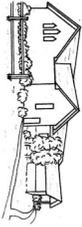


**NORTHWOODS
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH**



**4723 GRIFFITH AVENUE
CHEYENNE, WY 82009**

WORSHIP IN SPIRIT AND TRUTH. JOHN 4:24

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.
2 Cor 5:17

THE NORTHWOODS NEWS

Formula for the Christian life

By

Rich Cesal

As we begin a new year, it has become customary to take a refreshing look at our lives. Through the doldrums of daily living, we get complacent and set in our ways. Thus, we look to a new start. That which our culture calls New Year's Resolutions. I am not suggesting that we believers should fall into the pagan attitude and process that in the beginning of the new year we should make agreements with ourselves to do away with bad habits. But a battery recharge may be appropriate. Let's take an analytical look at Prov 3:1-12.

When we decided to change churches while we lived in Florida, we ended up at The First Presbyterian Church of North Pam Beach. The pastor was a very evangelical Christian and had a rule that no one could become a member without going through a new member class, no exceptions. I balked. I had been a member in Presbyterian churches for years, even a deacon, and had participated over the years in many new member classes which I found to be mostly useless. I had no desire to attend but somehow I ended up in the class with Charmayne and our two oldest daughters.

This class was to last several weeks meeting one night per week. In the beginning, the minister divided up the group of maybe 30 people into groups of six. He told us up front that we were expected to give a gift worth no more than 50 cents at the end of the series of meetings to each member of our group. I decided to give everyone in my group a leather bookmark burned with a wood burning tool with a Bible reference. I had a nurse in my group and so I searched a concordance for a verse having to do with nursing. I came upon Prov 3:8.

This led me to back up and read from verse one. I was very moved by verses 1-12. Here, I thought, was a complete set of instructions on how to live the Christian life (I was not a true believer at the time). This is the reference that I burned into the bookmarks for all my group members.

I was very grateful to have attended these classes because it was here that I became a new creation. During these classes, God changed my heart from a heart of stone to a heart of flesh and I became a Christian in the full sense of what that means.

It was shortly after this that I came to the conclusion that I wanted to do something on a full time basis to serve the Lord. Charmayne, who had become a Christian a year before me, and I decided to open a Christian Bookstore. After much searching for a location, we hit upon Laramie, Wyoming. These verses in Prov 3, especially 5 and 6, became the strength and guidance to quit my somewhat lucrative job and pack up all our belongings in a Ryder truck with our five kids and one cat and set out on our adventure to serve our Lord.

The only regret for this move was having to pull our kids out of King's Academy and put them into the public schools in Laramie. Even the children have voiced they were sorry for the change.

So let's examine Prov 3:1-12 and see if you might agree that this is a great formula for any Christian to dedicate their lives to following.

Prov 3:1—My son, do not forget my law, but let your heart keep my commands;

This is basic. The Ten Commandments are a blueprint to what God requires of us. If you do not obey the God that made you, there are many consequences. God gives example after example of what happens when people do not obey His commands. These are those pesky commands that the pagan organizations are so opposed to if they are displayed on public lands. I think the real reason for the opposition to the public display of The Ten Commandments is they are a stark reminder that God cares what those in His creation do and doesn't like it when they disobey Him. I think these organizations also are offended that people would actually live by the inspiration and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Prov 3:2—For length of days and long life and peace they will add to you.

A suggestion here that a reward of a long blessed life bringing the peace that surpasses all understanding (Phil 4:7) will come to those that have the faith to believe God, His promises, and live as He has commanded. This is also a warning to those that do not practice

that which is given in verse 1, will not see a long life of peace about God. This is also given in Ex 20:12 that if you honor your mother and father you will have a long life. That peace spoken here and in Phil 4:7 is peace for living a godly life and then the final ultimate peace that is known and experienced by believers.

Prov 3:3—Let not mercy and truth forsake you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart,

A stronger admonition to live under the commands of God and keep them handy so that you will be prepared to live accordingly. Bind them around your neck is probably a reference to the Jewish practice of wearing phylacteries containing the words given to them as in Deut 6:8, "You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes." This would make them a constant reminder of what is required. The warning is that if you do not hold them as a guide to everything that you do, you will forsake mercy and truth. Writing them on the table of your heart will give additional recall to mind as needed.

Prov 3:4—And so find favor and high esteem in the sight of God and man.

The reward for following these rules is akin to the words found in Mat 25:23, "His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.' " So, favor and high esteem in God's sight and also in man's is in store for those who follow God faithfully.

Prov 3:5—Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding;

This is one of the most meaningful verses in the whole of the Bible. Trust in the Lord with all your heart means to throw yourself under the complete guidance and control of the Lord. As the hymn states, "Whate'er My Lord Ordains is Right." He knows what is best and He has pre-ordained all that happens. Trusting Him with all your heart will give you a sense of deep peace. This kind of unflinching, undaunted trust leads to "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." (Phil 4:13). Matthew Henry says, "We must believe that He will, wise to do what is best, and good, according to His promise, to do what is best for us, if we love Him, and serve Him. We must, with an entire submission and satisfaction, depend upon him to perform all things for us, and not *lean to our own understanding*, as if we could."

Your understanding is flawed by sin. Leaning on your own devices will get you into trouble. Instead of leaning on your own

understanding give yourself totally over to God. Another hymn instructs in this way, "Leaning on the Everlasting Arms."

What a fellowship, what a joy divine,
Leaning on the everlasting arms;
What a blessedness, what a peace is mine,
Leaning on the everlasting arms.

What have I to dread, what have I to fear,
Leaning on the everlasting arms;
I have blessed peace with my Lord so near,
Leaning on the everlasting arms.

Leaning, leaning, safe and secure from all alarms;
Leaning, leaning, leaning on the everlasting arms.

I always felt that I could either be a willing partner with God with an attitude of gratitude or I could kick against the goads and reject Him but I knew God's will would be done in either case. Again Matthew Henry says, "In all our conduct we must be diffident of our own judgment, and confident of God's wisdom, power, and goodness, and therefore must follow Providence and not force it."

Prov 3:6—In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.

Acknowledging Him in all your ways is another way to say trust in Him totally. You can count on His making your way straight. God would not make a promise to care for you if you put your trust in Him and not direct your paths according to what is right and true. Trust Him. You will not be disappointed.

Prov 3:7—Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and depart from evil.

This is a repeating of the above guidance for reinforcement of the truths contained there. "Do not be wise in your own eyes" is another way of saying "do not rely on your own understanding." Leave it to God and follow with all that is in you for His glory and His good pleasure.

And then adding "fear the Lord" and you take your leave of evil. This will lead to nothing but joy in the Lord.

Prov 3:8—It will be health to your flesh, and strength to your bones.

This is the verse I was led to on the search for something appropriate for a nurse. This is an added promise of overall good health if you do all the above faithfully. I believe this also can be extended to include all that you do in the Lord's will shall result in a life of spiritual health.

Prov 3:9—Honor the LORD with your possessions, and with the firstfruits of all your increase;

This is an admonition to provide an offering to the church once per week. Jesus instructs in Luke 21:4-5, "Truly I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all; for all these out of their abundance have put in offerings for God, but she out of her poverty put in all the livelihood that she had." Also, in 1 Cor 16:1-2, "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also: on the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come." This moves us to another truth of life, that of honoring the fact that all we have we get from the gracious mercy of God. So, we must recognize this fact which will honor the Lord for providing for our welfare. And one way to do this is to give from your blessings to the Lord first and not after all other things are taken care of. And that giving is not out of your wealth but out of your poverty.

Prov 3:10—So your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will overflow with new wine.

If you give to Lord as He requires, you will find that you are blessed beyond measure. Not that you will become rich as some would preach but that you will have your needs met.

Prov 3:11 - My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, nor detest His correction.

Chastening means discipline and perhaps punishment. We are not to reject or in anyway think badly of God's discipline. God's will shall be done. And further more, grumbling about chastisement is really not accepting what God has ordained. Pastor Milan in a manner of jest remarked that the coming Sunday we as a church fellowship will have a pot-providence dinner after the Sunday worship service. That is because as reformed Bible believers we do not believe in luck so we do not have a potluck dinner. This also means the chastisement we receive is a result of God's will and not a matter of bad luck.

Prov 3:12—For whom the LORD loves He corrects, just as a father the son in whom he delights.

Why does God discipline us? Because He loves us. Discipline is many times the only way He gets our attention. We do not correct our children out of hate but out of love for we know that children for their own betterment need to be corrected. It is the same way with God. God chastises us as a means of correcting sinful behavior.

In summary, these twelve verses teach us how to live a godly happy, fruitful life under God our heavenly Father. Ω

Biography of Elisha A. Hoffman, hymn writer.

Elisha Albright Hoffman was born May 7, 1839 in Orwigsburg, Schuylkill County, Pennsylvania. Hoffman's parents, Francis A. and Rebecca A. Hoffman, were both of German descent. His father worked as a minister in the Evangelical Association for over 60 years, which likely influenced Hoffman's decision to enter the ministry.

Hoffman's musical education was obtained from his parents. While possessing natural musical abilities, Hoffman never attended a school of music. Any musical instruction Hoffman received came from his experiences at his father's church or at home. In addition to singing at church, the Hoffman household had a daily family worship time, of which hymn singing was an important part. Hoffman, therefore, became very familiar with the musical and spiritual tradition of Evangelical hymnology at a very early age. It was during these times of family worship that Hoffman developed a love for sacred music and a belief that song was "as natural a function of the soul as breathing was a function of the body."

Hoffman attended public school in Philadelphia and graduated from Central High School in the scientific course. After finished high school, Hoffman attended Union Seminary, associated with the Evangelical Association, in New Berlin Pennsylvania. After receiving his degree from Union, Hoffman spent eleven years working with the Evangelical Association's publishing house in Cleveland, Ohio. In 1866 at 26, Hoffman married Susan M. Orwig who was 22 at the time. Hoffman was ordained by the Presbyterian Churches in 1873, at the age of 34. Two years later in 1876, his wife, Susan died, leaving him a single parent of their three sons.

In early 1879, at the age of 40, Hoffman remarried to Emma, a woman who was 26 years old. The couple had a baby boy in December of that same year, adding to the family's three other boys. At the time, they were living in Cleveland, Ohio, and had Hoffman's sister-in-law living with them and working as a dressmaker.

Upon leaving his position with the Evangelical Association, Hoffman began his pastoral ministry. From 1880 until his retirement in 1922, Hoffman pastored several churches in Cleveland and Grafton, Ohio; Benton Harbor, Michigan; and Cabery, Illinois. His longest post was held at the Benton Harbor Presbyterian Church in Michigan where he served for 33 years. There are over two thousand hymns composed by Hoffman in print. Among his most popular and widely recognized songs are: "Leaning on the Everlasting Arms", "What a Wonderful Saviour!", "Are You Washed in the Blood?", and "I Must Tell Jesus". Hoffman also assisted in the compilation and editing process of over 50 different song books.

Hoffman died on November 5, 1929 in Chicago, Illinois.

Important Things

JAN 4— After the morning worship we will meet in the Fellowship Hall for a carry-in dinner. There is always lots of food and great conversation. Plan on attending.

WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY—The Women's Bible study will meet Jan 14 and 28 at 7:00 PM at the church. The study is led by Jean Holroyd. The lessons are from the book by John MacArthur *Our Awesome God*.

MEN'S BREAKFAST— January 17 the men of the church will meet at the church for a full cooked breakfast at 8:00 AM. Scrabbled eggs, bacon, and bakery will be the fare. Judging from the usual attendance at this event an outside observer would assume there are almost no men in the church. Fellowship is an important factor in the life of a church. Come on men, let's see you there.

Nursery Schedule for January

4th	-	LYDIA BRUNGARDT
11th	-	KELLEIGH ANDERSON
18th	-	ZANE NEWSOM
25th	-	ESTHER DAVISON

Please trade with someone if you are unable to do nursery duty on the assigned day.



Keegan Tunncliff	6th	Milan Norgauer	26th
Kendra Tunncliff	10th	Charmayne Cesal	29th
Alan Brubaker	15th		
Tom Twitchell	17th		
Heather Norgauer	19th		

Mike & Janet Anderson 18th



What a fellowship, what a joy divine,
Leaning on the everlasting arms;
What a blessedness, what a peace is mine,
Leaning on the everlasting arms.

*Refrain: Leaning, leaning, safe and secure
from all alarms;
Leaning, leaning, leaning on the
everlasting arms.*

○ how sweet to walk in this pilgrim way,
Leaning on the everlasting arms;
○ how bright the path grows from day to
day,
Leaning on the everlasting arms.

Refrain

What have I to dread, what have I to fear,
Leaning on the everlasting arms;
I have blessed peace with my Lord so near,
Leaning on the everlasting arms.

Refrain

The Divine Foundation of Authority

From
R.C. Sproul

Right Now Counts Forever

"You're out!" "I'm safe!" "Out!" "Safe!" "Out!" "It's my ball, and it's my bat, and I say that I'm safe." This is how we settled disputes over plays in our pickup baseball games played without the benefit of a referee or umpire. When a disputed play could not be resolved through reason or through yelling, the one who possessed the equipment usually determined the outcome. It was a child's game in which might made right. It was the nascent expression of the cynical statement: "He who owns the gold, rules."

These illustrations indicate that at some level ownership is involved in authority. The very word authority has within it the word author. An author is someone who creates and possesses a particular work. Insofar as God is the foundation of all authority, He exercises that foundation because He is the author and the owner of His creation. He is the foundation upon which all other authority stands or falls.

We use the term *foundation* with respect to the imagery of a building. Houses and commercial buildings are erected upon a foundation. As Jesus indicated in His parables, if the foundation is not solid, the structure will not stand. The house that is built upon the sand will crumble at the first sign of a windstorm. Instead, Jesus commended the building of the house upon a rock. The foundation has to be firm in order for the house to stand.

In the sixteenth century, the critical dispute that arose in the Protestant Reformation focused on two central issues. Historians speak of one as being the material cause, that is, the matter around which the dispute centered. That material cause was the doctrine of justification. The battle was fought over the issue of what is required for a person to be justified in the sight of God. The other issue, the formal one, lurked only slightly under the surface of the external debate about justification: the question of authority. When Luther defended his doctrine in his disputes with Cardinal Cajetan and with the theologian Johann Eck, the Roman Catholic experts called attention to the decrees of earlier church councils and of papal encyclicals to refute Luther's arguments. Luther in response argued that the edicts of church councils and even the encyclicals of popes can err and often do err. The only final authority Luther would recognize, upon which the controversy could

be resolved, was the authority of Scripture, because that authority carried the weight of God's authority itself.

As a result, the Diet of Worms culminated with Luther's expression: "Unless I am convinced by sacred Scripture or by evident reason, I cannot recant because my conscience is held captive by the Word of God, and to act against conscience is neither right nor safe. Here I stand. God help me. I can do no other." In that statement, Luther was affirming publicly his commitment to the principle of *sola Scriptura*, that the Bible alone is the only authority that can bind the conscience of a person absolutely because it is the only authority that carries with it the intrinsic authority of God Himself.

In the Scriptures we see that God creates the universe and owns the universe. It is His possession, and He governs it by His own authority. The authority by which God governs all things is His autonomous authority. To say that God's authority is autonomous is to say that God is a law unto Himself. He is not bound by some abstract system of law that exists outside of Himself or independent from Him (*ex lex*). Nor is God under some external law (*sub lego*); rather, He is a law unto Himself. This does not mean that He acts or behaves in an arbitrary manner. Rather, God's activity is directed by God's own character. And His character is completely righteous. All that He does flows out of His own internal righteousness. His external authority comes from His internal righteousness. In this sense God's authority is intrinsic. It is found within Himself. It is not borrowed, delegated, or assigned from any other source.

In the same manner, all lesser authorities on heaven and on earth are only as valid as they are delegated by God's authority. Whatever authority we possess is extrinsic rather than intrinsic. It exists only by delegation. This was the issue in the garden of Eden. The primal sin of Adam and Eve could be described as the grasping for autonomy. They sought to take for themselves the authority that belonged only to God. To act on one's own authority against the authority of God is the essence of disobedience and of sin. When we grasp authority ourselves and do what is right in our own minds, we are attacking the very foundation of life and of the welfare of human beings.

"You're out!" "I'm safe!" This question has to be determined by some foundation other than the possession of bats and balls. Justice must reign if we are to escape a life and a world without foundations. Any authority that rules without divine foundation is tyranny. Ω

Session Report

January 2015 Session Report

The new year is here. Take the time to reflect on the goodness and grace of God in the past year. Look ahead for how you can glorify and enjoy Him in 2015.

The Ladd's, Jim and Lela, have been received into membership. We will bring them before the church soon, but take the opportunity to welcome them.

In our recent session meeting we voted unanimously to pay-off the mortgage. In years past, our reserve has not been much more than our mortgage amount. In those times, we determined it was better to keep paying off the mortgage a little at a time and keep the surplus for contingencies. If at any point we had to payoff the mortgage we could. This past year, God has been generous to us and our surplus greatly exceeds the amount of the mortgage as we are looking to the purchase of land and the building of a new church in the future. We feel that it now makes sense to pay off the mortgage.

May God bless you in 2015.

Trust and Obey

By

R. C. Sproul, JR.

The KISS principle—Keep It Simple, Stupid—is itself a rather simple principle. It argues that when we find ourselves entangled in complex and complicated arguments, chances are we have already left the proper playing field. While, for instance, the gospel is a glory that can be studied and expounded upon for a lifetime of lifetimes, we nevertheless confess that something has gone wrong if we cannot rejoice in our salvation simply by confessing, "Lord be merciful to me, a sinner." Jesus said that the man who prayed that way went home justified (Luke 18:14).

The same is true after our souls are saved. Our forgiveness, our justification, our adoption all flow out of a glorious but simple truth that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us (Rom. 5:8). Our sanctification, however, our calling to grow in grace and wisdom, to put to death the old man, to become more like Jesus—this is simple too. There is no great and deep secret—we are called to trust and obey.

This not only describes our sanctification, but as the old hymn points out, this describes the only way to be happy in Jesus. That is, the key to having a good life is profoundly simple. Now there have been many who complained about the bestselling book *Your Best Life Now* by Joel Osteen that it was way too simple, that it lacked substance or heft, that it was the spiritual equivalent of a spool of cotton candy. I haven't read the book, but I suspect my concern would be just the opposite. I'm not opposed to having a good life. I wish it for my children, for my friends, even for everyone who reads this article. So I am not opposed to advice on how to have a good life. I am opposed to bad advice.

The key to living a good life is abundantly simple. According to our Maker, what we must do if we want things to go well for us in the land He has given us, is to honor our fathers and mothers. This is the first command with a promise (Eph. 6:2-3). The promise is that it will go well for us in the land.

The world tells us that the key to a good life is a good education. Do well in school and you will get into a competitive college. Do well there and you will get into a competitive graduate school. Do well there and you will get a good, high-paying job. Then you will be able

to afford a house in a neighborhood with good schools so that your children can do just what you did, and your grandchildren after them. I call this hell's hamster wheel.

God's plan is so much plainer, so much simpler. Which is likely why we don't believe it. We are offended by simplicity. In our pride, we like to believe that anything worth having must be terribly difficult to get, and terribly difficult to figure out how to get. We would rather go it alone and have it go poorly for us in the land than embrace the simple truth that we just need to honor those God has placed in authority over us.

Or is that the real rub? Is our objection not the simplicity of the rule, but the rule itself? That is, do we object to God's promise that it will go well for us in the land if we submit to those in authority over us because we don't want to submit to those in authority over us?

The devil, before his fall, lived a rather spectacular life. He threw it all away because he didn't want to be ruled. Adam and Eve lived in a literal paradise, the land God had given them. All they had to do to stay there forever was submit to their Father. They threw it all away. And we are their children. Is this not the very essence of what Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount? What does it mean to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness but to pursue obedience to our heavenly Father with a single minded passion? Does He not tell us to set aside our worries about all those things we think will give us a good life and to give ourselves to seeking His righteousness? The simple question is, do we trust our Father? Do we believe that His law is a burden to submit to, or a map to joy?

Of course there are selfish husbands. There are sinful parents. There are faithless elders. There are corrupt civil leaders. All of these, however, existed when our giving, sinless, faithful, pure Father promised us it would go well for us if we would submit to those in authority over us. He not only knows best, but He controls all things. He, after all, has the whole world in His hands.

There is no need to toss and turn all night wondering what you should do differently to make a better life. Seek first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness. Submit to those in authority over you: "Obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 'Honor your father and mother' (this is the first commandment with a promise), 'that it may go well with you and you may live long in the land'" (Eph. 6:1-3). Keep it simple, and be wise. It will go well for you. **Ω**

***And the peace of God,
which surpasses all
understanding, shall keep
your hearts and minds
through Christ Jesus.
Hallelujah, Amen***