

# Trust Blessing

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] I know all of you, so I won't introduce myself, but it's good to be with you again. As I mentioned earlier, God's law is what shows us the way to walk in this world, that we can experience blessing, and so that's why we turn at this time in our service. So we do every Sunday to hear from God because we believe that he has something to say to us, that he speaks with power, that he hasn't left us to wander, stumble alone in the dark, but instead he's given us his word to show us the way to go. We're continuing our series in the book of Proverbs, and you'll remember that the book of Proverbs is a book about wisdom, and wisdom is skill and the art of living, and as we've seen, it begins with the fear of the Lord, that's the foundation of wisdom, and it continues with humility and teachability. Last week, we looked at how we grow in wisdom. We saw that it was an issue of love, that we have to love wisdom to get wisdom. We can't be protected by wisdom unless we embrace it. This week, we're going to look at the idea of blessing. Wisdom offers to bless us. As we read chapter three, you're going to see the word blessing show up over and over again, but this also raises some questions and some confusion. If everything that God gives us is by grace, in what sense can we say he blesses those who are obedient? If we know that the prosperity gospel is wrong, the idea that God's main purpose in this life is to bring us material blessing, then what do we do with the

Proverbs promises of blessing? What is the relationship between our obedience and what God gives to us? That's what we're going to look at in Proverbs chapter three. This is a chapter with many things in it, so we're not going to look at everything equally. As we look at the whole chapter, I'm going to give a special focus to verses five and six, which are two of the most famous verses in the Bible, which tell us to trust in the Lord with all our heart and lean not on our own understanding.

But we'll simply ask this, what are the blessings that we should expect from wisdom? What are the blessings that we expect from wisdom? It's with that that we turn to read Proverbs chapter three. I invite you to turn with me in your worship guide or in your Bible or on your phone.

And no matter where you turn, remember that this is God's word. And Proverbs chapter 30, verse five, tells us that every word of God proves true. He is a shield to those who take refuge in him.

And so that's why we read now together, starting at verse one. My son, do not forget my teaching, but let your heart keep my commandments.

[ 2 : 5 2 ] For length of days and years of life and peace, they will add to you. Let not steadfast love and faithfulness forsake you. Find them around your neck. Write them on the tablet of your heart. So you will find favor and good success in the sight of God and man. Verse five, trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways, acknowledge him and he will make straight your paths. Be not wise in your own eyes. Fear the Lord and turn away from evil. It will be healing to your flesh and refreshment to your bones.

My son, do not despise the Lord's discipline or be weary of his reproof. For the Lord reproves him whom he loves as a father, the son in whom he delights. Verse 13, blessed is the one who finds wisdom and the one who gets understanding. For the gain from her is better than gain from silver and her profit better than gold. She is more precious than jewels and nothing you desire can compare with her.

Long life is in her right hand. In her left hand are riches and honor. Her ways are ways of pleasantness and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to those who lay hold of her.

Those who hold her fast are called blessed. Verse 19, the Lord by wisdom founded the earth. By understanding, he established the heavens. By his knowledge, the deeps broke open and the clouds dropped down the dew. My son, do not lose sight of these. Keep sound wisdom and discretion and they will be life for your soul and adornment for your neck. Then you will walk on your way securely and your foot will not stumble. If you lie down, you will not be afraid. When you lie down, your sleep will be sweet.

Do not be afraid of sudden terror or of the ruin of the wicked when it comes. For the Lord will be your confidence and will keep your foot from being caught. Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due when it is in your power to do it. Verse 28, do not say to your neighbor, go and come again.

[ 5 : 13 ] Tomorrow I will give it when you have it with you. Do not plan evil against your neighbor who dwells trustingly beside you. Do not contend with a man for no reason when he has done you no harm.

Do not envy a man of violence and do not choose any of his ways. For the devious person is an abomination to the Lord, but the upright are in his confidence. The Lord's curse is on the house of the wicked, but he blesses the dwelling of the righteous. Toward the scorners he is scornful, but to the humble he gives favor. The wise will inherit honor, but fools get disgrace. I invite you to pray with me as we come to this portion of God's word.

Our Father in heaven, we thank you for the ordinary, normal, week-by-week worship of you, and you're the words that come from you. We thank you that we have the privilege to hear from you over and over again. We ask that we wouldn't take it for granted. We wouldn't take for granted the freedom to worship you together, in person, in public, and we wouldn't take for granted the privilege of hearing from you in your word. We ask that you would do that now, that you'd send your Holy Spirit in a powerful way, that we would be challenged and encouraged by the grace that you offer us in your word. We ask these things not because we deserve them or have earned them, but we ask them in Jesus' name. Amen.

If you have an iPhone or a smartphone, you know that there are limits on what you can put on that phone. For example, if you have an iPhone, if you want to put an app on it, it has to be in the App Store.

And if it's not in the App Store, you're not going to get to put it on. Of course, there's protocols and requirements for something to be put into the App Store. Not everyone just gets to publish what they want. It has to be approved. It has to be vetted. And there's reasons for this, but there's also people who don't like those limits. They think it's artificial. It's their phone. They own it, right? They should be able to put on it what they want. And so there's this term, jailbreaking, when you take your phone and you remove all the limits from it. It allows you to put apps on it that maybe wouldn't be allowed by the App Store. It allows you to access parts of the phone you wouldn't normally be able to access. It allows you to change and modify things.

[ 7 : 52 ] And yet, companies warn against it. Your warranty's void often if you do it. There's a potential your updates won't work anymore. And in fact, Apple has an article out warning of all the things that could happen to you if you jailbreak your phone. You would be more vulnerable to hackers coming and taking it. Your battery life will not function as well.

It's possible that you won't be able to install new things on your phone. And if it has problems, you may not be able to recover it. So you'll find people who are in favor of jailbreaking. You'll also find people who cry many tears wishing they could go back and undo it. And there's a fundamental principle there that's also given to us here in Proverbs chapter 3. The builder, the creator, actually knows what they're doing.

The person who designed something is the one who knows how to keep it safe. There are boundaries and limits that are good. They're protecting you, right? Apple's not trying to take away your fun.

They're actually trying to enable it. They're trying to make your experience good and pleasant. They're trying to protect you from those who would take advantage of you. As we talk about blessing in the Proverbs, that's the first type of blessing that we experience from wisdom. It's the blessing that comes with honoring the creator. We see this in verses 19 and 20.

The Lord by wisdom founded the earth. By understanding, he established the heavens. By his knowledge, the deeps broke open and the clouds broke down the dew. In other words, wisdom was how God created the world. And so, of course, if we follow the ways of wisdom, things are going to go well. We are doing things the way the creator wanted us to do them. God's law, as I mentioned earlier, is not arbitrary.

[ 9 : 45 ] When he tells us certain things about how we handle our money, when he tells us how we handle our bodies and our sexuality, when he tells us how we handle our relationships, he's telling us, this is how I made the world. Wisdom is not random. It works because wisdom is how I created the universe.

And so, of course, there is going to be a certain kind of blessing that comes from living within the, living along with the grain of the world rather than against the grain of the world.

And this is the kind of blessing we see throughout chapter 2. If you keep wisdom, verse 2, you'll have long life, more likely. Proverbs is going to tell us certain things about what we do with our bodies, right?

If we follow that, the chances of us having long life is greater. Verses 13 through 18 tell us about all these things that are going to be good.

Again, verse 16, long life, riches, and honor. Verse 17, peace. If you follow the instructions of Proverbs, you're more likely to have peace in relationships with others, less conflict.

[ 10 : 53 ] And this isn't some special blessing from God, right? It's the same kind of blessing that comes from not jailbreaking your phone. You're just living with the instructions that the Creator gave you.

Last week, we talked about the love of wisdom and how it protects us. And I told you that wisdom was like a compass. It directs us in the right way. It's like something that holds a kite down.

This week, it's not that it's a compass and a kite, but that wisdom is the architect. Wisdom is the designer. Wisdom built this world, and so there's just a natural blessing that comes from doing what wisdom tells us.

Just like if we had a problem with this building and we weren't sure what was going on, it would be wise for us to go and speak to the person who designed it. They might know more than any of us know, even though we live in the building.

So God is the architect of this world. Wisdom was there with him at the beginning. And so there's a natural blessing that comes from walking God's ways. That's a lot of the blessing that's promised here in chapter 3.

[ 12 : 01 ] That's where this long life, verse 16, riches and honor come from. And so we trust God even when the things that he says don't make sense to us.

If God tells us to do something that seems counterintuitive to what our culture is telling us, what our friends are telling us, maybe what we're telling ourselves, we do it anyway.

Because we trust that he's the architect. We trust that God actually knows what he's talking about. Wisdom was there at the beginning.

We believe that God actually knows best. And when we do that, God promises blessing. It's blessing in a natural way.

It's blessing with going along with how God designed the world. Problem, of course, everyone agrees, right, that Apple makes the iPhone. I do not know of any Apple deniers who claim that the phone was made by some other organization.

[ 13 : 06 ] We all agree about that. What everyone does not agree about is whether God made the world or not. And so that's where so much of the conflict comes from in our culture.

It's not that we are people who hate the world. It's not that we're bigots. It's not that we're backwards. It's just we believe in a different maker.

We believe that God, rather than anything else, is the architect. God tells us things then that are true. We expect if we follow those things, there will be blessing.

The makers of the iPhone are not vindictive. They're not out to get us. They don't put limits on the phone so that they can pull on over on us. No, they're actually trying to make things good and pleasant.

They want us and our phones who have long life and riches and blessing. And so they put boundaries and limits in place. When and if we follow those boundaries and limits, we expect good things to happen.

[ 14 : 13 ] We talked when we went through 1 Peter about there being different types of suffering. And I told you there's a type of suffering that comes from sin, right? There's consequences that come.

There's also a type of blessing that comes from righteousness. There's natural consequences, good consequences, from living in the way God has told us to live. Of course, we need to be reminded of this.

The son here needs to be reminded to keep these commandments in his heart, verse 1, because the world, the flesh, and the devil are constantly lying to us. The enemy of our soul, Satan, has no new strategies.

We're aware of what his strategies are. And one of his strategies is that he's the father of lies. And so he constantly is telling us the same thing he told Adam and Eve in the garden.

Did God really say, and does God really have your best interests at heart? Proverbs 3 is reminding us, yes, God did really say, and he really has your best interests at heart.

[ 15 : 16 ] Trust God, even when he's telling you the opposite of what everyone else is telling you. Trust him, because he is the expert.

Trust wisdom, because wisdom, verse 19, founded the earth. How then do we experience blessing?

What's the relationship between blessing and obedience? Well, one of the ways is just natural blessing. We live in line with the way God created the world, and we expect things to work out because of it.

We also see here, though, a different type of blessing, not just a natural blessing, something that comes from natural consequences, but there is a special blessing as well. We're told in verse 4, we will find favor in the sight of God.

So God shows his favor, a special blessing, on people who honor him and obey him. We see that also in verse 6. There's an active element to what God's doing here. If we acknowledge him in all our ways, he will make straight your paths.

[ 16 : 20 ] Verses 9 and 10 seem to imply some sort of divine intervention. You're honoring God with your wealth. Your barns will be filled with plenty. That seems a little counterintuitive, right? You'd think the more you give away, the less you'd have. So there must be some element here of God being at work, blessing those who honor him. And then verse 26, we see it again.

The Lord will be your confidence. He will keep your foot from being caught. There is this active intervention by God to provide blessing for those who obey him.

Now, this is where we begin to run into some trouble, right? Sometimes it can be hard to figure out and understand exactly how these blessings work, but the Bible gives us examples of them.

And in fact, the best examples are the ones that come from the Bible, because it's hard for you and me to discern exactly how God makes our paths straight. But we see him doing it various places in Scripture.

[ 17 : 18 ] One, for example, is the beginning of the book of Exodus. If you're familiar with the book of Exodus, you know it tells the story of God's people leaving slavery. The very beginning of the book, we meet these Israelite women who are midwives.

And Pharaoh tells them, your job as Israelite midwives is to make sure you kill any male children who are born in Israel.

What do these midwives do? They, verse 5, trust in the Lord with all their hearts, and they lean not on their own understanding. They don't do what they're told, even though it's dangerous. They do not kill any of the children that come from the Israelite women, even though they could be punished for it.

And what happens? Verse 6, God makes straight their paths. We're told at the beginning of Exodus that God gives them a special blessing because of their obedience. He gives families to these midwives.

That doesn't tell us exactly how that happens. Maybe he provides spouses providentially that they didn't have. Maybe he provides pregnancy that they didn't have, but God blesses them specifically for their obedience.

[ 18 : 27 ] They honor him. They trust him. When it's hard, he makes their path straight. We've also seen an example of this in the book of Proverbs. I told you when we started Proverbs, their very first sermon on it, the story of Solomon.

God came to Solomon and asked him what he wanted. And Solomon said, more than anything else, he wanted wisdom. We know wisdom starts with the fear of the Lord. So Solomon is saying, I want what you have to offer God more than anything else.

I'm trusting you with all my heart. What does God do? He makes his path straight. He says, because you've asked for wisdom, I won't just give you wisdom. I'm going to give you everything else you could have asked for.

I'm going to give you riches and wealth and honor. And so God gives Solomon a special blessing for his trust and his obedience.

Same is true for us. Now we don't know exactly how or when. I'm not going to tell you authoritatively how God is going to bless you, how he might provide for you in certain ways.

[ 19 : 32 ] What I can tell you is this. The book of Proverbs tells us, if we trust him, God will care for us. If we trust him, God will care for us.

We have another example from Deuteronomy chapter 8. Israelites are in the wilderness. God tells them, when you were in the wilderness, I kept your clothes from wearing out and I kept your feet from swelling.

I intervened. I gave you a special blessing. I protected you. Remember verse 26. The Lord will be your confidence and will keep your foot from being caught.

Now this is exactly the point where we start to run into trouble because of course we know in our own lives and in the lives of other Christians, there's times when we've trusted God and it's led not to material blessing, it's actually led to suffering of various sorts.

Bible has those kinds of stories too. Remember Stephen, the first deacon in Acts chapter 6 and 7, is faithful in proclaiming the gospel and he gets a faith blessing, right?

[ 20 : 37 ] He becomes extremely wealthy. No, he's stoned to death. He doesn't experience material blessing here and now. In fact, he loses his life. We just spent a whole series in 1 Peter talking about the suffering that comes from being a Christian.

And so what do we do with these promises of blessing when we don't have the experience of the midwives? What do we do with promises of blessing when we feel more like Stephen?

Well, there's a couple things we have to remember. First of all, there is sometimes or often blessings now, always blessing in the future.

In other words, there's an eternal perspective that we have as we think about God's blessings. We may suffer now. We look forward to the time when Jesus returns and he makes all things right.

And the author of Proverbs has that same sort of eternal perspective. Remember we saw that last week. The upright will inhabit the land. The wicked will be cut off from the land. And so that's part of how we have to think about these things.

[ 21 : 47 ] We have to remember in this life, Jesus knows this by the way, the Bible's aware of this. He tells us in John chapter 6, verse 33, in this life you'll have tribulation, but I've overcome the world. So there's an ultimate blessing that we look forward to when Jesus returns.

The other thing we have to remember is the way that Proverbs works. I hinted at this when we started the series. If you have your Bible with you, you can go back all the way to Proverbs chapter 1.

Remember, part of wisdom is knowing how to interpret wisdom. Chapter 1, verse 6, there's wisdom to understanding a proverb and a saying. Verse 2, to understand the words of insight.

So we have to understand how the words of insight of chapter 3 work. And they work like this. Proverbs, as many people have put it, are not rules but principles. They're not rules but principles.

That's the way the genre of a proverb works. They have to be applied in the right time, in the right place. They are not guarantees. Proverbs is not a legal document where God guarantees rigid blessings for obedience in a certain way in a certain time in a certain place.

[ 22 : 59 ] Instead, Proverbs tells us the way the world generally works, the way it is supposed to work. It doesn't mean there aren't exceptions. That's part of the reason God's given us the book of Job and the book of Ecclesiastes.

So Job is a righteous man. He trusts in the Lord with all his heart. And all his wealth and family are taken away from him with the exception of his wife. And Job's friends, as many people have pointed out, come to him and quote Proverbs 3 logic to him.

You're suffering. Obviously, you haven't trusted the Lord. So there's a wisdom to reading Proverbs 3. Just because righteous needs leads to blessing does not mean that everyone who suffers has sinned.

It means that this world is broken. While it's meant to work this way, it doesn't always work this way in the here and now. It's also helpful to remember in the Old Testament, there's a greater focus on physical, material blessing and less of a focus on spiritual blessing.

In the New Testament, there's a greater emphasis on spiritual blessing, less of an emphasis on material blessing. But both are in both.

[ 24 : 16 ] So there's both spiritual and material blessing in the Old Testament, both spiritual and material blessing in the New Testament. When we trust in the Lord with all our heart, and it seems like he's not making our path straight, we continue to trust in his goodness knowing that he will fully and finally one day.

When we trust in the Lord with all our heart, but it looks like he's not making our path straight, we trust him knowing that he will fully and finally make them straight one day. We sometimes and often see blessing now, we will always and ultimately see it in the future.

And in fact, that's how much of the Bible works and talks. So there's blessing. There's blessing that comes from wisdom.

There's natural blessing that comes just as a consequence of living in the world the way God intended. And there's a special blessing that God gives to his people, showing them what it tells us in verse 4, his favor.

I focus so far mainly here on verse 6, God making straight our paths, the blessing that comes, but this blessing comes specifically from trusting God. There's a dance here.

[ 25 : 37 ] There's a trust blessing dance. And we're given sort of general commands here to trust God, right? Verse 5, trust in the Lord with all your heart.

Do not lean on your own understanding. Verse 6, in all your ways acknowledge him. Whatever you do, live according to what God has told you, his instructions. He's the architect.

He's written the manual. Pay heed to it. Now, it would be wonderful if chapter 3 of Proverbs ended there. It would be a great, pithy saying.

We could have someone write it in calligraphy and put it on a wall in our house and there'd be no specifics. We'd just get to say, we trust in the Lord in this house. Problem is, verse 3 actually tells us what trust, or chapter 3 actually tells us what trust in the Lord looks like.

Gives us a specific list of what trusting people do. In other words, trust is not just an action of the heart. It's something that leads to real behaviors in time and space.

[ 26 : 36 ] It's not just a feeling. Trust is a behavior and it's behaviors that are outlined in this chapter. We're told, verse 7, be not wise in your own eyes.

Fear the Lord. So there's an action of humility which we've talked about multiple times now in Proverbs. If we trust the Lord, we're going to be humble and fear him, which means we're going to be looking to his word for advice and instruction.

We're going to be talking to other people and asking for their input. That's part of our behavior of trusting God. It gets even scarier in verse 9. If we are people who trust God, we will honor him with our wealth.

Our checkbooks reveal whether we trust God or not. It is one thing to memorize and quote Proverbs 3, verses 5 and 6.

It is another thing to write a check when it hurts. And yet the Bible tells us that that is what shows our trust in God.

[ 27 : 39 ] As I mentioned last week, wisdom is not a strategy, it's a relationship. So this person in verse 9 is honoring the Lord with their wealth, not so they can get a return or a blessing, but because of their relationship with God, their trust in him because they want to honor him.

By the way, Deuteronomy chapter 8, again, I mentioned it earlier, God tells the people that when they were in Egypt, he protected them. He kept their clothes from wearing out.

We trust that when we give first to God, demonstrating our trust in him, he's going to care for us. Maybe it will be in a Deuteronomy chapter 8, 8 sort of way, maybe he'll keep our clothes from wearing out, maybe it will be in a different way, we don't need to know.

What we need to know is that we belong to God and he cares for us. The list continues, verses 11 and 12, trust in God means we remain faithful to him when things are difficult.

If we're not seeing our paths made straight, if our barns are not filled with plenty, even though we've given God the first fruits, it's not coincidental, by the way, that verses 11 and 12 follow verses 9 and 10, we continue to trust God.

[ 28 : 59 ] We don't despise his discipline. So we remain faithful, seeking God, even when things aren't turning out the way we want them to. That's how we demonstrate our trust.

Then we're told in verses 27 and 28, trust looks like loving our neighbor, which sounds a lot like verses 9 and 10. Loving our neighbor is going to cost us something, right?

We trust God that when we give up for others' good, he's going to continue to protect and provide for us. And we demonstrate that trust by actually providing for others rather than hoarding as much as we can, trusting our storehouse rather than God's provision.

These are the actions that show whether we trust God. Verses 28 through 32 present us with some shortcuts, some alternate ways we might try to get blessing.

We might try to get blessing not by trusting the Lord, verse 28, but withholding good from our neighbor. We might try to get blessing by planning evil, verse 29. We might envy someone who has more blessing than us, verse 31, but has gotten it for the wrong reasons.

[ 30 : 11 ] We might envy a violent man. Why would we envy a violent man? Well, he probably has barns that are full, right? He's plundered other people.

He's doing well in life. He has success. He has the blessing maybe we want to have. And so we remember that God's blessings are sometimes, often now, always in the future.

That's the warning, too, for this violent man. Verse 33, the Lord's curse is on the house of the wicked. It doesn't matter how much that violent man has now.

He will not have it in the future. But, verse 33 again, he blesses the dwelling of the righteous. Of course, this shouldn't surprise us because Jesus tells us in Matthew chapter 22 that the sum of the law is that we love God and we love our neighbor.

And that's what we see here in Proverbs chapter 3. Trust in God is demonstrated through love of God, treasuring His commandments, giving our first fruits to Him, and love of neighbor, doing what we can to serve our neighbor, knowing that God will provide for us.

[ 31 : 32 ] And so our trust has real actions, real behaviors, that can help us know whether we actually believe God is going to protect and provide for us.

Our Lord Jesus teaches us the same thing. I'm a broken record at this point, but Jesus is the great teacher of wisdom. He's greater than Solomon. We saw last week that He tells us in John chapter 14, if you love me, you'll keep my commandments.

Jesus also motivates obedience and faith and trust through promises of blessing. Jesus calls us to trust Him with all our hearts and in all our ways.

He does this in Mark chapter 8. He says, if anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospels will save it.

For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul? God calls us to take up our cross and follow Him. He calls us to obedience and trust. God also promises blessing.

[ 32 : 45 ] He tells us in Matthew chapter 6, seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things will be added to you. Trust in the Lord with all your heart.

Lean not on your own understanding. He will make your paths straight. Jesus tells us about giving and blessing. He tells us in Matthew chapter 6 again that when we give to the needy, don't let your left hand see what your right hand is doing.

Do it in secret. And your heavenly Father who sees in secret will what? He'll reward you. Jesus promises rewards for obedience.

He tells Peter in Luke chapter 18 when Peter says, see, we've left our homes and followed you. Jesus says, truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God who will not receive many times more in this time eternal life.

Jesus calls us to obedience. Jesus also promises blessing. Jesus knows, like the book of Job and Ecclesiastes, that things don't always work out in this life.

[ 33 : 59 ] Jesus is the one who said that foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head. Jesus is the one who tells his disciples, blessed are you when people hate you and exclude you and revile you and spurn your name as evil on account of the Son of Man.

Rejoice in that day and leap for joy for behold, your reward is great in heaven. Sometimes, often now, always in the future in heaven.

Jesus knows that it doesn't work out like a math problem here in this life. Blessing doesn't work like that. But he also promises us rewards for obedience.

And he secures those blessings for us by his death and his resurrection. These aren't things that we earn. They're things that Jesus has earned for us.

This might sound very similar to the beginning of 1 Peter, which we looked at in September of last year. Remember, it says this in chapter 1, God has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead to an inheritance that is a reward, a blessing, that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you.

[ 35 : 23 ] In other words, nothing can touch the blessing that God has for us. That is the ultimate blessing that we look forward to in our obedience.

So what's the relationship between obedience and blessing? God blesses in natural ways through those who follow the rules that he's given in this world, and God blesses in a special way those who trust him in obedience.

in the movie Grand Torino with Clint Eastwood, he plays the character of Walt Kowalski who's a Korean war vet, and he's been mostly abandoned by his family.

His wife has died. He's a widower, and they visit him infrequently, mainly because they're interested in his inheritance and his money. And he has this Grand Torino that his granddaughter is very excited about inheriting when he dies.

So there's this interest not in him, not in a relationship with him, but in his death. On the other hand, there's a young teenager that lives in Walt's neighborhood named Tao.

[ 36 : 36 ] Now Tao's not set up to inherit anything. He's not interested in Walt's money, but Walt develops a relationship with him and he begins to mentor him. He helps Tao get a job.

He teaches him the ways of wisdom. He teaches him how to talk to other men when he wants to get a job. He teaches him how to talk to women. He coaches Tao through his dating life.

And Walt ends up actually defending Tao. Tao and his family are being tormented by a gang that's in the neighborhood and Walt stands up to them. Now I won't spoil the entire movie for you, but at the very end, Walt dies.

and his will is opened up. His family, who has ignored him, only interested in what they can get from him, find out there's nothing in the will for them.

Tao, who has not been interested in anything that Walt has to offer him outside of his advice and his wisdom and his counsel, is the one at the end who receives the Gran Torino, the Ford car that the granddaughter desperately wanted but doesn't receive.

[ 37 : 49 ] And Walt has one instruction for him. You can have this car, just please don't make any modifications to it. And so, it's the one who wants the relationship.

It's the one who wants the wisdom looking for nothing else who receives the blessing. Brothers and sisters, the same is true for us.

Trust and obedience lead to the blessings of our Heavenly Father. Not because we want what he has to offer, but because we want him.

Let's pray. Our Father in Heaven, we are astounded when we think of it that you would actually take the time and the trouble of speaking to us and helping us even as we were people who rebelled against you and didn't know you.

We ask that you would grow our obedience and our trust in you and that it would be motivated by our love for you. We thank you for Jesus' promise of blessing to us sometimes in this world and always in the world to come and we ask that we would remain faithful to you until the end.

[ 39 : 09 ] We ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.