

SOLOMON'S ADVICE TO CHILDREN

BIBLE TEXT : Proverbs 4:1-27.

LESSON 278 Senior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Proverbs 4:18).

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:

I Good Doctrine

1. Solomon give good instruction to children, Proverbs 4:1, 2; **Psalm 34:11** ¹¹ **Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the LORD.**
2. Solomon's father, David, taught him to keep his commandments, Proverbs 4:3, 4; **Proverbs 7:2** ² **Keep my commandments, and live; and my law as the apple of thine eye.**

II Wisdom

1. Wisdom is shown to be the principal thing, Proverbs 4:5-7; **Proverbs 2:2-5** ² **So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding;** ³ **Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding;** ⁴ **If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures;** ⁵ **Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God.** **Matthew 13:44** ⁴⁴ **Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.**
2. The blessings that follow wisdom are enumerated, Proverbs 4:8, 9; **Proverbs 1:9** ⁹ **For they shall be an ornament of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck.** **Proverbs 3:22** ²² **So shall they be life unto thy soul, and grace to thy neck.**
3. Long life is promised to those who follow in the path of wisdom, Proverbs 4:10-13, 19; **Proverbs 3:2** ² **For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee.**

III Two Kinds of Paths

1. We are advised to keep out of the path of wickedness, Proverbs 4:14-17; **Proverbs 1:10-15** ¹⁰ **My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.** ¹¹ **If they say, Come with us, let us lay wait for blood, let us lurk privily for the innocent without cause:** ¹² **Let us swallow them up alive as the grave; and whole, as those that go down into the pit:** ¹³ **We shall find all precious substance, we shall fill our houses with spoil:** ¹⁴ **Cast in thy lot among us; let us all have one purse:** ¹⁵ **My son, walk not thou in the way with them; refrain thy foot from their path:** **Psalm 1:1** ¹ **Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.**
2. The path of the just is as the shining light, Proverbs 4:18; **Matthew 5:14** ¹⁴ **Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.** **2 Samuel 23:4** ⁴ **And he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain.**

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.

3 It is well that we keep our heart with all diligence, Proverbs 4:20-27.

NOTES:

Solomon was endowed with a rich parental inheritance. He had the advantage of being the child of David's later years and of growing up under the godly influence of Christian piety, which characterized those years. Solomon inherited his father's literary tastes, skill of ruling, and an interest in the things of God. He was brought up in the religion and learning of the Jews. He was well versed in literature and science, having written about three thousand proverbs, and his songs numbered a thousand and five (**1 Kings 4:29-34** ²⁹ **And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea shore.** ³⁰ **And Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country, and all the wisdom of Egypt.** ³¹ **For he was wiser than all men; than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, and Chalcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol: and his fame was in all nations round about.** ³² **And he spake three thousand proverbs: and his songs were a thousand and five.** ³³ **And he spake of trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall: he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes.** ³⁴ **And there came of all people to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all kings of the earth, which had heard of his wisdom**). Solomon became one of the literary prodigies of the world. We read in the Bible that, "the LORD loved him" (II Samuel 12:24).

David's Instruction to Solomon

Solomon opened this portion of his writings with the words: "Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father, and attend to know understanding. For I give you good doctrine, forsake ye not my law. For I was my father's son, tender and only beloved in the sight of my mother. He taught me also, and said unto me, Let thine heart retain my words: keep my commandments, and live" (Proverbs 4:1-4). Solomon wanted to pass on to succeeding generations the faithful teachings of a Christian father.

At an early age David had instructed his son, Solomon, in the Word of God, instilling in that young heart the law of God, good doctrine, and the necessity of keeping the commandments, that he might have eternal life. Under the Law, the Jews were instructed diligently to teach their children the things of God when they were sitting in their homes, while on a journey, upon doing to bed, and upon arising in the morning. Solomon gives us a vivid picture of this careful instruction by his father. "He taught me also, and said unto me, Let thine heart retain my words: keep my commandments, and live" (Proverbs 4:4).

Wisdom Sought

One of the first admonitions given the young future king was: "Get wisdom, get understanding: forget it not; neither decline from the words of my mouth. Forsake her not, and she shall preserve thee; love her, and she shall keep thee. Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding" (Proverbs 4:5-7). We know the instruction given here is to secure righteous and godly wisdom; for the Word of God tells us to seek that wisdom and it shall

preserve us, to love that wisdom and it shall keep us. There is little preserving or keeping power in the wisdom or knowledge of the world. To fear God is the beginning of wisdom, and godly fear brings repentance for sins. When we receive this wisdom, our heart and soul are opened and we have spiritual understanding.

Though a child, Solomon must have listened attentively and stored in his heart the righteous teachings of his father. After Solomon was made king, God appeared to him and asked him what He should give him. Solomon said: "Give me now wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people: for who can judge this thy people, that is so great?" (II Chronicles 1:10).

Solomon realized his utter dependence upon God for wisdom to rule a people "like the dust of the earth in multitude." His request pleased God and He gave him abundantly more than he asked. In addition to giving him wisdom, God granted him riches, wealth, and honour. "Exalt her (wisdom), and she shall promote thee: she shall bring thee to honour, when thou dost embrace her. She shall give to thine head an ornament of grace: a crown of glory shall she deliver to thee" (Proverbs 4:8, 9).

Two Paths

One of the next instructions given Solomon was, "Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men" (Proverbs 4:14). Here we find that there are two paths leading to eternity. One is the broad road that leads to eternal destruction. The other path is the way of the just.

Many people are to be found on the broad road that leads to destruction, because the lure of sin's pleasures has enticed them. It may be the enticement of the dance hall, the theatre, the card parties, or the ball games for them; or it may be that they are on the broad road because of sheer indifference on their part. Some are there because of rebellion in their heart against God. Some are there because they are afraid of the opinions of their friends. Some are there because they want money and the possessions of this life more than the wealth and treasures of God – the hope and assurance of eternal life with God in Heaven. Some are there because they do not want to bear the reproach of the Cross of Christ. Some are there because they want an easier way than the straight way, and they have invented a religion of their own or have followed a religion of another man's invention. Some are there because they have neglected their own salvation.

The way of the just is a narrow road and only a few are seeking to find it. It is beautifully described and the true Christian recognizes it when he reads: "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Proverbs 4:18). The path of the wicked is gloomy, dark, and dangerous; that of the righteous is open and full of light. The Christian is walking in the commandments of his God blameless: reflecting the light of salvation which he has received to all those who form the circle of his acquaintance or who come under his influence in one way or another.

The Heart Kept

The heart is the fountain of physical life. So, in spiritual things, we say that the heart is the seat of the Lord of Life and Glory, and that the streams of spiritual life proceed from Him, when He is enthroned there, to all powers and faculties of the being. We must watch with all diligence to be sure that this fountain does not become clogged and the stream of life thereby cut off.

Then we are to put away from us a forward mouth and perverse lips; and, as it were, walk straight ahead. If the heart is pure and holy, all its purposes will be pure and good. Hastiness, rash speeches, and impatience will be avoided. Ponder the path of your feet to see that you do not take on any bad habits. Consider well all your behaviour.

The Conclusion

In another part of the Bible we are told the conclusion of the whole matter: "Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil" (Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14).

During our Christian life we hear many testimonies of young men and young women who had gone their own wilful way, disregarding the will of God; but that God, in mercy, had brought them to judgment. Some of these had Christian parents who had instructed them in the right way and had never stopped praying for them as long as they lived. While in the life of sin they had heard, many times, in their ear of memory, the prayers of their godly parents and often had remembered the words they had been taught. God had used this means to bring them to the place of repentance once more.

Others who had never had a Christian environment tell that God led them into the light of the Gospel in one way or another. They, with those who knew of the Christian way and its requirements, had suffered for their sins and had been judged, in mercy, for their violation of the laws of God and man. God had permitted sorrow and trouble to come to them that they might see the greater condemnation that was coming to them if they persisted in the wrong way.

Evil deeds may be hidden from man but God sees them all. Nothing is hidden from His sight and all evil deeds will eventually be brought to light and judgment. The good that is done in secret, by the godly, God will reward openly. Solomon's most beneficent advice to children is: "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth" (Ecclesiastes 12:1).

Remember God in your youth, in order that you may have a long and blessed life, that you may be saved from the trouble and misery that befalls the sinner. How pleased God must be with that individual who has been saved at an early age; one who has never seen the inside of a theatre, never played a game of cards nor gone to a dance; one who took the advice of godly parents and never let his feet wander into the paths of sin. Such children are blessed of the Lord.

Nevertheless, there is forgiveness and the same fullness of divine love for those who have left a Christian home and have gone out into sin and sorrow, as well as for those who never had the advantages of a Christian home. There is a beautiful life of service ahead, and the consequent heavenly rewards, for those who come to God and who faithfully serve Him, no matter at what stage of life they sincerely pray for forgiveness. When God forgives He forgets. The sins of our life are blotted out when the pardoning grace of God is manifested toward us. We are made as though we had never sinned. The Lord hates sin. He gave His life's Blood to redeem sinners. He loves the soul of every sinner, but He hates the sin the sinner has committed.

God created us that we might be happy, but we can be happy only in Him. Remember Him for His love, His mercy, His care, and His protection. Remember Him? How could we forget Him? **He gave His life for us!**

QUESTIONS

1. Who gave to Solomon such wise instructions?
2. What did he say was the principal thing to get?
3. Name a number of things wisdom will do for you.
4. Tell about the two paths pointed out in this chapter.
5. What does Solomon tell us to put away from us?
6. How are we to guard the heart?