



THE PATH OF THE RIGHTEOUS

*But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn,
which shines brighter and brighter until full day.*

(Proverbs 4:18 ESV)

THE WAY OF THE WICKED

*The way of the wicked is like deep darkness;
they do not know over what they stumble.*

(Proverbs 4:19 ESV)

THE PATH OF THE RIGHTEOUS – PROVERBS 4

1. TO LIVE IN THE LIGHT OF OUR SOVEREIGN LORD'S PROVIDENTIAL CARE WE MUST GET WISDOM, 4:1-9.

A. First, we must hear God and be attentive to his instruction, 4:1-4.

- (Proverbs 4:1–4 ESV) 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.

The righteous ... are the people of God; those who believe in Messiah, are taught by our Lord and who follow him. The righteous are those who inherit eternal life as contrasted with the wicked who will face God's eternal wrath.

- (Matthew 25:46 ESV) **And these [the wicked] will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.**

- To be attentive to his instruction means to hear God with the resolve and intent that he will direct and transform our lives.

"Instruction" mûsâr—chastisement, reproof, warning or instruction, correction, discipline, doctrine, rebuke.

- (2 Timothy 3:16 ESV) All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for **teaching**, for **reproof**, for **correction**, and for **training in righteousness**.
- ii. It is with this approach to the words of God that we gain insight.
- iii. We must not forsake his good teaching.
- iv. We hold fast his words in our hearts.
- v. So then we walk in his light and live.
 - (Proverbs 10:16–17 ESV) The wage of the righteous **leads to life**, the gain of the wicked to sin. 17 **Whoever heeds instruction is on the path to life, but he who rejects reproof leads others astray.**
 - (Proverbs 12:28 ESV) In the path

of righteousness is life, and in its pathway there is no death.

B. The righteous hear God in this life-changing, transforming way and get wisdom, 4:5-9.

- (Proverbs 4:5–9 ESV) 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."
- i. We don't have wisdom and insight.
- ii. So we need to get wisdom and insight.
- iii. We must neither forget nor turn away from the wisdom we get.
- iv. Love wisdom and she will keep us and guard us. Prize wisdom and be lifted up. Embrace wisdom and be honored and crowned with grace and beauty in the eyes of God.

2. TO LIVE IN THE LIGHT OF OUR SOVEREIGN LORD'S PROVIDENTIAL CARE WE MUST LIVE TRUSTING IN THE WISDOM WE "GET" FROM GOD, 4:10-19.

A. Trusting and living in God's wisdom we hear and accept his words of wisdom and add to the years we actually live, 4:10-12.

- (Proverbs 4:10–12 ESV) 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.
- i. Hearing and accepting the words of wisdom we will be taught the way of wisdom and led in paths of uprightness.
- ii. We will live free of the restraints of sin and foolishness.
- iii. We will endure in a life that honors

the LORD.

- (Hebrews 12:1 ESV) Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.

B. Trusting in God's wisdom we do not let go of his wisdom, 4:13.

- (Proverbs 4:13 ESV) Keep hold of instruction; do not let go; guard her, for she is your life.

C. Trusting in God's wisdom we turn away from the path of the wicked, 4:14-17.

- (Proverbs 4:14-17 ESV) 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.

D. As we trust and live in God's wisdom the path before us grows brighter and brighter, 4:18.



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God's light does not grow brighter but our perception of his light grows brighter. And with increasing clarity we see where we are and where we are going on the path of life and in the plan and purpose of the LORD.

- (1 John 2:8-10 ESV) At the same time, it is a new commandment that I am writing to you,

which is true in him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining. 9 Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness. 10 Whoever loves his brother abides in the light, and in him there is no cause for stumbling.

E. The wicked stumble in deep darkness, 4:19.

- (Proverbs 4:19 ESV) The way of the wicked is like deep darkness; they do

not know over what they stumble.

We must understand and hold firm to the great conflict and the sharp divide between light and darkness that Scripture clearly presents to us ...

- (Psalm 56:13 ESV) For you have delivered my soul from death, yes, my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of life.
- (Psalm 89:15 NLT) Happy are those who hear the joyful call to worship, for they will walk in the light of your presence, LORD.
- (Isaiah 50:10-11 NLT) Who among you fears the LORD and obeys his servant? If you are walking in darkness, without a ray of light, trust in the LORD and rely on your God. 11 But watch out, you who live in your own light and warm yourselves by your own fires. This is the reward you will receive from me: You will soon fall down in great torment.
- (John 8:12 ESV) 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."
- (John 12:35 ESV) So Jesus said to them, "The light is among you for a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you. The one who walks in the darkness does not know where he is going."

3. TO CONTINUE LIVING IN THE LIGHT OF OUR SOVEREIGN LORD'S PROVIDENTIAL CARE WE MUST KEEP GOD'S WISDOM IN OUR HEARTS WITH ALL VIGILANCE, 4:20-27.

A. We are to be attentive and deliberate in our approach to discovering and discerning the words and sayings of the wisdom of God.

- (Proverbs 4:20 ESV) My son, be attentive to my words; incline your ear to my sayings.

B. Once we have the words and sayings of wisdom in sight, we must keep them within our hearts and not let them escape.

- (Proverbs 4:21-23 ESV) 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.

C. We then protect our hearts with all vigilance **because this wisdom in our hearts** is the key to abundant living.

HERE IS HOW WE PROTECT OUR HEARTS ...

- i. **WE PROTECT OUR HEARTS WHEN** we obey wisdom and put away crooked speech and devious talk.
- (Proverbs 4:24 ESV) Put away from you crooked speech, and put devious talk far from you.

"Crooked speech" ... distortion, crookedness ... **"devious talk"** ... deviation, perversity, crookedness. Put this speech far from us; distance ourselves from speaking in a way that distorts and deviates from righteousness; stay far from the crooked talk of the person who walks in their own light—the reality of which is actually darkness.

- ii. **WE PROTECT OUR HEARTS BY** keeping our eyes looking straight ahead.
- (Proverbs 4:25 ESV) Let your eyes look directly forward, and your gaze be straight before you.
 - (Colossians 3:2 ESV) **Set your minds on things that are above**, not on things that are on earth.
 - (Matthew 16:23 ESV) But he turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. **For you are not setting your mind on the things of God**, but on the things of man."
 - (1 Chronicles 22:18–19a ESV) Is not the LORD your God with you? And has he not given you peace on every side? For he has delivered the inhabitants of the land into my hand, and the land is subdued before the LORD and his people. 19 **Now set your mind and heart to seek the LORD your God.**
 - (Psalm 84:5 ESV) Blessed are those whose strength is in you, in whose heart are the highways to Zion.
 - (Psalm 84:5 NIV) Blessed are those whose strength is in you, **whose hearts are set on pilgrimage.**

- (1 Peter 1:13 ESV) Therefore, **preparing your minds for action**, and being sober-minded, **set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.**
- iii. **WE PROTECT OUR HEARTS WHEN** we ponder the direction of our lives.
- (Proverbs 4:26 ESV) Ponder the path of your feet; then all your ways will be sure.
 - (Ephesians 5:15–17 ESV) Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, 16 making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. 17 **Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.**
 - (Psalm 101:2–3 ESV) I will ponder the way that is blameless. Oh when will you come to me? I will walk with integrity of heart within my house; 3 **I will not set before my eyes anything that is worthless.** I hate the work of those who fall away; it shall not cling to me.
- iv. **WE PROTECT OUR HEARTS WHEN** we stay true to the teaching of Scripture—do not swerve to the right or to the left.
- (Proverbs 4:27 ESV) Do not swerve to the right or to the left; turn your foot away from evil.
- v. **WE PROTECT OUR HEARTS WHEN** we turn away from evil.
- (Proverbs 4:27 ESV) Do not swerve to the right or to the left; turn your foot away from evil.
 - (Psalm 97:10–12 ESV) **O you who love the LORD, hate evil!** He preserves the lives of his saints; he delivers them from the hand of the wicked. 11 **Light is sown for the righteous, and joy for the upright in heart.** 12 Rejoice in the LORD, O you righteous, and give thanks to his holy name!