

Abide in Me

John 15:4
*Bible studies for disciples
who make disciples*



Volume 8 - Number 11

The Week of January 8, 2023

Get Wisdom
Guarding Your Fountain
Proverbs 4:1-27

Wisdom has become a lost virtue in our culture today. We are awash in superfluous opinions that invade our lives like junk mail in our inboxes. We need something more, something deeply rooted, that shows us how to live sensible and spiritually productive lives. We need the ancient wisdom that is collected and arranged in the book of Proverbs. Proverbs is resolute in its assertion that everything about our lives must revolve around God—from our words, work, wealth, worship, and so much more. It is a practical handbook on how to live in a way that pleases God.

Over the course of twelve weeks, we are going to immerse ourselves in the timeless wisdom of Proverbs. It's a unique book. At times we will read a lengthy section of the book, but for most of this series we will look at a specific topic explored through a cluster of proverbs.

READ PROVERBS 4:1-27

- Place brackets around the words of address found in verses 1, 10, and 20 (These are the main sections of the chapter).
- Place a box around the command to *get wisdom* in verses 5 and 7.
- To the right of *father* in verse 3a write: = *grandfather*.
- Draw a long bracket down the left-hand side from verse 4a to verse 9.
- In verses 10-19 circle each time the words *way* or *path(s)* occur.
- In verses 20-27 double underline each time a part of the human body is mentioned.

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."

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.

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.

EXPLORING THE PASSAGE TOGETHER

1. In verses 3-9 the father mentions how wisdom was passed down to him from his father. What does this tell us about the value of investing in the next generation?

2. Read Proverbs 1:7 and 4:7. Fusing the two verses, what is the beginning of wisdom? How do you get it? In addition, while God is not explicitly mentioned in Proverbs 4, His presence is conspicuous. In what ways do you see Him?

3. In Proverbs wisdom is personified as a woman (cf. 1:20-33, Chapter 9). Why do you think that's the case? What do the metaphors in verses 8 and 9 tell us about the value of wisdom? If wisdom is so valuable, why do we need the exhortation to get it?

4. Verses 10-19 describe two ways or paths. What are the two paths and how is each one described? The word *stumble* appears in this section three times (vss. 12, 16, 19). What does it mean in each case?

5. According to verse 13, what does the way of wisdom promise to impart to us? What does it look like to be fully alive?

6. We are urged to keep our heart with all vigilance (v. 23).

- Define the heart and how is it like a fountain?
- How do we keep the heart with all vigilance?

7. What is the father's point in mentioning all the parts of the human body in verses 20-27? How does each part contribute to living a life of wisdom or not? (See 1 Corinthians 6:19 for the NT's version of the same truth).

8. What is one thing you can do this week to get wisdom?

9. What is one thing you can do to guard your heart?

