

WORSHIP SERVICE - 7.31.2022

WISDOM: THE SPRINGS OF LIFE

I. INTRODUCTION

- Chapter 4 contains three poetic lessons from the Father to the Son: Lessons 5, v1-9; Lesson 6, v10-19; Lesson 7, v20-27
- Though they are their own unit, they flow together.
- Each section is marked by the typical introduction, “*My Son.*” So the chapter divides up nicely between these three lessons.

II. COMMIT TO GET WISDOM

Proverbs 4:1-9

1 Hear, O sons, a father's instruction,
and be attentive, that you may gain insight,

2 for I give you good precepts;
do not forsake my teaching.

3 When I was a son with my father,
tender, the only one in the sight of my mother,

4 he taught me and said to me,

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

5 Get wisdom; get insight;
do not forget, and do not turn away from the words of my mouth.

6 Do not forsake her, and she will keep you;
love her, and she will guard you.

7 The beginning of wisdom is this: Get wisdom,
and whatever you get, get insight.

8 Prize her highly, and she will exalt you;
she will honor you if you embrace her.

9 She will place on your head a graceful garland;
she will bestow on you a beautiful crown.”

MULTI-GENERATIONAL DISCIPLESHIP

- V1-2 The father is appealing to his sons to listen, to be attentive so that they can gain wisdom.
- He is giving good instruction and sound teaching which should not be abandoned.
- There is a Scriptural mandate for parents to transmit godly wisdom and teaching to their children.
- Solomon says in v3, that when he was a child, his father (David) also taught him. Read 1 Kings 2:1-4
- This is an important principle regarding the instruction of wisdom, it must be passed down.
- Parents have an enormous responsibility before the Lord of raising their children in the fear of the Lord.
- Whether we realize it or not, we're already passing something down to them, wisdom or folly.
- Multi-generational discipleship should be our focus. God has granted us parental authority so that we can communicate God's Word and will to our children.
- Those of us who have younger children should desire to live a long life so we can disciple our grandchildren.
- Read the Bible to them, teach them to pray, bring them to the gathering of the church, have family worship, and also teach them life skills.

WISDOM CROWNS YOU WITH LIFE

- What was David's teaching that is being passed down?
 - v4-9, Get wisdom and she will give you the crown of life—Get wisdom and you get life.
 - V4b "keep my commandments and live." Wisdom is always tied to obedience to God's commands.
 - The true son was not the biological child but the obedient one. The rebellious son was disowned.
 - Deut. 21:18-21 "If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who will not obey the voice of his father or the voice of his mother, and, though they discipline him, will not listen to them, 19 then his father and his mother shall take hold of him and bring him out to the elders of his city at the gate of the place where he lives, 20 and they shall say to the elders of his city, 'This our son is stubborn and rebellious; he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton and a drunkard.' 21 Then all the men of the city shall stone him to death with stones. So you shall purge the evil from your midst, and all Israel shall hear, and fear.
 - When we obey God, our life is prolonged because we avoid the things that can cut our life short or bring our life to ruin.
 - Long life was a sign of blessedness to the Israelite. That is what God had promised.
 - The life in view here is eternal life, we've talked about that before. This is what we have in Christ.
 - "Life" is repeated often throughout these three lessons, v4, 10, 13, 22, 23
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- Wisdom again is personified as a woman. She is presented this way so that the son, a young man, will pay attention and seek wisdom.
 - *"Do not forsake her, love her, prize her highly, embrace her."*
 - The motivating promise is if the son does these things, wisdom will keep him and guard him, wisdom will exalt him and honor him, and grace his head with a beautiful crown.
 - Wisdom will bestow upon him a crown that is far more important than the crown a king wears.
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- What Solomon knew as a shadowy promise, we get to understand fully with Christ.
 - James 1:12 Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him.
 - In Christ, we receive the crown of life promised to the Church at Smyrna (Rev. 2:9).
 - This is why pursuing wisdom, which is Christ, is the goal, He is the greatest treasure.
 - Jesus is the faithful and obedient son. He was not rebellious, he was not disobedient. He was fully submitted to and obedient to his earthly parents and his heavenly Father.

- The active obedience of Christ is what enabled him to earn perfect righteousness for us. His perfect obedience is credited to us so that we can be crowned with eternal life.

GET WISDOM

- Twice the grandfather's instruction is to "*Get wisdom, Get insight.*"
- Get does not mean to grab or to snatch up wisdom. It means to "buy or purchase through a financial transaction."
- Proverbs 23:23 Buy truth, and do not sell it; buy wisdom, instruction, and understanding.
- V7 The beginning of wisdom is this" Get wisdom, and whatever you get, get insight.
- The point is that wisdom is the supreme treasure to acquire and whatever the price is to purchase wisdom, pay it.
- Wisdom is not a one-time acquisition. It's a recurring purchase.
- We must commit to getting wisdom and we must commit TO wisdom.
- Wisdom is Christ—commit to Christ—that is the first principle to getting wisdom.

III. COMMIT TO THE RIGHT PATH

Proverbs 4:10-19

- 10 Hear, my son, and accept my words,
that the years of your life may be many.
- 11 I have taught you the way of wisdom;
I have led you in the paths of uprightness.
- 12 When you walk, your step will not be hampered,
and if you run, you will not stumble.
- 13 Keep 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 walk in the way of the evil.
- 15 Avoid it; do not go on it;
turn away from it and pass on.
- 16 For they cannot sleep unless they have done wrong;
they are robbed of sleep unless they have made 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,
which shines brighter and brighter until full day.
- 19 The way of the wicked is like deep darkness;
they do not know over what they stumble.

THE TWO PATHS

- A recurring and main theme and metaphor of Proverbs is that of the two paths that are before the son. (Proverbs 1-9)
- The path is the course of one's life. It is a rich metaphor for our actions in life and the steps we take in life. A path is both a direction and a destination.

- The son has two paths available to him, the way of wisdom or the way of folly. Those two same paths are before us.
- The father has taught the son the way of wisdom and by his teaching and example has led him on the paths of uprightness (v11).
- Again we are reminded that the way of wisdom is not found by accident. It must be learned by listening to and holding on to right teaching and God's Word.
- This poetic lesson represents our spiritual walk, our daily Christian life.
- We have come to know wisdom—Christ—and we must walk in the way of Christ, which is the way wisdom. .
- Which path we are on is demonstrated by our daily decisions and actions.
- Nothing we do is morally neutral for what we do, what we say, how we act, and what we think, has everything to do with which path we are on, it has everything to do with Jesus.
- When one is on the way of wisdom and the path of life, wisdom will guide each step, which represents each decision and action in the way of life.
- Our walking and running in life will not be hindered so we can move with a regular rhythm and pace and full assurance we will reach our destination.
- Your way will be made smooth and you won't stumble.
- This doesn't mean there won't be challenges and difficulties in life, rather, that when you walk in the way of wisdom, you are free from the moral hindrances that can bring God's judgments.
- Psalm 119:165 Great peace have those who love your law; nothing can make them stumble.
- When you are on the right path, you avoid the things that complicate life and can trip you up.
- 13 Keep hold of instruction; do not let go; guard her, for she is your life.
- The father gives three commands to encourage his son's commitment to the right path of wisdom; hold on to wisdom, don't let go of wisdom, guard wisdom.
- The motivating promise is if he does that, he will have life.
- The path metaphor truly is about the two distinct destinations one can have in life, eternal life vs eternal death.
- Wisdom will lead to eternal life.

AVOID THE WAY OF THE WICKED

- The path of the wicked and the way of the evil are to be strictly avoided.
- Six strong commands are given concerning this:
 - "Don't enter the path of the wicked,
 - "Do not walk in the way of the evil,
 - "Avoid it"
 - "Do not go on it"
 - "Turn away from it"
 - "Pass on"
- The father knows the son will be tempted and allured by sin.
- Not only that, there will be things in life that might seem like the right road to take but they are not.
- Wisdom trains us to discern the right path and we must commit to walk in it.
- V 16, 17 Here are the reasons to avoid the deadly way of the wicked.
- The wicked are addicted to their wickedness. It's all they want.
- Avoid the way of the wicked because all they do is eat, drink, and sleep foolishness and wickedness and they want to drag others down with them.

WISDOM ILLUMINATES THE PATH OF THE RIGHTEOUS

- The father's lesson concludes by contrasting the two paths with the metaphors of light and darkness.
- The path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, and as the sun approaches its zenith, the day keeps getting brighter and brighter.

- That's how it is with the righteous, that is how it is in the Christian's walk of sanctification, we are progressively growing in wisdom and holiness until the last day.
 - As we grow in wisdom, the way of wisdom grows brighter and brighter.
 - Psalm 119:105 Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. (see also Ps. 119:130)
 - But the path of the wicked is deep darkness.
 - They can't even see what they have stumbled over. Fools in the way of the wicked can't avoid the obstacles of foolishness.
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- John 8:12 Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."
 - Being in Christ means we are in the light and have the light to illuminate our path in life. There is no darkness in him.
 - And every step of our growth in spiritual maturity means our path gets brighter and brighter.
 - Are you walking in the light or are you stumbling around in darkness?
 - **John 14:6** Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.
 - The way is not just our path in life, it is also a person. Jesus is the only way of life and truth.
 - When we are in him, on the way to life, each day will get brighter and brighter.
 - Jesus is concerned with every area of your life. Take care that you are moving toward him and to the light and not stray from him towards darkness.

IV. COMMIT TO GUARD YOUR HEART

Proverbs 4:20-27

20 My son, be attentive to my words;

incline your ear to my sayings.

21 Let them not escape from your sight;

keep them within your heart.

22 For they are life to those who find them,

and healing to all their flesh.

23 Keep your heart with all vigilance,

for from it flow the springs of life.

24 Put away from you crooked speech,

and put devious talk far from you.

25 Let your eyes look directly forward,

and your gaze be straight before you.

26 Ponder the path of your feet;

then all your ways will be sure.

27 Do not swerve to the right or to the left;

turn your foot away from evil.

- Lesson 7 is a powerful life lesson and contains one of the key verses in all of Proverbs.
- Notice how it deals with the heart.
- V4 Let your heart hold fast my words (Lesson 5)
- V21 the son is to keep the father's words and teachings within his heart
- V23 Keep your heart with all vigilance

- The heart of the matter is the matter of the heart.
- This is why we needed a new heart as promised in the new covenant (Jer 31:33; Ezek 36:26-27).
- We needed to be made completely new, from the inside out.
- The real problem is that our heart was broken, sin-sick, dark, and dead and that's why we loved the things that God hates and hated the things that God loves.

THE ANATOMY OF DISCIPLESHIP

- The principle of the lesson in v20-27 is that your heart is the command center for your life.
- We need to make sure to keep our heart, guard our heart, to walk in the way of wisdom.
- Our heart directs the course of our life.
- Take note of all the body parts mentioned: ears, the eyes, the heart, the whole body, the mouth, the feet.
- Our heart must be orientated properly so that it can direct all of our parts towards righteous things instead of wicked things.
- V20 Incline your ear to my sayings...
- With so many competing voices, whose voice and what messages do you listen to?
- V21 Let them not escape from your sight"
- What are your eyes drawn to continually? What are you watching?
- This is so important because what you take in through your ears and eyes goes down into your heart.
- Your eyes and ears are the gate to your heart.
- Matthew 6:22-23 "The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light, 23 but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!
- This is why we continually exhort you to take in God's Word. It's the only way to know wisdom. And we must memorize wisdom and meditate upon wisdom.
- Psalm 119:11, 15 I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you. I will meditate on your precepts and fix my eyes on your ways.

KEEP YOUR HEART

- 23 Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.
- 4:23 NIV Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.
- This is one of the key verses to understanding Proverbs and all of life.
- The heart is the source of everything in your life
- The way you think, the way you speak, the way you evaluate life, your beliefs, your conduct and actions, flows from your heart.
- The heart governs and dictates all of your body's actions.
- How you behave reveals the true state of your heart.
- **Mark 7:20-23** And he said, "What comes out of a person is what defiles him. 21 For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, 22 coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. 23 All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person."
- **Luke 6:45** The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.
- Solomon tells his son to "keep his heart" to "guard his heart" above everything else that must be kept and guarded.
- Keep means to watch, guard, and restrain.
- If the direction of your life is determined by your heart, then you must guard your heart.
- How do we do that?
- We already know that if we keep the words within our heart then our heart will be kept from evil.
- v24-27 give us further instructions. Attention must be given to our speech, to what our eyes watch, and to the path of our feet.
- Does what comes out of our mouth reveal that we have had a change of heart?

- Ephesians 4:29 Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.
- What are your eyes looking at? The command is “eyes forward,” don’t let your eyes gaze upon things that will incite sinful thoughts and actions.
- Job 31:1 Job says he made a covenant with eyes not to look lustfully on a woman.
- David said in Psalm 101 “I will not set before my eyes anything that is worthless.”
- Our eyes never stop taking things in.
- We need to fix our eyes on Jesus. Look to Christ.
- We need to watch where we step. We need to make sure our feet are pointed in the direction of the path of wisdom and life.
- There are lots of temptations to cause us to swerve to the right or left.
- What’s our hope? It’s Christ.
- Don’t swerve from him! Listen to his words, look to him, follow him.
- These things are only possible through the life giving Spirit of God and a heart transformed by him.
- Ultimately, our trust is that we are in the grip of his grace.
- He has promised that he will safely deliver us all the way home.