

Bible Recall: POINTS IN PROVERBS

PROVERBS 4 – The Principal Thing

“Wisdom is the principal thing” (Prov. 4:7). Every man’s life is defined by what they prioritize. The wise man makes wisdom the *principal* or *first* thing in his quest to see things from God’s viewpoint.

“Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord [is]” (Eph. 5:17).

Wisdom, therefore, preserves us from making bad and foolish choices without having to experience them. “Do not forsake her, and she will preserve you; Love her, and she will keep you” (Prov. 4:6). It also works to our promotion, “Exalt her, and she will promote you; She will bring honor, when you embrace her” (Prov. 4:8). To forsake wisdom is to not love wisdom.

SOME THINGS TO CONSIDER IN THIS CHAPTER:

1. **The definition of a Bible “hearer” (4:1).** The wise man hears in giving attention to know and understand.
2. **The definition of being “taught” (4:4).** Solomon was “taught” by David when his heart *retained* David’s words and he *kept his father’s commandments*. The forgetful hearer cannot be taught well by wisdom (4:5). This is not because of any flaw of the teacher, necessarily, but because of the listener’s failure to retain.
 - a. James 1:25, “But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues [in it], and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.”
 - b. To *retain* teaching is to actively *reproduce* it in our lives (see also Jas. 1:22ff).
3. **The commission to utterly abandon the pathway of evil (4:14-19).** Notice the energies in avoiding this pathway parallel the same level of intensity of getting wisdom and understanding (see 4:5, 6).
 - a. 1 Timothy 6: 11, 12: “But you, O man of God, _____ these things and _____ righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. _____ the good _____ of faith, _____ on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.”
 - b. 2 Timothy 2:22, 23: “_____ also youthful lusts; but _____ righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. But _____ foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife.”
4. **The source for all of life’s endeavors—the heart (4: 23).** Since the issues of life spring from the heart, the heart must be trained and well protected.

EXERCISES:

A. *What do good parents give their children and how do they impart this (Prov. 4:2, 10, 11)?*

B. *If wisdom is the principal thing to gain in life, and if wisdom means to gain God's outlook or perspective on things, what should my attitude be toward these things:*

The question, "What is good for me?" See 1 Corinthians 10:31.

The question of, "How often must I assemble with the Saints?" See Hebrews 10:25.

My participation with drugs, dancing, smoking, viewing pornographic material, profanity, sexual immorality, etc. (1 Thess. 5:21-23; 1 Cor. 6:20; Matt. 5:28)?

C. Read Proverbs 4:23-27. *What influence does the heart have on:*

The mouth (4:24; cf. Matt. 12:34-37; Jas. 1:26)?

The eyes (Prov. 4:25; cf. Matt. 6:22, 23; 2 Pet. 2:14)?

The feet (Prov. 4:26; cf. Psa. 119:59; Heb. 12:13)?

Conclusion:

Proverbs chapter four works with very active language in describing a man's direction or walk in life. By wisdom his walk is not hindered and when he runs he will not stumble (4:12). The chapter could be divided up as:

1. The preservation and promotion of wisdom (4:1-13).
2. The destructive path of sinners (4:14-19).
3. The wellspring of life (4:20-27).

—Steven J. Wallace