



“Listen, my sons, to a father’s instruction;
pay attention and gain understanding.” –

Prov 4:1

Prov 4:1-9

Listen, my sons, to a father’s instruction; pay attention and gain understanding. I give you sound learning, so do not forsake my teaching. When I was a boy in my father’s house, still tender, and an only child of my mother, he taught me and said, “Lay hold of my words with all your heart; keep my commands and you will live. Get wisdom, get understanding; do not forget my words or swerve from them. Do not forsake wisdom, and she will protect you; love her, and she will watch over you. 7 Wisdom is supreme; therefore get wisdom. Though it cost all you have, get understanding. Esteem her, and she will exalt you; embrace her, and she will honor you.9 She will set a garland of grace on your head and present you with a crown of splendor.”

Am I training my children to love wisdom? I know what the next family time is going to be about!

Prov 4:18-19

18 The path of the righteous is like the first gleam of dawn, shining ever brighter till the full light of day.

19 But the way of the wicked is like deep darkness; they do not know what makes them stumble.

Do I know what makes me stumble? Are things getting brighter in my heart or darker?

Proverbs 4:1, 4, 5, 10, 13, 20

All of these scriptures me to listen closely, pay attention, “lay hold” of what is said, and to “hold on” to instruction. They build up to the last piece of the chapter:

Prov 4:23-27

23 Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.

24 Put away perversity from your mouth; keep corrupt talk far from your lips.
 25 Let your eyes look straight ahead, fix your gaze directly before you.
 26 Make level paths for your feet and take only ways that are firm.
 27 Do not swerve to the right or the left; keep your foot from evil.
 Guard my heart above all else. Put away perversity from my mouth. Perverse speech.

Perversity: עִקְשׁוּת - `iqqěshuwth “distortion, crookedness”

Corrupt talk: לְזוּת - lězuwth “deviation, perversity, crookedness”

Both of these talk about “distorting” the truth. Twisting things. Corrupting truth.

What I say, what comes out of my mouth, absolutely has an impact on what direction I’ll take in life. It’ll affect what I do next. James reinforces this in a very clear way.

James 3:3-6



3 When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal.

4 Or take ships as an example. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to go. 5 Likewise the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. 6 The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell.

It takes God to “Tame our tongue” – All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and creatures of the sea are being tamed and have been tamed by man, but no man can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. James 3:7-8

Like a bit in the mouth of a horse, the small rudder for a large ship, and a small spark which sets the whole forest on fire – is the tongue for directing our steps.

The tongue corrupts the whole person. The damage that can be done with the tongue is astonishing.

“Sticks and stones may break my bones but words will never hurt me.” Well, clearly, that is not true...no matter how clever it seemed as a child.

Proverbs 4:25

25 Let your eyes look straight ahead, fix your gaze directly before you.

26 Make level paths for your feet and take only ways that are firm.

27 Do not swerve to the right or the left; keep your foot from evil.

I need to know what I am doing, what my next steps are going to be. There needs to be a plan and there needs to be steps taken in that plan day to day. Consider Isaiah 32:8 - "The noble man makes noble plans and by noble deeds he stands."

The paths that I take, the plans that I make, they need to be righteous, God must be considered - his will, his purpose, his kingdom, even his heart - in whatever plans/paths I take. I can't swerve in conviction, no one likes to ride with a fellow who swerves all over the road - Jesus would be no exception.

What are "my plans" (paths) for the day? Do they reflect what is straight, what is level and firm? Am I taking risks with my life, relationships, health, finances, purity, righteousness, or relationship with God? The things I plan to do - are they for my pleasure or my Father in heaven's pleasure? What do I have planned that will please God today?



"I guide you in the way of wisdom and lead you along straight paths."