

## Proverbs 4-5

A proverb a day will help keep foolishness away! I don't know why I've neglected to encourage you but as you may know there are 31 chapters in the book of Proverbs & as such they make a great spiritual "one a day" type vitamin to add to whatever you're already taking in regarding your daily devotions. **Whatever day of the month it is, grab that chapter & dive into it. Consider it your spiritual appetizer, or perhaps dessert depending upon which side of your main course you place it 😊.**

The book of Proverbs provides for us both an end goal and a means to reach the goal. The goal is successful living and the means is the way of wisdom; remember wisdom is not primarily intellectual or academic it is moral. The way I lead my life, the decisions I make, the paths I choose to take will display whether or not I'm walking or leading a life of foolishness or a life that accords w/wisdom.

**Ch 4 begins "Hear, my children, the instruction of a father." Solomon wants his children to hear the tried & true words that have been passed down for generations & have stood the test of time. Having said that we recognize that the scriptures are inspired of God & as such we as the *children of God* do well to give heed to these words as from our *heavenly Father*.**

### Vs 1-4

Ok, few things here that I want to point out as we launch out into this particular passage. #1 When it comes to gaining insight (instruction) & understanding, 2 things need to happen so that it might settle down in our heart. **#1 We need to hear it (Vs 1) it needs to enter through the ear gate (kind of like faith comes by hearing, hearing by the Word of God); it's not to say it can't enter through the eye gate as we read it; but as it pertains to receiving instruction from another (Pastor to parishioner, father to son...whatever) 1<sup>st</sup> we have to hear it.** 2ndly we have to *give attention* or *pay attention* to it; it's so easy to keep the lights on & leave no one home; to be here in person but you're really not present. You're somewhere else in your mind or in your heart. **So you're hearing what's being said, you're simply not paying attention to it; but wise is the one who hears & pays attention (w/an intent to apply) to the Word of God.**

Because that's what this is (Vs 2), it's *good doctrine*. That is, it's inherently, intrinsically good; it's good *for* you, it will work good *in* you & bring forth good *from* you when followed *by* you. Biblical teaching nourishes our lives, it facilitates spiritual health & well being.

Paul told Timothy, *"If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed."* 1 Timothy 4:6

So the Word of God is good doctrine, good on every level. It's good for us in every way. So we want to take the time to hear it & to pay attention *to* it.

There in Vs 3 Solomon says something that every child hates hearing from their dad, "Back when I was a boy..." (fill in the blank, right?). But if we would listen & pay attention we would learn. The truth of the matter is that this primary means through which God has ordained that His truth, the principles & precepts of His word are to be preserved, passed on & invested from one generation to the next. We read in the book of Deuteronomy where God as said, *"And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up."*<sup>1</sup> So though the church should/will do it's best to teach the children the word of God; it's primarily the responsibility of the parents; we're to train up our children in the way that they should go (Prov 22:6). As for the children who have godly parents they would do well to give God thanks for that, the heritage that they've received rather than so often doing just the opposite which is scoffing &/or despising the heritage that God has given them & abandoning that for the ways of the world...

Here in Vs 4 Solomon says, *"I'm getting ready to tell you something; let your heart hold on to it; keep my commands, & live."*

#### Vs 5-9

Over & over again throughout the book of Proverbs we will be exhorted to get wisdom. It should be turning us on to the reality of how critical it is when God devotes an entire book to it! Vs 5 tells us, "Get wisdom, get understanding" that's what *we are* to do. What we're *not* to do is forget it, turn away from it or forsake it.

When he says, "Get wisdom"; what's suggested there is that we're to "buy wisdom"; the Hebrew Word carries the idea of a commercial transaction. The idea being that there is a price to pay if you want to really know & obey God's Word, but the price is well worth it & there's no price too high because there's a much higher price to pay if you *don't* know it & obey it. There is sacrifice, study & death to self involved in the purchase price of wisdom.

<sup>1</sup> The New King James Version. 1982 (Dt 6:6-7). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

But as he says in Vs 7, wisdom is the *principal* thing; therefore above all else do what you need to do in order to apprehend it. That word “principal” means, “very best” it’s above all else.

Knowledge is no good apart from wisdom, because wisdom is the appropriate application of knowledge. You can have knowledge & still be a fool. Wisdom will show you how to appropriate knowledge.

For instance you may have the necessary knowledge but you choose not to apply it. A good example of this would be Dr. George Wald, Harvard Graduate, Nobel Prize winner in physics, biologist & devout evolutionist. Obviously when it comes to knowledge, when it comes to intelligence there aren’t too many people who could stand beside him, I know I couldn’t. Yet regarding the origin of life he’s quoted (in Scientific American [1954] Vol. 190, pp. 46-50) as saying, “There are only two possible explanations as to how life arose: Spontaneous generation arising to evolution or a supernatural creative act of God . . . there is no other possibility. Spontaneous generation was scientifically disproved 120 years ago by Louis Pasteur and others, but that leaves us with only one other possibility...that life came as a supernatural act of creation of God, but I can't accept that philosophy because I do not want to believe in God. Therefore I choose to believe in that which is scientifically impossible, spontaneous generation leading to evolution.” (The Origin of Life," Scientific American, Vol. 190, pp. 46-50)

All the appropriate *information*; yet refusing to make the proper application; foolish. Knowledge? Yes, Wisdom? No. Sounds crazy but I call it honesty, because that’s exactly where thousands upon thousands (if not millions upon millions) of people are but they refuse to admit it.

Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore *get wisdom*. Solomon says, “Treat wisdom like you would (or should) treat your wife; exalt her, embrace her, love her; she will preserve you, promote you, bring you honor; place an ornament of grace upon your head & a crown of glory she will deliver to you.” Spare no expense in acquiring wisdom.

### Vs 10-13

In the 18th Ps David declares, “*You enlarged my path under me, So my feet did not slip.*”<sup>2</sup> The way Solomon states that is found in Vs 12. If you walk in the way of wisdom your steps will not be hindered & when you run you will not stumble.

<sup>2</sup> The New King James Version. 1982 (Ps 18:36). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

The danger (Vs 13) is to learn it but then “let go” of it, letting it slip (as it were) through your fingers & rather than walking in wisdom you wonder down the path of the wicked.

It's been said that the will of God isn't for the curious, it's for the serious. We can't approach the word of God like a buffet (we'll have a little of this, little of that, not really interested in that, don't really want any of the other thing). We call that kind of person a “double minded” man, unstable in all his ways (Jas 1:8).

If you're willing to do God's will, then you will have God's guidance; but let's not deceive ourselves into thinking that God will lead us as we sort of seek shuffle back & forth between the path of wisdom & the path of the wicked. Notice.

#### Vs 14-19

So as for the path of the wicked; don't enter it, don't walk in the way of it, avoid it, don't travel on it, turn away from it; pass on! (What is he trying to say?☺) It's darkness; it's the blind leading the blind, they can't see, can't figure out why they're stumbling.

But the path of the just is like a sunrise, that crests over the horizon in the morning & just shines brighter & brighter as he travels through life & the beauty of it is that there's never a sunset... It just gets brighter & brighter. Not in a “cover my eyes I can't see” kind of a way, but in a “I can see clearer & clearer” kind of a way. The path ends as we step into the land where the light never dims, Rev 22:5, *“There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever.”*<sup>3</sup>

#### Vs20-22

Notice the progression from the ear to the eye, to the heart. It's amazing the amount of people who show no discretion concerning the things they listen to, nor the things they watch believing that they really hold no true influence over them. As if they're impervious to the influence of things that enter their eyes, that enter their ears; but the word says we're to weigh carefully those things, because if wisdom makes for life & health, what will worldly/wicked ways make for? Those things do impact our perspective.

#### Vs23-27

To me Vs 23 is the key Vs of this entire Ch. “Keep your heart w/all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life.”

<sup>3</sup> The New King James Version. 1982 (Re 22:5). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

That word “Keep” speaks of “Watching” & the word “diligence” speaks of a “guard post” as in a prison guard. The idea is that you are confining your heart to the way of wisdom; you refuse to allow it the “freedom” to wonder down the path of wickedness. You recognize your liberty as being free not *to* sin, but you’ve been freed *from* sin.

Don’t be deceived, the things we allow *into* our heart will find it’s way *out of* our heart & therein lies the problem. We say it over & over again, the heart of the matter is always a matter of the heart. If you’re watching your heart in such a way as to allow that which is pure, that which is noble, that which is praiseworthy *in*, than guess what’s going to make it’s way out. However to the contrary if those things that are coming in are constantly polluting you... you’ve heard the expression, “garbage in, garbage out”?

We have to make a conscious decision regarding what it is that we’re going to allow into our lives. The sweet psalmist of Israel said these words, *“I will set nothing wicked before my eyes; I hate the work of those who fall away; It shall not cling to me. A perverse heart shall depart from me; I will not know wickedness.”*<sup>4</sup>

The scriptures warn us regarding a perverse heart, a double heart (Ps 12:2), a hard heart (Prov. 28:14), a proud heart (21:4), an unbelieving heart (Heb. 3:12), a cold heart (Matt. 24:12), and an unclean heart (Ps. 51:10). It’s no wonder that David cried out & said, *“Search me, O God, and know my heart”* (139:23).

Jesus said that it’s not what enters into a man’s mouth that defiles him, as if eating w/unwashed hands makes a person unclean before God. He said, *“But those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. These are the things which defile a man, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile a man.”*<sup>5</sup>

Again we read in Luke’s gospel where He said, *“A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.”*<sup>6</sup>

Now here is where that principle becomes practical. How can you determine how you’re doing w/respect to “Keeping your heart w/all diligence”? It comes down to 3 things. #1 What you say, #2 What you see & #3 Where you step.

<sup>4</sup> The New King James Version. 1982 (Ps 101:3-4). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>5</sup> The New King James Version. 1982 (Mt 15:18-20). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>6</sup> The New King James Version. 1982 (Lk 6:45). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Vs 24, “Put away from you a deceitful mouth & put perverse lips far from you.” Or to understand that in a little bit more of a contemporary vernacular, “Watch your mouth.” If you were to record the things that come from your mouth, as a general rule would they be words of grace or words of gripe, words of praise or words of complaint?

Would they be words that build people up or tear people down, words of *encouragement* or words of *discouragement*? In Prov Ch 12 we read, “*The words of the reckless pierce like swords, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.*”<sup>7</sup> James speaks of the tongue like a fire; it can be kindled small but set an entire forest ablaze (Ch3). Meaning it may be small but it has the power to do incredible damage.

The bible has a lot to say about how we use our words. (Prov 25:11) “A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver.” It’s a beautiful, elegant & valuable thing. We’re to let our speech be w/grace, seasoned w/salt, that we might know how we ought to answer each person in each situation. So, what we say is a great meter that displays what’s happening in our heart.

Also what we see. Vs 25 “Let your eyes look straight ahead, your eyelids look right before you.” Be careful what you set your eyes upon; the things you look at. Job said, “*I have made a covenant with my eyes; Why then should I look upon a young woman?*”<sup>8</sup> Again the psalmist said, “*Turn away my eyes from looking at worthless things, And revive me in Your way.*” Psalm 119:37 You know there used to be a time whereby it seemed that addiction to pornography (though that’s not the only worthless thing there is that we do well to turn our eyes from) was primarily a problem among men. It’s not that way anymore, there is an alarming amount of women who are addicted as well & struggle w/the desires of their flesh.

“Let your eyes look straight ahead” that is, stay focused on the Lord that your body may be full of light (Matt 6). To focus on the Lord is to *purify* your heart, to focus upon the flesh or the ways of the wicked is to *pollute* your heart. Don’t look back, don’t look around, keep your eyes on Jesus.

#1 What you say, #2 What you see, & #3 Where you step. “Ponder the path of your feet & let all your ways be established. Do not turn to the right or to the left; remove your foot from evil.”

<sup>7</sup> *The New International Version*. 2011 [Pr 12:18]. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

<sup>8</sup> *The New King James Version*. 1982 [Job 31:1]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Be careful where you go, don't stray from the pathway of wisdom, from walking in obedience to the word of God. Don't deviate from the narrow way that leads to life, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet & a light unto my path." (Ps 119:105)

So take inventory of your life, the things you say, the things you see, the places you step (where you go & what you do). What's going on in your heart? Are you keeping it w/all diligence, or allowing it to wonder down the pathway of the wicked?

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

All that the way of the wicked can offer is danger, detours, disappointments, & ultimately death.

So may we hear the instruction of our heavenly Father; to get wisdom, get understanding & walk in the ways of the Word of God.

#### Prayer Points:

Father Your Word is so rich; so practical & so powerful. Search our hearts, see if there be any wicked way in us & lead us in the way everlasting. May we purpose in our heart to sacrifice, study, & crucify our flesh, paying whatever price necessary that we might obtain & walk in the ways of wisdom.