

A Light in the World
Proverbs Chapter Four
Berean Baptist Church
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INTRODUCTION

The fourth chapter in Proverbs focuses on parenting and passing down wisdom from one generation to the next. Before this passage, Proverbs gives seven calls to wisdom and each starts with "my son..." (1:8, 10; 2:1, 15; 3:1, 11, 21). But this call to wisdom is to "ye children" or "you sons" and it is a call from a father who was educated by his father. This is a powerful lesson in the necessity and reward of directing children to wisdom.

Teach young people to intentionally live according to wisdom, and they will be lights in the world!

Proverbs 4:1-4 The Wise Get Wisdom and Pass it Down for Generations

Vs 1-2 This wisdom comes down three generations from father to son. The father got this wisdom from his father and he gives it to his sons, note plural. Proverbs makes it very clear that mothers are also involved in passing wisdom down (6:20, 31:1, etc). "Good doctrine" has the idea of good education or learning. The wise parent takes direct responsibility for the education of their children in good doctrine. And they do not hesitate to tell their children why they need to be educated in the Doctrine of Living: "Keep my commandments and live."

Vs 1-4 The parents' instruction is good and worth keeping. This illustrates an important truth: God created the parent-child relationship as part of His image. Parents reflect God to their children. God constantly refers to Himself as "father" because the father-child relationship is an illustration of the relationship between God and men. See Exd 4:23, Luke 15:11-32 and Heb 12:6-10.

Parents (and grandparents), you are your child's first and most important theology lesson. Your actions, words, and decisions tell your children about wisdom generally and God's character specifically. Make sure you are telling them the truth.

Parents and grandparents, you must reflect good doctrine to your children. Everything you do is a statement to them about God, so show them the truth!

"Eph 6:4 And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

Children, God gave you your parents as His representatives, so you should honor them. Whether they are good representatives of God or terrible, they should always have your respect and attention. And they should also have your obedience unless they are leading you to sin.

"Col 3:20 Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord."

Proverbs 4:5-13 The Wise Guard Wisdom, and Wisdom Guards Them

Vs 5-7 notice that it starts with a decision, not a circumstance or an opportunity, but a decision to follow after wisdom. These are urgent commands with remarkable promises. The heart of the admonishment is for children take a personal responsibility for their education.

The children are to get, hold, love, and exalt wisdom. A biblical education is something that you do, not something that happens to you!

Vs 8-9 You will be treated in the way that you treat wisdom. Lift up wisdom in your life and she will lift you up, be faithful to her and she will be faithful to you.

Vs 9 In **Vs 1-4** the father gives wisdom to the son. Now in **Vs 9** if the son keeps wisdom, wisdom will give him glory. Note how the origins of wisdom are ancient, but the effects of wisdom are continually relevant.

The parenting of the wise is about continuing good cycles as it is ending bad ones.

Vs 13 These commands are urgent matters of as life and death

We must take personal responsibility for our education and encourage others to do the same as a matter of life and death.

Proverbs 4:14-19 The Wise are Lights in the World, the Wicked Darken the World

Vs 18 and 19 these two paths could not be more different. The path of wisdom is much likely that of the Godly leader in 2 Sam 23:4. The ways of the just bring light into the world. Like the sun, the wise warm, sustain and illuminate those around them. Because these directions have young people in mind, the just shine more and more as they mature until they become like the sun at high noon.

The wicked do not contribute anything good to the world and are so wrapped in their own darkness that they cannot even find their own way.

Vs 16, 17, 19 The evil darken the world and their sustenance is the harm of others.

Every child will either be a light to the World or darkness to the world. Lead them in the path of light.

Proverbs 4:20-27 The Wise Live Intentionally

Vs 20-21 incline the ear and fix your eyes, keep them inside of you. Again the expectation is on the child to take ownership of the education.

Vs 23 protect your inner life from evil. Wisdom is not about making good outward choices, wisdom starts as a matter of the heart. **Many heathen kings tried to destroy Israel during their time in the wilderness, but the only one that came close was Balak who turned Israel to idolatry.**

"1Jo 5:21 Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen."

Vs 27 "Do not turn to the right or the left" is an Old Testament expression of a path that is determined, straightforward, and stable; Deuteronomy 5:32; 17:11; 28:14; and Josh 23:6. This is a life of focus!

Vs 26-27 Small steps feed into the direction of your life. This is an exhortation to live intentionally good lives, made up of intentionally good, small choices.

We must live intentionally and diligently practice good choices.

CONCLUSION

Wisdom is not given for your sake alone, but for those who will come after you. Take personal ownership of your own education in the Doctrine of Life and encourage children to do the same. All people should learn to honor Wisdom and guard their hearts. And all must learn the significance of

small, daily choices. The stakes are too high for these things to be neglected. Every young person will bring light or darkness to the world.

Teach young people to intentionally live according to wisdom, and they will be lights in the world!