

SOLOMON'S ADVICE TO CHILDREN

BIBLE TEXT : Proverbs 4:1-27.

LESSON 278 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life" (Proverbs 4:23).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Proverbs 4:1-27 ¹ Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father, and attend to know understanding.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

BIBLE REFERENCES:

NOTES:

Solomon's Father

We have learned much about David – the shepherd boy, harpist, songwriter, and king. He was also a great teacher, and he must have spent many hours instructing his children. Although Solomon was not an only son, yet his kind father taught him and directed his steps as carefully as though he were. God gave Solomon the ability to write for children and young people the very words, which he had heard from David, and they are recorded in the Bible.

Sometimes children tire of hearing their parents say repeatedly, "You cannot do that"; "You cannot go there" "You must do as I say." But listen as King David, one of the greatest of all men, speaks. In fancy we can almost hear him say, "Solomon, my boy, 'get wisdom, get understanding: forget it not; . . . Forsake her not, . . . Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding.'" (Proverbs 4:5-7). Then one night the test came: Had Solomon really listened to his father? Had he paid close attention when his father instructed him? We well remember the account of the night when God met Solomon in a dream and said, "Ask what I shall give thee." The request that Solomon made "pleased the Lord" (I Kings 3:10). "Give . . . thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad." It is true that the wisdom, which Solomon received came from God, but no doubt it was the teaching, which he had received from his father that caused him to ask for wisdom.

Avoiding Temptation

Let us read from our text some other things that Solomon learned from his father, and is passing on to us. The 14th and 15th verses tell us: "Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away." If we know where the places of sin are, by keeping away from them we can avoid any possibility of yielding to temptation. We do not need to walk into the traps, which Satan lays for our feet. We do not have to read the billboards that depict the latest movie. We need not read the crime comics or listen to corrupt radio programs to know that they are an evil influence for young people. We need not dress and act like the world.

The devil tempts one through the mind and the eye. When temptation takes hold of one and he yields to it and does what he knows is wrong, his heart is no longer under the Blood. Solomon wrote, "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." We read in Mark 7:21, 22, that from the heart come many wicked things: "evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, and foolishness."

- ¹⁵ Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away.
- ¹⁶ For they sleep not, except they have done mischief; and their sleep is taken away, unless they cause *some* to fall.
- ¹⁷ For they eat the bread of wickedness, and drink the wine of violence.
- ¹⁸ But the path of the just *is* as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.
- ¹⁹ The way of the wicked *is* as darkness: they know not at what they stumble.
- ²⁰ My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings.
- ²¹ Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart.
- ²² For they *are* life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh.
- ²³ Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it *are* the issues of life.
- ²⁴ Put away from thee a froward mouth, and perverse lips put far from thee.
- ²⁵ Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee.
- ²⁶ Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established.
- ²⁷ Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil.

Examples – Bad and Good

The devil knows how to allure. In the Garden of Eden it was the forbidden fruit; in the well-watered plains of Jordan, it was the fertile land; in the town of Jericho, when the Israelites went in to take the city, it was a wedge of gold and a Babylonish garment. With Esau, it was appetite – his birthright was quickly sold for a mess of pottage.

We remember the story of Balaam, and the story of Gehazi, the servant of Elisha. Both these men went after earthly gains. Ananias and Sapphira, too, tried to achieve gains through fraud, but it cost them their lives. But, thank God for Jesus who overcame temptation! He is able to keep us from falling if we look unto Him.

A true Christian bears the earmarks of a child of God, and can be recognized as such. He may be considered peculiar and old-fashioned, but that is better than being popular with the world and out of favour with God. It has been said that "character is what a person is; reputation is what he is supposed to be."

Heartaches Prevented

Some young people think they must live a life of sin for a while in order to be able to testify for Jesus after they are saved. That is a mistaken idea. A young girl was heard to say, "I am glad I went out into the world and tasted of the sins of life, for I never would have been satisfied without trying them." That lie of the devil is as old as the world itself, for Satan made a similar suggestion to Eve in the beginning of time when he said that she would become wise if she ate of the forbidden fruit. But one does not need to become a sinner to be wise, "The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God" (I Corinthians 3:19). One does not need to be a partaker of the evils of the world to know that they bring nothing but heartaches, sorrow, and remorse. One does not need to taste of the bitter dregs of sin to know that they leave their sting. Perhaps a certain momentary earthly joy may be found in sinful pleasures, but genuine happiness and peace come only through shunning all forms of sin and seeking and finding the Giver of every good and perfect gift. A young girl recently saved said that the only shadow cast upon her Christian life is the thought of the years she wasted in sin.

A pastor made this statement: "I felt as though I had been cheated when, as a boy, I heard Christians testify of the great and lurid sins from which the Lord had saved them. It was only after some years that I began to realize how wonderfully the Lord has blessed me. He did not save me **in** the gutter, but through Christian parents and countless influences. He saved me **from** the gutter." A veteran in rescue-mission work, in speaking to workers, Sunday School teachers, and parents said: "Your work is of much more importance than that of the Gospel mission worker. You save the whole life; we put the pieces together. You save heartaches and regrets; we bind up hearts after they are broken. . . . Too many boys and girls are slipping through your hands, parents, . . . teachers and preachers; your neglect makes the rescue mission necessary. . . . It is tremendously more important to save a life from the gutter than it is to pick it up out of the gutter after it has been soiled and

crushed and broken."

Importance of Sunday School

Not all children are privileged, as was Solomon to have God-fearing parents. Many parents today are negligent in their duty, because they are not sending their children to Sunday School and are not reading the Word of God to them; and thereby they are failing to sow the seed of truth in the hearts of the very young. Children who attend Sunday School regularly have a far better chance to know right from wrong and to be equipped to face a world of temptation, than those who do not. A Sunday School teacher once said to her class, "Any one of you boys might be a minister." One of the boys said at once in his heart, "I will be that boy." Although he was only 13 or 14 at the time, from that very day until the day he preached his first sermon, he never had a desire to be anything else. He was saved at 16 and later became a minister. A judge before whom thousands of boys have come once said, "Sunday School boys do not come to see me."

God said of Abraham and his family, "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment" (Genesis 18:19). Have you so ordered your life before God that He can say of you, "I know this child and I know his father and mother and the manner in which they have ordered their steps; they are not going to turn to the right hand or the left, but will stay on the straight and narrow path that leads to Heaven."

A Charted Course

"Ponder the path of thy feet." If you hope some day to be a school-teacher or a mechanic, you prepare yourself for that work. A successful life depends upon forethought and wise planning. This is true also in the Christian life. A Christian has turned from Satan and the downward way to destruction, and is heading toward God and Heaven. All his life is planned around the Gospel. His every ambition centres around being his best for God and winning as many souls as he can in a short lifetime. If he hopes some day to play in the senior orchestra at church, he must take lessons and study his music very diligently. If worldly opportunities present themselves, his first thought is: "Would it hinder my work for God? Could I do this and still attend every service? If I must give up any of my privileges in the Lord's work, I had better say No." You are safe if you avoid all bypaths that have a tendency toward lessening your zeal for God and your hold upon Him. A life of service for God is enriched by your paying close heed to your lips and eyes, as well as to your heart: "Put away from thee a forward mouth, and perverse lips put far from thee. Let thine eyes look right on and let thine eyelids look straight before thee."

May every young person listen carefully to the words of the wisest man: "My son (or daughter), attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings. . . . keep them in the midst of thine heart." This is a commandment with promise: "For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh" (Proverbs 4:20-22).

QUESTIONS

1. From whom did Solomon receive his wisdom?
2. Name some things promised to those who get wisdom.
3. How may we avoid temptation?
4. What contrast is there between the path of the just and the way of the wicked?
5. Why is it so important to "keep thy heart"?
6. What is meant by a "forward mouth" and "perverse lips"?
7. How many commandments with a promise attached do you find in this chapter?
8. Throughout the Bible, to whom is long life promise?