

The Book of Proverbs

The Path Wisdom Perfects

Chapter 2: Wisdom *protects* our paths (*Prov 2:7-8*)

2:7] *He stores up sound wisdom for the upright and is a shield to those who walk in integrity*
8] *guarding the paths of the just and protecting the way of his faithful ones.*

Chapter 3: Wisdom *directs* our paths (*Prov 3:5-6*)

3:5] *Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not depend on your own understanding.*
6] *In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.*

Chapter 4: Wisdom *perfects* our paths (**Prov 4:18**)

4:18] *The path of the righteous is like the light of dawn that grows brighter until the full light of day.*

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The Book of Proverbs

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Proverbs 4 *Diligently Pursue Wisdom*

The Only Path into Life 4:1—27

***Let your heart hold fast my words;
keep my commandments, and live.***

PROVERBS 4:4

***Keep hold of instruction; do not let go:
guard her..for she is your life.***

PROVERBS 4:13

***Keep your heart with all vigilance,
for from it flow the springs of life.***

PROVERBS 4:23

Wisdom is personified as a beautiful woman who invites us to her lavish banquet

Folly is the adulteress or prostitute who tempts us, leading us into poverty and death.

The one you love, is the one who will control your life. 2

The Book of Proverbs

Wisdom Perfects Your Path (Prov. 4)

Key verse **4:18** - ***“But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.”***

The picture is that of the sunrise - ***“the first gleam of dawn,”*** NIV and the increasing of the light on the pilgrim path as the day advances.

If we walk in the way of God’s wisdom, the path gets brighter and brighter and there is no sunset!

God has a plan for each of His children (***Eph. 2:10***),

Walk in His wisdom and we can trust that:

“The LORD will perfect that which concerns me” (Ps. 138:8 KJV).

Our path may not be an easy one, but it will always be a fulfilling one as we walk in the will of the Father.

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Proverbs 4:1-27 The Only Path into Life

Following Wisdom’s first call we have three chapters that present the path of wisdom.

The words **“path”** and **“way”** are each used 13 times in these chapters.

Solomon spoke of his boyhood when his parents David and Bathsheba taught him. He was then their only child though later he had three brothers (***1 Chr 3:5***).

Proverbs 4:4b-9 is a quote from Solomon’s father, David.

By quoting these words Solomon was passing the instruction on to his sons.

The three generations involved here illustrate ***Deut 6:2***.

David had urged young Solomon to obey his words wholeheartedly (with all your heart; cf. ***Prov 3:5***).

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Proverbs 4:1-27 The Only Path into Life

*Mat 7:13 Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:
14 Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.*

- 1) We can't say "Yes" to everything,
neither can we say "No" to everything.
 - 2) Whenever we say, "No" to something,
we are saying, "Yes" to something else.
- Whenever we say, "Yes" to something,
we are saying, "No" to something else.

Proverbs 4:1-27 The Only Path into Life

Even when we see the stupidity of our sins and
how empty they are and
how they only make us sad,
that realization still does not change us.

We start changing only:

- when we see Christ, **2 Cor 5:17-21**
- when we see that Christ will make us alive in ways our favorite sins and trespasses cannot,
- when we see that in Christ we are not losing anything but damnation and gaining everything we desire.

Joh_10:10 The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

Proverbs 4:1-27 The Only Path into Life

Proverbs 4 is not primarily about don'ts.

Chapter 4 is a very positive chapter is about how we can live.

The "don'ts" have their place.

But, Jesus said:

"I came that they may have life and have it abundantly" (John 10:10).

Every one of us wants that abundant life.

We do not deserve it but we can have it because Christ gives it to us on terms of grace.

However, to gain the new, we must give up the old.

James 1:1 (Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights")

The gospel is not about what we give to God but what he gives to us — true life in all its richness and fullness.

The Gospel → The Good News

1Jn 2:1-3

My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin.

And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;

***and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins;
and not for ours only,
but also for those of the whole world.***

*By this we know that we have come to know Him,
if we keep His commandments.*

The Gospel → What is the Good News?

2Co 5:13-21

.... For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; and **He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves**, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf....

Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation,

namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us;

we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Jesus: Believe Him or Not ...

Mar 1:15repent ye, and believe the gospel.

Repent: Turn around and go the other way...

Act 3:19, Act 17:30, Act 20:21, Act 26:20; Mat 3:2, Mat 3:8-9, Mat 4:17, Mat 21:28-32; Luk 15:1-32; Luk 24:47

Act 16:31 ...Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved...

Rom 4:24it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead;

Rom 10:9 ...if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved....

Act 2:38-39 KJV

(38) Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

(39) For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

The Gospel → The Good News

1Co 15:1-8

Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, by which also you are saved,

if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain.

For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received,

- **that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,**
- **and that He was buried,**
- **and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,**

Power to become...

Joh_1:12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:

Rom_1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

Eph_1:19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,

Proverbs 4:1-27 The Only Path into Life

Proverbs 4 shows us the only path into life:

Jesus Christ.

The chapter breaks down into three paragraphs:

- how to get going (**vv. 1—9**),
 - knowing God's Word,
- how to keep going (**vv. 10—19**),
 - trusting God's providence and God's divine provision and care as our guide and protector
- how not to get lost along the way (**vv. 20—27**).
 - obeying God's will.

Pro 4:1-9 NASB

- (1) *Hear, O sons, the instruction of a father, And give attention that you may gain understanding,*
- (2) *For I give you sound teaching; Do not abandon my instruction.*
- (3) *When I was a son to my father, Tender and the only son in the sight of my mother,*
- (4) *Then he taught me and said to me, "Let your heart hold fast my words; Keep my commandments and live;*
- (5) *Acquire wisdom! Acquire understanding! Do not forget nor turn away from the words of my mouth.*
- (6) *"Do not forsake her, and she will guard you; Love her, and she will watch over you.*
- (7) *"The beginning of wisdom is: Acquire wisdom; And with all your acquiring, get understanding.*
- (8) *"Prize her, and she will exalt you; She will honor you if you embrace her.*
- (9) *"She will place on your head a garland of grace; She will present you with a crown of beauty."*

PROVERBS 4:1-4 The First Paragraph

How to Get Going

*Hear, O sons, a father's instruction,
and be attentive, that you may gain insight,
for I give you good precepts;
do not forsake my teaching.
When I was a son with my father,
tender, the only one in the sight of my mother,
he taught me and said to me,
"Let your heart hold fast my words;
keep my commandments, and live."*

We are overhearing a father of teenage sons coaching them in wisdom.

He tells them what he learned when he himself was a boy.

He is saying, "I remember when I was a kid, how my dad got me going into a great life."

Jeremiah 6:16 Seek the old ways...

Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein.

We meet the grandfather – (King David)

When I was a son with my father, v3

Evidently grandfather has died, because the father informs his sons about how his dad made such a positive impact during his youth.

We are being invited into a tradition of wisdom.

Tradition is previous generations handing down to us something of their own.

Do as I say, not as I do...

We have all heard someone say this at some point.
Maybe they were trying to be cute, Maybe not!
Either way, it really is hypocritical to the extreme...

Solomon is NOT saying this. Solomon is saying,
Don't do as I did...Do as I've learned to do
Learn from my mistakes and failures
Don't repeat them yourself...

Seek the old ways...wisdom is of old...

Our faithful forefathers are not disqualified from speaking into our lives just because they may have died..

In fact, they have an advantage over us.

They fought the good fight, they finished the race, they kept the faith (2 Timothy 4:7).

Proverbs is alerting us to the value of past voices.

“Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith” (Hebrews 13:7).

We do not have to imitate their style, but we would be fools not to imitate their faith. It took them all the way into life.

C. S. Lewis said that,

“After reading a modern book, we should not read another one until we have read at least one old book.”

The Old guys speak from proven experience, not theory. ;

Knowing God's Word (4:1—9).

“When when I was a boy ...“

Watch the listener eyes roll ... but the hearers just might learn a lot if they paid attention and listened.

Here the father says he learned wisdom from his father, and now he's passing it on to the next generation.

Actually, this is the way God has ordained for His truth to be preserved and invested from generation to generation

(Deut. 6:3-9; Eph. 6:1-4; 2 Tim. 1:3-5; 2:2; 3:14-17).

Children who have godly parents and grandparents ought to give thanks to the Lord for their rich heritage, instead of scoffing at that heritage and abandoning it for the way of the world.

PROVERBS 4:1-4

(Pro 4:1 ISV*) Listen, children, [Lit. sons] to your father's instruction, and pay attention in order to gain understanding. 2) I give you sound teaching, so do not abandon my instruction. [Or law] 3) When I was a son to my father, not yet strong [Lit. delicate] and an only son to my mother, 4) ¶ he taught me and told me, “Let your heart fully embrace what I have to say; [Lit. embrace my words] keep my commandments and live!

(Pro 4:1 KJV+) Hear,^{H8085} ye children,^{H1121} the instruction^{H4148} of a father,^{H1} and attend^{H7181} to know^{H3045} understanding.^{H998} 2) For^{H3588} I give^{H5414} you good^{H2896} doctrine,^{H3948} forsake^{H5800} ye not^{H408} my law.^{H8451} 3) For^{H3588} I was^{H1961} my father's^{H1} son,^{H1121} tender^{H7390} and only^{H3173} beloved in the sight^{H6440} of my mother.^{H517} 4) He taught^{H3384} me also, and said^{H559} unto me, Let thine heart^{H3820} retain^{H8551} my words.^{H1697} keep^{H8104} my commandments,^{H4687} and live.^{H2421}

PROVERBS 4:1-4

(Pro 4:1 NASB) Hear, O sons, the instruction of a father, And give attention that you may gain understanding, 2) For I give you sound teaching; Do not abandon my instruction. 3) When I was a son to my father, Tender and the only son in the sight of my mother, 4) Then he taught me and said to me, "Let your heart hold fast my words; Keep my commandments and live;

(Pro 4:1 NIV) Listen, my sons, to a father's instruction; pay attention and gain understanding. 2) I give you sound learning, so do not forsake my teaching. 3) When I was a boy in my father's house, still tender, and an only child of my mother, 4) he taught me and said, "Lay hold of my words with all your heart; keep my commands and you will live.

That is, have eternal life.

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PROVERBS 4:5-6

(Pro 4:5 ISV) "Get wisdom! Get understanding! Do not forget or turn aside from the words of my mouth! 6) "Do not abandon her, and she will protect you. Love her, and she will watch over you.*

(Pro 4:5 KJV+) Get^{H7069} wisdom,^{H2451} get^{H7069} understanding:^{H998} forget^{H7911} it not;^{H408} neither^{H408} decline^{H5186} from the words^{H4480} ^{H561} of my mouth,^{H6310} 6) Forsake^{H5800} her not,^{H408} and she shall preserve^{H8104} thee: love^{H157} her, and she shall keep^{H5341} thee.

(Pro 4:5 NASB) Acquire wisdom! Acquire understanding! Do not forget nor turn away from the words of my mouth. 6) "Do not forsake her, and she will guard you; Love her, and she will watch over you.

(Pro 4:5 NIV) Get wisdom, get understanding; do not forget my words or swerve from them. 6) Do not forsake wisdom, and she will protect you; love her, and she will watch over you.

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PROVERBS 4:4-12

If you want God's wisdom, it will cost you all your preconceived ideas about how life is supposed to work.

- God's wisdom will make you alive (**v. 4**),
- his wisdom will "keep" you and "guard" you (**v. 6**),
- his wisdom will "exalt" you and "honor" you and crown you with beauty (**vv. 8, 9**).

You face a choice today:

- the proven way of Christ versus
- the defunct way of man.

Whichever you choose it will cost you all you have.

But, which path will give you everything you want?

To follow Jesus you need to become decisive.

Though it cost you all you have, it will get you Christ and all He has...

Decisiveness is all you need to get going.

You've got to want it single mindedly

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Knowing God's Word (4:1—9).

"Get wisdom" (Prov. 4:5) suggests **"buy wisdom"**

the Hebrew word carries the idea of a commercial transaction.

There's a price to pay if you want to know God's truth and obey it.

"Buy the truth, and sell it not" (23:23).

Parents and grandparents can teach us,

but only we can receive the Word into our hearts, cherish it, and pay the price to obey it.

Rev 3:14-22

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PROVERBS 4:7-12

This father here in Proverbs is urging his son to set his heart firmly on the only prize in all this world that cannot fail:

Get 'wisdom; get insight ...

The beginning of wisdom is this: get wisdom, and whatever you get, get insight. (Proverbs 4:7)

God our Father is looking into our eyes and saying this to us right now:

“Whatever you get, get insight.”

“Though it cost all you have, get understanding.”

Pro 4:10-19 NASB

- (10) *Hear, my son, and accept my sayings And the years of your life will be many.*
- (11) *I have directed you in the way of wisdom; I have led you in upright paths.*
- (12) *When you walk, your steps will not be impeded; And if you run, you will not stumble.*
- (13) *Take hold of instruction; do not let go. Guard her, for she is your life.*
- (14) *Do not enter the path of the wicked And do not proceed in the way of evil men.*
- (15) *Avoid it, do not pass by it; Turn away from it and pass on.*
- (16) *For they cannot sleep unless they do evil; And they are robbed of sleep unless they make someone stumble.*
- (17) *For they eat the bread of wickedness And drink the wine of violence.*
- (18) *But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, That shines brighter and brighter until the full day.*
- (19) *The way of the wicked is like darkness; They do not know over what they stumble.*

Trusting God's providence (4:10—19).

Place God's truth in your heart and God renews your mind (**Rom. 12:2**)

This enables you to think wisely and make right decisions and experience the guidance of God day by day.

“You will show me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore” (Ps. 16:11 NKJV)

If you are willing to do God's will, you will have God's guidance (**John 7:17**), but if you treat God's will like a buffet lunch, choosing only what pleases you, He will never direct you.

The will of God isn't for the curious; it's for the serious.

God's children can't expect God's leading if they jump back and forth between the path of wisdom and the path of the wicked (**Prov. 4:14—17**).

Trusting God's providence (4:10—19).

You will cross paths with the wicked but don't merge with it.

Stay as far away from the path of the wicked as you can!

Don't walk it!

Don't enter it!

Avoid it!

Don't go near it!

Go as far from it as you can!

Certainly we must interact with, be a witness to unsaved people whom the Lord brings to us, but we must never adopt their lifestyle or imitate their ways.

Lead, don't follow them...

You cannot lead from behind...

Note how Jesus always urges us to follow...

- A shepherd leads
 - His flock follows willingly by their own choice.
- A herder drives, pushes from behind
 - His 'flock' is coerced, forced to go in whether they want to or not.

You cannot follow from in front...

PROVERBS 4 The second paragraph...

The key metaphor in this second paragraph is "the way."

Verse 11: "the way of wisdom ... the paths of uprightness."

Verse 14: "the path of the wicked . . . the way of the evil."

Verse 18: "the path of the righteous."

Verse 19: "the way of the wicked."

We face only two alternatives — the wise way or the evil way.

We might prefer three ways to choose from

1. — a rotten life of folly over at one extreme,
2. — a super-duper life of wisdom over at the other extreme, or
3. — in the middle a half-decent life of mediocrity that we don't mind settling for; a good enough existence.

God is saying there are only two ways:

1. — a gloomy disaster of a life without his wisdom and
2. — a bright success of an abundant life with his wisdom.

God's wisdom is not an optional extra: ". . . **she is your life**" (v13)³¹

Trusting God's providence (4:10—19).

When you're living in the will of God, your path gets brighter and brighter, not darker and darker (1 John 1:5—10).

Do not let the lessons of wisdom slip through your fingers.

"Take fast hold of instruction; let her not go" (Prov. 4:13).

Hold on to wisdom the way a child holds a parent's hand and trusts Mother or Father to guide and protect.

God is able to keep us from stumbling (Jude 24-25) if we'll keep ourselves in His wisdom and live for His glory...

"Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen."

PROVERBS 4:7-12

(Pro 4:7 ISV*) "Wisdom is of utmost importance, therefore get wisdom, and with all your effort work to acquire understanding. 8) "Prize her and she will exalt you. Indeed, if you embrace her, she will honor you. 9) "She will place on your head a graceful garland; she will present to you a crown of beauty." 10) Listen, my son: accept my words, and you'll live a long, long time. [Lit. and the years of your life will be many] 11) I have directed you in the way of wisdom, and I have led you along straight [Or upright] paths. 12) When you walk, your step will not be hindered, and when you run, you will not stumble.

PROVERBS 4:7-12

(Pro 4:7 KJV+) Wisdom^{H2451} is the principal thing;^{H7225} therefore get^{H7069} wisdom:^{H2451} and with all^{H3605} thy getting^{H7075} get^{H7069} understanding.^{H998}
8) Exalt^{H5549} her, and she shall promote^{H7311} thee: she shall bring thee to honour,^{H3513} when^{H3588} thou dost embrace^{H2263} her. **9)** She shall give^{H5414} to thine head^{H7218} an ornament^{H3880} of grace:^{H2580} a crown^{H5850} of glory^{H8597} shall she deliver^{H4042} to thee. **10)** Hear,^{H8085} O my son,^{H1121} and receive^{H3947} my sayings;^{H561} and the years^{H8141} of thy life^{H2416} shall be many.^{H7235} **11)** I have taught^{H3384} thee in the way^{H1870} of wisdom;^{H2451} I have led^{H1869} thee in right^{H3476} paths.^{H4570} **12)** When thou goest,^{H1980} thy steps^{H6806} shall not^{H3808} be straitened;^{H3334} and when^{H518} thou runnest,^{H7323} thou shalt not^{H3808} stumble.^{H3782}

(Pro 4:7 NASB) "The beginning of wisdom is: Acquire wisdom; And with all your acquiring, get understanding. **8)** "Prize her, and she will exalt you; She will honor you if you embrace her. **9)** "She will place on your head a garland of grace; She will present you with a crown of beauty." **10)** Hear, my son, and accept my sayings And the years of your life will be many. **11)** I have directed you in the way of wisdom; I have led you in upright paths. **12)** When you walk, your steps will not be impeded; And if you run, you will not stumble.

PROVERBS 4:7-12

(Pro 4:7 NIV) Wisdom is supreme; therefore get wisdom. Though it cost all you have, get understanding. **8)** Esteem her, and she will exalt you; embrace her, and she will honor you. **9)** She will set a garland of grace on your head and present you with a crown of splendor. **10)** Listen, my son, accept what I say, and the years of your life will be many. **11)** I guide you in the way of wisdom and lead you along straight paths. **12)** When you walk, your steps will not be hampered; when you run, you will not stumble.

PROVERBS 4:13

(Pro 4:13 ISV*) Hold on to instruction, do not let it go! Guard wisdom, [Lit. her] because she is your life!
(Pro 4:13 KJV+) Take fast hold^{H2388} of instruction;^{H4148} let her not^{H408} go:^{H7503} keep^{H5341} her; for^{H3588} she^{H1931} is thy life.^{H2416}
(Pro 4:13 NASB) Take hold of instruction; do not let go. Guard her, for she is your life.
(Pro 4:13 NIV) Hold on to instruction, do not let it go; guard it well, for it is your life.

[life] Eternal life

1Co 1:30 It is God who has made you part of Christ Jesus. And Christ has become for us wisdom from God.

He is the reason we are right with God and pure enough to be in his presence. Christ is the one who set us free from sin. **31** So, as the Scriptures say, "Whoever boasts should boast only about the Lord."

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Avoiding the Ways of the Wicked How to Keep Going

**Do not enter the path of the wicked,
and do not walk in the way of the evil.
Avoid it; do not go on it;
turn away from it and pass on.
For they cannot sleep unless they have done wrong:
they are robbed of sleep unless they have made
someone stumble.
For they eat the bread of wickedness
and drink the wine of violence. (Proverbs 4:14—17)**

The path of life is a journey, there is no quick once and for all fix. We walk the path one step at a time with constant, moment by moment commitments to the way of Christ. We are given his warning that one of these two path choices before us leads us into a minefield.

Avoiding the Ways of the Wicked

How to Keep Going

Evil becomes compulsive, and none of us is above it, because this is the nature of our depraved hearts.

“Everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin” (John 8:34).

Sin is a slavery deep inside, an emotional engine we cannot shut down just by choosing to do so.

We scarcely understand or realize the impact of the dark powers we unleash inside ourselves when we turn one step away from the path of Christ's wisdom.

PROVERBS 4:14

(Pro 4:14 ISV*) Do not enter the path of the wicked, or go along the way of evil men.

(Pro 4:14 KJV+) Enter^{H935} not^{H408} into the path^{H734} of the wicked,^{H7563} and go^{H833} not^{H408} in the way^{H1870} of evil^{H7451} men.

(Pro 4:14 NASB) Do not enter the path of the wicked And do not proceed in the way of evil men.

(Pro 4:14 NIV) Do not set foot on the path of the wicked or walk in the way of evil men.

Three examples of avoiding wicked paths:

1. Rechabites (**Jer 35**)
2. Joseph (**Gen 39:7-23**)
3. Jesus (**Heb 4:14-16**)

Three examples of entering wicked paths:

1. Lot (**Gen 13:10-13**)
2. Solomon (**1 Kings 11:1-8**)
3. Jehoshaphat (**2 Chron 18:1; 21:6**)

PROVERBS 4:15-17

(Pro 4:15 ISV*) Avoid it! Don't travel on it! Turn away from it, and pass on by. 16) For they cannot sleep unless they are doing evil, and they are robbed of their sleep unless they cause someone to stumble. 17) For they eat the bread of wickedness, and they drink the wine of violence.

(Pro 4:15 KJV+) Avoid^{H6544} it, pass^{H5674} not^{H408} by it, turn^{H7847} from^{H4480 H5921} it, and pass away.^{H5674} 16) For^{H3588} they sleep^{H3462} not,^{H3808} except^{H518 H3808} they have done mischief;^{H7489} and their sleep^{H8142} is taken away,^{H1497} unless^{H518 H3808} they cause some to fall.^{H3782} 17) For^{H3588} they eat^{H3898} the bread^{H3899} of wickedness,^{H7562} and drink^{H8354} the wine^{H3196} of violence.^{H2555}

PROVERBS 4:15-17

(Pro 4:15 NASB) Avoid it, do not pass by it; Turn away from it and pass on. 16) For they cannot sleep unless they do evil; And they are robbed of sleep unless they make someone stumble. 17) For they eat the bread of wickedness And drink the wine of violence.

(Pro 4:15 NIV) Avoid it, do not travel on it; turn from it and go on your way. 16) For they cannot sleep till they do evil; they are robbed of slumber till they make someone fall. 17) They eat the bread of wickedness and drink the wine of violence.

PROVERBS 4:15-17

(Pro 4:15 NASB) *Avoid it, do not pass by it; Turn away from it and pass on. 16) For they cannot sleep unless they do evil; And they are robbed of sleep unless they make someone stumble. 17) For they eat the bread of wickedness And drink the wine of violence.*

The wise father in Proverbs is warning us that we will be tempted, and behind every temptation is an overwhelming power of darkness and despair.

Realize how much is at stake in what we choose.

PROVERBS 4:18

But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, which shines brighter and brighter until full day.

The best defense is a good offense

- our hope in Christ
- our bright hope in the promise of the gospel:

What keeps us moving forward in the way of God's wisdom is hope, confidence, expectancy.

“He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ” (Philippians 1:6).

That bright gospel hope is how you keep going, step by step, moment by moment, on the right path.

PROVERBS 4:18

(Pro 4:18 ISV*) *The path of the righteous is like the light of dawn that grows brighter until the full light of day.*

(Pro 4:18 KJV+) *But the path^{H734} of the just^{H6662} is as the shining^{H5051} light,^{H216} that shineth^{H215} more and more^{H1980} unto^{H5704} the perfect^{H3559} day.^{H3117}*

(Pro 4:18 NASB) *But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, That shines brighter and brighter until the full day.*

(Pro 4:18 NIV) *The path of the righteous is like the first gleam of dawn, shining ever brighter till the full light of day.*

PROVERBS 4:18

(Pro 4:18 NASB) *But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, That shines brighter and brighter until the full day.*

The 4th prophecy in Proverbs (**Pr 4:18**, being fulfilled).

Next, **Pr 5:22**.

Pr 4:14-17,19 show the gloomy, dark, and violent path of the unjust.

In **Prov 4:18** the bright and luminous path of the just is revealed.

Five examples of increasing light to men:

1. Jacob (**Gen 32:24-32; 49:10,18**)
2. Nathaniel (**John 1:46-51**)
3. Eunuch (**Acts 8:27-39**)
4. Cornelius (**Acts 10**)
5. All Christians (**Acts 26:18**)

PROVERBS 4:19

(Pro 4:19 ISV) But the way of the wicked is like deep darkness, and they do not know what they are stumbling over.*

(Pro 4:19 KJV+) The way^{H1870} of the wicked^{H7563} is as darkness:^{H653} they know^{H3045} not^{H3808} at what^{H4100} they stumble.^{H3782}

(Pro 4:19 NASB) The way of the wicked is like darkness; They do not know over what they stumble.

(Pro 4:19 NIV) But the way of the wicked is like deep darkness; they do not know what makes them stumble.

Five examples of darkness in the way of wicked:

1. Korah (**Num 16:16-19**)
2. Ahab (**1 Kings 16:31**)
3. Babylon (**Isa 47:11**)
4. Jews (**Jer 5:19,25; 44:15-23**)
5. Gentile world (**Rom 1:21-32**)

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Pro 4:20-27 NASB

(20) My son, give attention to my words; Incline your ear to my sayings.

(21) Do not let them depart from your sight; Keep them in the midst of your heart.

(22) For they are life to those who find them And health to all their body.

(23) Watch over your heart with all diligence, For from it flow the springs of life.

(24) Put away from you a deceitful mouth And put devious speech far from you.

(25) Let your eyes look directly ahead And let your gaze be fixed straight in front of you.

(26) Watch the path of your feet And all your ways will be established.

(27) Do not turn to the right nor to the left; Turn your foot from evil.

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Obeying God's will (4:20—27).

A personal spiritual inventory.

Are we really living in obedience to the Lord.

- “What comes into my ears?” (**v. 20**).
- “What is within my heart?” (**v. 23**).
- “What is upon my lips?” (**v. 24**).
- “What is before my eyes?” (**v. 25**).
- “What is beyond my path?” (**vv. 26—27**).

It shouldn't be too difficult to make right choices!

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“What comes into my ears?” (v. 20).

Whatever enters my ears will ultimately influence my mind, my heart, and my decisions, so I'd better be careful what I listen to.

We are warned to beware of

“obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking” (Eph. 5:4 NIV),

Psalm 1:1 tells us to avoid ungodly counsel.

When people speak we must be able to identify God's voice (**John 10:3—5, 16**) and obey what He says.

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PROVERBS 4:20-21

Remembering the Counsel of a Wise Father

The Third Paragraph

How not to get lost along the way

(Pro 4:20 ISV*) My son, pay attention to my words, and listen closely [Lit. turn your ear] to what I say. 21) ¶ Do not let them out of your sight; keep them within your heart.

(Pro 4:20 KJV+) My son,^{H1121} attend^{H7181} to my words,^{H1697} incline^{H5186} thine ear^{H241} unto my sayings.^{H561} 21) Let them not^{H408} depart^{H3868} from thine eyes,^{H4480 H5869} keep^{H8104} them in the midst^{H8432} of thine heart.^{H3824}

(Pro 4:20 NASB) My son, give attention to my words; Incline your ear to my sayings. 21) Do not let them depart from your sight; Keep them in the midst of your heart.

(Pro 4:20 NIV) My son, pay attention to what I say; listen closely to my words. 21) Do not let them out of your sight, keep them within your heart;

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PROVERBS 4:22

(Pro 4:22 ISV*) For they are life to those who find them, and healing to their whole body. [Lit. flesh]

(Pro 4:22 KJV+) For^{H3588} they^{H1992} are life^{H2416} unto those that find^{H4672} them, and health^{H4832} to all^{H3605} their flesh.^{H1320}

(Pro 4:22 NASB) For they are life to those who find them And health to all their body.

(Pro 4:22 NIV) for they are life to those who find them and health to a man's whole body.

Four secrets of health and eternal life:

1. Attend to my words (**Prov 4:20**).
2. Incline your ears to my sayings (**Prov 4:20**).
3. Constantly look into God's Word (**Ps 1:2-3; James 1:21-27; 2 Tim 3:16**).
4. Keep the Word in the heart (**Prov 4:21; Rom 1:16; 10:17**).

These secrets are life and health to all who find and obey them (**Ps 91; 107:20; John 15:7; Rom 1:16**).

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PROVERBS 4:22

(Pro 4:22 NASB) For they are life to those who find them And health to all their body.

[health] Hebrew: **marpe**° (OT:4832).

Translated:

- "health" (**Prov 4:22; 12:18; 13:17; 16:24; Jer 8:15**);
- "healing" (**Jer 14:19; Mal 4:2**);
- "cure" (**Jer 33:6**);
- "remedy" (**2 Chron 36:16; Prov 6:15; 29:1**);
- "sound" (**Prov 14:30**); and
- "wholesome" (**Prov 15:4**).

Physical health and healing are clearly being referred to in all these passages.

"health to all their flesh," not spirit.

When Christians awake to their full rights in the gospel they can have health of body as well as soul (**3 John 2; 1 Peter 2:24; Matt 8:16-17; James 5:14-16**).

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PROVERBS 4:23

**Keep your heart with all vigilance,
for from it flow the springs of life.**

In this final paragraph we are being called to a concentrated focus. A lack of self-awareness will get us lost.

The counsel of verse 23 is the opposite of the wisdom of our age.

Life does not flow from the outside in;
it flows from the inside out.

We need our hearts continuously filled ...

"If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water'" (John 7:37, 38).

We will not lose our way on the journey of life if we keep coming to Jesus, drinking in his acceptance, forgiveness, promises, his love.

Everything else flows out from deep in there.

Your heart has a hunger, a thirst, that only Christ can satisfy overflowingly, forever, freely, for you.

What is within my heart?" (v. 23).

Whatever the heart loves,
the ears will hear and the eyes will see.

"Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life" (v. 23 NIV).

If we pollute that wellspring, the infection will spread;
before long, hidden appetites will become open sins and public shame.

The Bible warns us to avoid

- a double heart (**Ps. 12:2**),
- a hard heart (**Prov. 28:14**),
- a proud heart (**Prov. 21:4**),
- an unbelieving heart (**Heb. 3:12**),
- a cold heart (**Matt. 24:12**), and
- an unclean heart (**Ps. 1:10**).

"Search me, O God, and know my heart" (Ps 139:23)

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PROVERBS 4:23

(Pro 4:23 ISV*) ¶Above everything else [Lit. Above all watching] guard your heart, because from it flow the springs of life.

(Pro 4:23 KJV+) Keep^{H5341} thy heart^{H3820} with all^{H4480} H3605 diligence;^{H4929} for^{H3588} out of^{H4480} it are the issues^{H8444} of life.^{H2416}

(Pro 4:23 NASB) Watch over your heart with all diligence, For from it flow the springs of life.

(Pro 4:23 NIV) Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.

Guard the heart from going astray, for out of it are the issues of life.

The reference is to the evil and good deeds that come from the heart (center) of man. (**Mark 7:19-21**). The source point of what we love...

The heart symbolizes the center of one's innermost being.

For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. Matthew 15:19

When one keeps the heart from evil it is an easy matter to obey the other commands of this passage (**Prov 4:23-27**).

PROVERBS 4:24-27

***Put away from you a crooked mouth,
and put devious lips far from you.¹⁰
Let your eyes look directly forward,
and your gaze be straight before you.
Ponder the path of your feet;
then all your ways will be sure.
Do not swerve to the right or to the left;
turn your foot away from evil.***

If we are distracted from our real-time connection with God,

- our hearts grow cold and our mouths become reckless and
- our eyes become wayward and
- our feet wander

we are only one misstep away from life-shattering catastrophe.

If you will keep your heart with all vigilance for his sake, Christ will fill you with his springs of life.

With a heart filled by Christ, you will not lose your way.

Romans 12:1 Romans 8:21

The Lord Jesus Christ who died for you also claims you,
all that you are from head to toe.

"I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship" (Ro 12:1)

We do not have to give ourselves to raw evil to end up there;

We only have to un-guard our hearts,
We only have to stop being vigilant.

The whole creation ***"will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God" (Ro 8:21).***

If you are in Christ, that massive liberation will include all of you,
parts and whole, everything about you.

Christ has set you apart to himself.

Christ requires the final say in your life.

Give it to Him and his purpose of grace will dawn in you.

“What is upon my lips?” (v. 24).

Whatever is in the heart will ultimately come out of the mouth (**Matt. 12:33-34**).

God’s children must be careful to have:

“**sound speech, that cannot be condemned**” (**Titus 2:8**),

speech that’s gracious and “**seasoned with salt**” (**Col. 4:6 NKJV**).

Words we hear and dismiss we, (“Cum grano salis”) “take with a grain of salt.”

Christians are supposed to put the salt into their speech and keep their words pure and honest.

Salt flavors, preserves, keeps from slipping, melts...

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“What is upon my lips?” (v. 24).

Proverbs has a great deal to say about human speech; the word mouth is used over 50 times and the word lips over 40 times in the Authorized Version.

Solomon warns us about

- perverse lips (**Prov. 4:24**),
 - lying lips (**12:22**),
 - flattering lips (**20:19**),
- deceptive lips (**24:28**), and
- undisciplined lips (**10:19**).

“He who guards his lips guards his life, but he who speaks rashly will come to ruin” (13:3 NIV).

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PROVERBS 4:24

(**Pro 4:24 ISV***) **Never talk deceptively and don’t keep company with people whose speech is corrupt.** [Lit. keep corrupt lips far from you]

(**Pro 4:24 KJV+**) **Put away^{H5493} from^{H4480} thee a froward^{H6143} mouth,^{H6310} and perverse^{H3891} lips^{H8193} put far^{H7368} from^{H4480} thee.**

(**Pro 4:24 NASB**) **Put away from you a deceitful mouth And put devious speech far from you.**

(**Pro 4:24 NIV**) **Put away perversity from your mouth; keep corrupt talk far from your lips.**

Froward: Perverse; corrupt; unyielding; ungovernable; refractory; disobedient; peevish.

A perverse mouth is referred to in a threefold way:

1. Froward speaking (**Prov 2:12**)
2. Froward mouth (**Prov 4:24; 6:12**)
3. Perverse lips (**Prov 4:24**)

This covers all the speaking faculties and their sinful exercise.

Every idle word will be judged (**Matt 12:36-37**).

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“What is before my eyes?” (v. 25).

Abraham was the friend of God. He walked by faith and “**looked for a city ... whose builder and maker is God**” (**Heb. 11:10**).

Lot became a friend of the world because he walked by sight and moved toward the wicked city of Sodom (**Gen. 13:10, 12**)

Everybody has some vision before them that helps to determine their values, actions, and plans.

“I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes” (Ps. 101:3),
“Turn my eyes away from worthless things” (Ps. 119:37).

If you are “**looking unto Jesus**” (**Heb. 12:2**) as you walk the path of life, then keep that posture of faith.

If you look back (**Luke 9:62**) or around (**Matt. 14:30**), you may go on a detour.

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PROVERBS 4:25

(Pro 4:25 ISV) Let your eyes look directly ahead; fix your gaze straight in front of you.*

(Pro 4:25 KJV+) Let thine eyes^{H5869} look^{H5027} right on,^{H5227} and let thine eyelids^{H6079} look straight^{H3474} before^{H5048} thee.

(Pro 4:25 NASB) Let your eyes look directly ahead And let your gaze be fixed straight in front of you.

(Pro 4:25 NIV) Let your eyes look straight ahead, fix your gaze directly before you.

The eyes and eyelids must be kept from sin

1Jn 2:15-17 NIV (15) Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. (16) For everything in the world—the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does—comes not from the Father but from the world. (17) The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.

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“What is beyond my path?” (vv. 26—27).

The Hebrew word translated “ponder” means “to weigh” or “to make level.”

It is related to a word that means “scales” (16:11 NKJV).

“Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves” (2 Cor. 13:5 NKJV).

The Lord is weighing

- our ways (*Prov. 5:21*)
- our hearts (*21:2*),
- our actions (*1 Sam. 2:3*),

We better do the same - Life is too short and too precious to be wasted on the temporary and the trivial.

If we walk in the way of wisdom, God promises to protect our path, direct our path, and perfect our path.

All folly can offer us is danger, detours, and disappointments, ultimately leading to death.

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PROVERBS 4:26

(Pro 4:26 ISV) Carefully measure [Lit. Weigh] the paths for your feet, and all your ways will be established.*

(Pro 4:26 KJV+) Ponder^{H6424} the path^{H4570} of thy feet,^{H7272} and let all^{H3605} thy ways^{H1870} be established.^{H3559}

(Pro 4:26 NASB) Watch the path of your feet And all your ways will be established.

(Pro 4:26 NIV) Make level paths for your feet and take only ways that are firm.

Seven examples of pondering a right path:

1. Abraham (*Gen 24:1-9*)
2. Eleazar (*Gen 24:5*)
3. Joshua (*Josh 24:15*)
4. Ruth (*Ruth 1:16-18*)
5. David (*Ps 39:1*)
6. The good wife (*Prov 31:27*)
7. Daniel (*Dan 1:8; 6:3-4*)

PROVERBS 4:27

(Pro 4:27 ISV) Do not turn to the right or to the left; turn your foot away from evil.*

(Pro 4:27 KJV+) Turn^{H5186} not^{H408} to the right hand^{H3225} nor to the left:^{H8040} remove^{H5493} thy foot^{H7272} from evil.^{H4480 H7451}

(Pro 4:27 NASB) Do not turn to the right nor to the left; Turn your foot from evil.

(Pro 4:27 NIV) Do not swerve to the right or the left; keep your foot from evil.

Six physical parts to be controlled; removed from evil:

1. To keep one's heart with all diligence (*Prov 4:23*).
2. To put away the froward mouth (*Prov 4:24*).
3. To put away perverse lips.
4. To look straight with the eyes (*Prov 4:25*).
5. To look straight with the eyelids.
6. To guide one's feet in righteousness (*Prov 4:26-27*).

Summary Proverbs 1-4

In these days of flagrant immorality (in movies, TV, music, adverts, etc.), it is important that we keep our hearts and minds pure.

• **We cannot avoid decisions**

- “Decision determines destiny.”
- We choose either the path of Wisdom or the path of Folly; we cannot postpone this decision or avoid it.
- To choose one is to reject the other; to reject one is to choose the other.
- What decision have *you* made?

• **Sin is always alluring**

- Folly does everything she can to make sin attractive
- She never reveals her true nature; she never tells people that her house is the way to hell
- The only way to detect Folly is to walk with Wisdom **Prov 2:10–22**
- Those who walk with Wisdom, obeying the Word of God, will not easily be tricked by Folly

Summary Proverbs 1-4

• **It takes time for judgment to fall**

- The simple, the fool, and the scorner all thought they “had it made” when they rejected Wisdom, because nothing disastrous immediately happened.
- But judgment eventually caught up with them.

Whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. Gal 6:7

• **Satan appeals to the flesh**

- The “wicked woman” (or “strange woman”) is appealing to the young man’s appetites. She tells him he can use his body as he pleases and not suffer for it.
- Sexual sin leads to tragic results, both in body and soul.

• **God continues to call**

- So long as people will hear, God’s Spirit continues to call. But when sinners refuse to obey, their ears become deaf to the Word of God. Beware!

**Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts.
Heb 3:7**

Three calls from Wisdom and Three from Folly

– Wisdom calls us to God and life.

- Wisdom’s 1st Call: Salvation – was to the Fool, the Scornor, and the Simple.
- Wisdom’s 2nd Call: Wealth – was only to the Fool and the Simple.
- Wisdom’s 3rd Call: Life – is only to the Simple.

– Folly calls us to sin and judgment.

- Folly’s 1st call: to Condemnation.
- Folly’s 2nd call: to Poverty.
- Folly’s 3rd call: to Death.

Folly: The Results

• **The Scornor**

- rejected Wisdom and met destruction (**Prov 1:24-27**).
- listened to Folly and received destruction (**Prov 6:32**).

• **The Fool**

- rejected Wisdom and was led to death (**Prov 8:36**).
- he listened to Folly and received death (**Prov 5:22,23**).

• **The Simple**

- rejected Wisdom and went to hell (**Prov 9:18**).
- he listened to Folly and ended up in hell (**Prov 7:27**).