

When we learn the secrets of the LORD, the wisdom and understanding that come from Him through worship will provide great inheritance. If Solomon's son will listen to his teachings, they will lead him to be part of the family of God as a child of God. How does that happen? By listening to the voice of wisdom from the LORD.

The Proverbs

Lesson 4

Proverbs 4

Instruction from Solomon to Rehoboam

Proverbs 4:1 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.

In chapters 1 through 3, Solomon gave Rehoboam specific instruction concerning wisdom and understanding. In the opening of chapter 4, Solomon tells Rehoboam and any other sons of the kingdom who are willing to learn about the things that his father taught him when he was young.

Instruction from David to Solomon

Proverbs 4:3 When I was a son to my father, tender and the only son in the sight of my mother,

David became the king of Israel at the age of 40, but he was at least 50 years of age before Solomon was born. David's son, Absalom, had already attempted to take the throne from his father and died in his pursuit to kill David. After David returned to Jerusalem, he had the adulterous relationship with Bathsheba and gave birth to a child who died soon after delivery. Later, when Bathsheba was widowed, David married her and she gave birth to Solomon. The following instruction to Solomon was given when he was old enough to understand and remember but before his three other brothers were born. Practically, David must be at least 65 when he gives this instruction to Solomon. The other three sons of Bathsheba are born in David's last 15 years of life. Therefore, Bathsheba must be significantly younger than David.

Your Heart Hold Fast to Wisdom and Understanding

Proverbs 4:4 Then he taught me and said to me, "Let your heart hold fast my words; Keep my commandments and live;⁴⁰ 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.

When a person speaks of a heart issue, it usually refers to something about which he is passionate. Here, David avidly instructs Solomon to acquire wisdom and understanding and he continues to tie them together with a feminine pronoun. David states that his words are wisdom and understanding and if Solomon will not forget and turn from his words, the two will protect Solomon. David tells Solomon, "Do not forsake her ..." referring to wisdom and understanding, and "she will guard you; Love her, and she will watch over you." David personifies wisdom and

⁴⁰ **1 Chronicles 28:9** "As for you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve Him with a whole heart and a willing mind; for the LORD searches all hearts, and understands every intent of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will let you find Him; but if you forsake Him, He will reject you forever.

⁶⁴ **Ephesians 6:4** And, fathers, do not provoke your children to anger; but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

understanding as a guardian and companion who protects the person who is faithful to her and continues to love her.

Begin with Wisdom and Get Understanding

Proverbs 4:7 The beginning of wisdom *is*: acquire wisdom; and with all your acquiring, get understanding. ⁴¹

David believes that when you “...acquire wisdom,” you “get understanding.” The two are inseparable. However, you do not acquire understanding to get wisdom. Wisdom includes moral knowledge and endeavors. As we work in the business of this life, our daily thoughts and duties are overrun with fleeting and temporal beliefs and actions; however, wisdom is eternal and we must remain fervent about that which the LORD approves. Once eternal wisdom from the LORD rests in the heart, understanding begins to emerge gradually, giving insight to the reasons His wisdom is eternal. Wisdom prescribes the destination; understanding directs the path. Wisdom provides the things that are required; understanding provides the means to accomplish and attain them. Wisdom focuses on the eternal goal; understanding focuses on the heartfelt reason for the eternal goal. Wisdom points; understanding obeys. The person who is already wise seeks more wisdom and knows her value in obtaining understanding.

Reward from Wisdom and Understanding

Proverbs 4:8 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.

Nothing in this life has such an effect on a person to bring him honor and respect in this era or that of the past or future as wisdom and understanding. The moral man, full of wisdom and understanding is sought out and crowned by others; it is their elegant gift to the wise.

David’s Challenge to Solomon

Proverbs 4:10 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.

The truly wise person will plan his path in order to avoid traps and stumbling stones. The path is upright, avoiding all trails of evil; the path is smooth, avoiding all sharp dangers along the way. Whether the wise person walks or runs, no danger exists.

David’s Instruction Concerning the Wicked and Evil

Proverbs 4:14 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.

⁴¹ James 1:5 But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all men generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

We can interpret David's instruction to Solomon as follows: do not live with sinful people. Living with sinful people and associating with them are two different things. We must associate with them in order to share the wisdom of the LORD, but, we should not live with them and approve of their sinful ways. A wise person will not continue to live in a home where stolen money has purchased its contents. A wise person will not ride along with drug dealers and thieves. A wise person will not accompany a person in possession of illegal items. However, an evil person will crave all such things!

David's Instruction Comparing the Righteous and Wicked

Proverbs 4:18 But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, that shines brighter and brighter until the full day.⁴² **19** The way of the wicked is like darkness; they do not know over what they stumble.⁴³

David wants Solomon's life to be filled with open, lighted and instructive paths in opposition to the dark, gloomy, dangerous paths of the wicked. The righteous can see what is coming, the wicked cannot.

David's Reminder to Solomon

Proverbs 4:20 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 whole body.

Solomon is recounting how his father began the conclusion of his instruction by reminding him of the importance of hiding it in his heart. The heart pumps the blood to the whole body and gives life to each cell, but David is speaking of the spiritual heart that pumps wisdom and understanding to the soul. David concludes with four warnings.

David's Warning to Solomon – Watch Your Heart

Proverbs 4:23 Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it *flow* the springs of life.

Everyone knows how easy it is for the affections of a heart to go astray. The physical heart thrives from clean, pure, refreshed blood that streams to the body and the heart must be protected from danger and injury. So too, the heart of the soul should strive for clean, pure and refreshed thoughts that guide the person to the LORD's will and it must be guarded from evil that can taint the spiritual blood of life.

David's Warning to Solomon – Watch Your Mouth

Proverbs 4:24 Put away from you a deceitful mouth, and put devious lips far from you.

⁴² Matthew 5:14 "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden.

⁴³ Philippians 2:15 that you may prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world,

⁴⁴ 2 Samuel 23:4 Is as the light of the morning *when* the sun rises, A morning without clouds, *When* the tender grass *springs* out of the earth, Through sunshine after rain.'

⁴⁵ John 12:35 Jesus therefore said to them, " For a little while longer the light is among you. Walk while you have the light, that darkness may not overtake you; he who walks in the darkness does not know where he goes.