basic meanings – to plow with a team of animals, or to engrave.**

1. Considered with the idea of plowing, it goes to the state of mind of an individual, or to their attitude toward something where they have "plowed a furrow" in their mind towards something and nothing can change it.

2. Considered in the sense of engraving or cutting into something, once there it's very difficult to remove.
3. That's why it's so important that we make sure our minds stay fixed on Christ and the Bible and make sure we don't let the Devil and the world sway us from the right path.

Psalm 57:7

<sup>7</sup> My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed:  
I will sing and give praise.

***B. "Evil" – we are not to fabricate evil, especially in anger, towards others.***

***C. The reason for the first part of this proverb is found in the second half – our neighbor, those in need, are to see in us someone that they can trust, that they don't need to be afraid of, either physically, spiritually, mentally or otherwise.***

#### **IV. "STRIVE NOT" – VS. 30**

**Speaks to actions**

***A. The saying we learned as children – "actions speak louder than words" still applies today, and that is what this verse is dealing with.***

***B. "Without a cause" – there will be times when we will have to "strive" with people.***

1. "Strive" means to contend, to debate, to argue – sometimes it has to do with

physical actions, but most often it has to do with words.

#### Proverbs 17:14

**14** The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water: therefore leave off contention, before it be meddled with.

#### Proverbs 18:6

**6** A fool's lips enter into contention, and his mouth calleth for strokes.

#### Proverbs 25:8–9

**8** Go not forth hastily to strive, lest thou know not what to do in the end thereof, when thy neighbour hath put thee to shame.

**9** Debate thy cause with thy neighbour himself; and discover not a secret to another:

#### Matthew 5:39–41

**39** But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.

**40** And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also.

**41** And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.

#### Romans 12:18–21

**18** If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.

**19** Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.

**20** Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so

doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.

<sup>21</sup> Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

2. There will be times when we will need to defend ourselves against those that would silence us, or to stop us from serving Christ – this verse does not apply in those cases.

### **C. "If he have done thee no harm"**

1. Not dealing with revenge here but rather we're not to be quick to attack a person, whether verbally to his face or legally in a court of law, if he hasn't done us any physical harm.
2. Solomon was speaking to his son to make sure he understood that attacking people with the law and dragging them into court to get his way was not the right thing to do – but that's exactly what he did anyways .

## **V. "ENVY...NOT" – vs. 31**

### **Speaks to adjustments**

**A. *When faced with the challenges of living in a wicked world we are going to have to be able to make adjustments to our thoughts and actions in order to stay focused on following God and His word.***

**B. *The word for "envy" – נָאִיב – is one that means to be jealous ("from the redness with which the face is suffused" –***

***GHCLOT). Accompanied with the basic adverb of negation (לֹא), this is pretty clear – we are not to be so jealous as to change our behavior to be like other people, no matter who they are nor what they have.***

Psalm 37:1

<sup>1</sup> Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity.

Psalm 37:7

<sup>7</sup> Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass.

### ***C. "The oppressor"***

1. We will look at this particular "person" in the next four verses.
2. There are two words in the Hebrew that are translated by the word "oppressor" - **בְּאִישׁ הַמָּזֵם** – literally translated, "by a man, an oppressor." As literally translated into English as possible in order for it to make sense, it would be, "the man of violence."
3. There is a very interesting point to make on the word translated "oppressor." In the Hebrew, it would read in English, "hamas" (or "hemas"). That name will sound familiar because of the terrorist group in the Middle East by that name. The name for the group called "Hamas" is an acronym for an Arabic title, translated into English as "The Islamic Resistance Movement." The word in Arabic means

zeal or enthusiasm. Is it a coincidence that the name means “violence or oppression” in Hebrew?

***D. “And choose none of his ways” – part of the idea here in the word for “choose” (בָּחַר) is that of pleasure, and the choice made is one done simply for pleasure or reward. We are to make sure we stay focused on the Lord and the right and adjust our thinking and living accordingly.***

Conclusion: How do you apply the wisdom Christ brings to your life? How are we at using the ability that God has given us to accomplish His will in our lives? How is our attitude towards those that are in need? What are our actions towards others? How have we adjusted our thoughts and actions to deal with the evil around us?

When it's all said and done: **Does the world see Jesus in us?**