

Why do Good?
Proverbs Chapter 3
Berean Baptist Church
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The Doctrine of Life teaches us that wisdom, virtue, and doing good are just facets of the same jewel. To do good, to be wise, to have virtue are different ways of talking about the same thing.

But why should we bother being good, virtuous, or wise? Why not sin? Surprisingly few Christians can provide much of an answer to this simple question. Usual answers are some variation of “because God says so”; or “out of gratitude for your salvation”; or “because we will give an account of God.”

Those answers are all true and helpful because they are biblical. But these not the only reasons that the Bible gives for bring good or wise. In fact, they may not even be the main reasons that God gives us for being good. **Joke “because I said so” only works so far. We should obey God without questioning Him and He does not need to justify himself. But in the Scriptures he repeatedly gives is a specific kind of reason for doing right.**

Gen 2:17, Ex 20:6, 12, Deut 28:1-14, Luke 6:38, Gal 5:15-16, Rom 13:3-4, and Proverbs chapter three all teach a neglected but important truth:

You should do good because it is good for you. And this is not just “good for you in the next life”, or “spiritually”, rather wisdom and virtue benefit those who have it every way and every place.

Do good because it is good for you!

Proverbs 3:1-12

These 12 verses are arranged into six two-line couplets. Each couplet first explains a way to be good or wise, and then answers the question of why to be good or wise.

Vs 1-2 How? Do not forget, but actively keep commandments in your mind. **Why?** Because wisdom leads to a full and peaceful life.

Vs 3-4 How? Cling to loyal-love and truth, wrap yourself with them inside and out. **Why?** You will find favor (good treatment) and good understanding with God and man.

This is a picture of the meeting of loyal-love (grace) and truth (judgment) meeting in a human life. Both are possible and should be a deep part of who you are.

Vs 5-6 How? Trust in the LORD with all thine heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding.
6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, **Why?** and he shall direct thy paths.

Vs 7-8 How? Reject arrogance, respect God and separate from sin. **Why?** It leads to physical health.

This is not the prosperity gospel. The Bible is not promising that if you separate from sin you will always be in good health. But God wants us to know the general pattern that godly virtue leads to health.

Example Harlan Larson I'm betting he doesn't smoke

Vs 9-10 How? Give of your physical substance in a way that honors God. **Why?** Generosity leads to physical blessings.

Vs 11-12 How? Respond to the correction of God **Why?** It is an action of love done for your improvement.

Vs 3, 7, 11 Notice how many of these ways of wisdom are internal matters of the heart. This Scripture is not trying to sell us on external obedience in exchange for a material reward. Rather, we are to be filled with wisdom within, and because wisdom is good for us the natural results will be good circumstances.

We must not fall into legalism, which is the idea that you are earning your relationship with God through good behavior. But if we ignore the Bible's teaching that virtue leads to the good life, we ignore a vital truth: God's commandments are not just right, they are good for us in this present life.

Do good because it is good for you!

Proverbs 3:13-20; The Happiness of the Wise

This reads like a hymn and may have even been memorized as a song.

Vs 13-18 wisdom leads to happiness.

Vs 14-16 wisdom is far preferable to material gain. But if you set your heart on Wisdom you will also likely get material gain.

Vs 16-17 wisdom leads to a long life as well as wealth and respect. And what is more, wisdom leads to peace. The very powerful might obtain longevity, wealth and something like respect, but what peace to do they have?

If a man could only have one of the gifts of wisdom promised in this hymn, doubtless, peace is the best. The evil may obtain a few of these benefits, but he can never have all of them and peace is always beyond his grasp. But the promise of wisdom/goodness is a life full of all goodness.

Do good because goodness leads to complete happiness.

Proverbs 3:19-26; The Companion of the Wise

These next verses also read like a hymn or poem. Notice how they begin and end.

Vs 19, 20 and 26 Wisdom is so powerful because God Himself used it to fashion the world and by wisdom, it is sustained.

Vs 21-23 By Wisdom, we find life, grace, and stable safety.

Vs 24-25 By Wisdom, we find peaceful sleep and protection against the judgment of the wicked.

If you walk in wisdom, choosing the good life of virtue, God goes with you and the very power that made and sustains the universe will be at work in your life.

Do good because God will be with you and you want His power in your life.

Proverbs 3:27-35; The Opponent of Fools

Vs 27-31 Wisdom calls to us to not envy or imitate the oppressor and four specific evil actions are illustrated.

Vs 32-35 provide the reason to not be wicked: God is far and wrathful to the wicked, but the good have

grace, closeness to God and glory.

Do good because it is the winning side.

CONCLUSION

The teaching of Scripture provides many motives for doing good. But out a fear for seaming "unspiritual" or "works-oriented" we neglect, and teach our kids to neglect, one of the most important reasons for doing good: doing good is good for us and leads to a better life. A virtuous person is able to better live a good and happy life.

God is the author of everything good and he wants good for his Children. Joy, pleasure, contentment, and fun are all the intended result of the proper use of God's creation. God made the world good. The word is now broken, and many goods have been perverted, but God's wise goodness is still evident.

Even though things do not work as they should, if we chose to be good we will still generally be happier than those who chose evil in this world. We should not neglect this truth because 1. it is repeatedly taught in Scripture, 2. it is a powerful incentive to do good, and 3. it illustrates God's own wise goodness.

Do good because it is good for you!