

Proverbs 4:1 ¶ Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father, and attend to know understanding.

Proverbs 4:2 For I give you good doctrine, forsake ye not my law.

Proverbs 4:3 For I was my father's son, tender and only *beloved* in the sight of my mother.

Proverbs 4:4 He taught me also, and said unto me, Let thine heart retain my words: keep my commandments, and live.

With this verse, we notice that Solomon expands his address to his children. Maybe he has been speaking to a group of sons all along and uses the word "son" to make it personal to each one.

Solomon continues to urge them to listen carefully with the intent to obey what he is teaching them. He wants them to truly understand how important it is. He tells them that he was the beloved child of his mother and that his father (King David) had taught him just as he is teaching them. His father also urged him to take to heart his teaching and live according to his commands (and we know those commands were rooted in the law of God).

Note: We know that Bathsheba had four sons, even though the wording implies that Solomon is the only child of his mother. I think the significance is that Solomon was her first and the chosen heir to the throne.

1 Chronicles 3:1&5 "Now these were the sons of David....these were born unto him in Jerusalem; Shimea, and Shobab, and Nathan, and Solomon, four, of Bathshua the daughter of Ammiel...."

Proverbs 4:5 Get wisdom, get understanding: forget *it* not; neither decline from the words of my mouth.

Proverbs 4:6 Forsake her not, and she shall preserve thee: love her, and she shall keep thee.

Proverbs 4:7 Wisdom *is* the principal thing; *therefore* get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding.

Proverbs 4:8 Exalt her, and she shall promote thee: she shall bring thee to honour, when thou dost embrace her.

Proverbs 4:9 She shall give to thine head an ornament of grace: a crown of glory shall she deliver to thee.

Again, wisdom and understanding are identified as most important to living a good, profitable life. Those who determine to make wise choices effectively protect

themselves from the consequences of straying outside God's protective boundaries. Those who are wise will bring honor to themselves—always before God, even if mocked by men.

Chuck Smith: "Now you know, there are certain people who have a lot of knowledge but they're fools. They don't know how to use their knowledge. They don't have wisdom. If there is to be a choice made between wisdom and knowledge, it's better to choose wisdom. It's like the mother who told her child, "**Honey, when you don't get an education, you got to use your brains.**" And wisdom is really preferable to knowledge. For unless you have wisdom, knowledge can be dangerous. Knowledge can destroy. Wisdom is the principal thing, which is actually the correct application of knowledge. "

Proverbs 4:10 Hear, O my son, and receive my sayings; and the years of thy life shall be many.

Proverbs 4:11 I have taught thee in the way of wisdom; I have led thee in right paths.

Proverbs 4:12 When thou goest, thy steps shall not be straitened; and when thou runnest, thou shalt not stumble.

Proverbs 4:13 Take fast hold of instruction; let *her* not go: keep her; for she *is* thy life.

Solomon continues to urge his son to embrace the truths he is teaching; they will lead to length of life. He has taught him wisdom that will lead him to make the right choices if he will but heed what he has been taught. Solomon tells his son that wise choices will provide firm a firm foundation that will allow him to navigate life safely. However, this teaching will be worthless unless he determines to live by what he has been taught.

Proverbs 4:14 ¶ Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil *men*.

Proverbs 4:15 Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away.

Proverbs 4:16 For they sleep not, except they have done mischief; and their sleep is taken away, unless they cause *some* to fall.

Proverbs 4:17 For they eat the bread of wickedness, and drink the wine of violence.

As in previous chapters, Solomon warns his son not to follow the ways of evil men. He should actively avoid those connections and turn away when tempted to follow the wrong path. He warns him that those who choose to do evil become obsessed with their sin. It even invades their sleep as they plot and plan more evil; it is what fuels them.

Proverbs 4:18 But the path of the just *is* as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

Proverbs 4:19 The way of the wicked *is* as darkness: they know not at what they stumble.

Solomon phrases his summary as a proverb. My paraphrase: Those who live a moral life walk in a shining light that grows ever brighter, ensuring their safety. Those who live wicked lives walk in darkness and don't even recognize the danger in front of them.

Proverbs 4:20 ¶ My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings.

Proverbs 4:21 Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart.

Proverbs 4:22 For they *are* life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh.

Solomon continues to urge his son to pay careful attention to what he is teaching him, hoping the repetition conveys the importance of what he is saying. It would seem he is encouraging his son to read the record he is making for his instruction and to hide its truths in his heart, to memorize them. To be careful to follow his father's teaching will promote a healthy, wholesome life.

Proverbs 4:23 Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it *are* the issues of life.

Beginning with this verse, Solomon words some truths in a form more easily memorized.

The "heart" references one's whole being—feelings, will and intellect. "Issues" references what goes forth or flows out of one's life. Solomon is urging his son to guard his heart carefully because that determines what flows out of one's life—righteousness or evil.

Proverbs 4:24 Put away from thee a froward mouth, and perverse lips put far from thee.

"Froward" and "perverse" are synonyms; they represent choosing what is wrong. Solomon tells his son to be honest and tell the truth, to be a man of integrity, to distance himself from that which is false and wicked.

Ironsides: "The mouth and heart are intimately connected for out of the heart's abundance the mouth speaks. A perverse mouth indicates one who is not in subjection to God. When God's Word has its place in the soul, the lips reveal it."

Matthew 12:34 "...for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh."

Proverbs 4:25 Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee.

Proverbs 4:26 Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established.

Proverbs 4:27 Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil.

The chapter closes with Solomon warning his son to keep his eyes wide open and be aware of where he is going as he makes choices about the direction he will go. To "ponder" is to weigh mentally. Solomon tells his son to carefully consider each choice and make decisions using the wisdom he has learned from the firm foundation established on the teaching he has received. He urges him to maintain a straight course of wise choices without deviating at all in another direction. This warning finds root in other scripture.

Deuteronomy 5:32 "Ye shall observe to do therefore as the LORD your God hath commanded you: ye shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left."

Deuteronomy 28:14 "And thou shalt not go aside from any of the words which I command thee this day, to the right hand, or to the left, to go after other gods to serve them."

Joshua 1:7 "Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest."

Ironside: "The eye should be fixed on the goal, looking straight ahead. For us, this goal is Christ. The plowman cuts a straight furrow when his eye is on a distant point directly before him. In the same way the Christian's path will be true when the eye of the heart is fixed on the Lord Jesus in glory. But this involves earnestly establishing one's ways in accordance with the truth."