**Proverbs chapter 4 (Lesson #5)**

**The Path of Wisdom (and the Wicked)**

Here in chapter 4 we find **three speeches** or **three parental appeals** from **the father**, appeal 5 (verses 1-9), appeal 6 (verses 10-19) and appeal 7 (verses 20-27).

The Bible and in particular the book of Proverbs says a lot about wisdom, in fact the Hebrew word translated wisdom **חָכְמָה‎ (chokmah)**, is used in 38 verses.

Because the Proverbs speak a lot about wisdom, it also says a lot about the **importance of obtaining** and the **value of acquiring wisdom**.

* **Knowledge** is not wisdom.
* **Experience** is not wisdom.
* **Moralism** is not wisdom.
* **Even discipleship** is not wisdom.

Wisdom can only be acquired in a spirit of dependance upon God and following God’s principles and teachings.

Wisdom is God’s knowledge and God’s experience, **put into action**. It is the **craft** or the **art** of **living well in God’s world**.

The first step in acquiring wisdom is to **ask God.** Really, that seems rather simplistic**!**

***5****If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. (James 1:5, ESV).*

Let me show this working out:

***5****At Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night, and God said, “Ask what I shall give you.”****6****And Solomon said, “You have shown great and steadfast love to your servant David my father, because he walked before you in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart toward you. And you have kept for him this great and steadfast love and have given him a son to sit on his throne this day.****7****And now, O Lord my God, you have made your servant king in place of David my father, although I am but a little child. I do not know how to go out or come in.****8****And your servant is in the midst of your people whom you have chosen, a great people, too many to be numbered or counted for multitude.****9****Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, that I may discern between good and evil, for who is able to govern this your great people?”*

***10****It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this.****11****And God said to him, “Because you have asked this, and have not asked for yourself long life or riches or the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right,****12****behold, I now do according to your word. Behold, I give you a wise and discerning mind, so that none like you has been before you and none like you shall arise after you.****13****I give you also what you have not asked, both riches and honor, so that no other king shall compare with you, all your days.****14****And if you will walk in my ways, keeping my statutes and my commandments, as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your days.” (I Kin 3:5-14, ESV).*

I hope you see the wisdom that God provides is tied to God’s revelation. It requires persistence and pursuit, both those factors alone are not enough. It also requires humble dependance on God.

**A Grandfather’s Wise Instruction – The Fifth Appeal**

***4:1-4a Hear, O sons, a father's instruction, and be attentive, that you may gain insight, 2for I give you good precepts; do not forsake my teaching. 3When I was a son with my father, tender, the only one in the sight of my mother, 4he taught me and said to me…***

***4b - “Let your heart hold fast my words; keep my commandments, and live. 5Get wisdom; get insight; do not forget, and do not turn away from the words of my mouth. 6Do not forsake her, and she will keep you; love her, and she will guard you. 7The beginning of wisdom is this: Get wisdom, and whatever you get, get insight. 8Prize her highly, and she will exalt you; she will honor you if you embrace her. 9She will place on your head a graceful garland; she will bestow on you a beautiful crown.”***

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**A Man-to-Man Talk About the Paths of Life - The Sixth Appeal**

***10Hear, my son, and accept my words, that the years of your life may be many. 11I have taught you the way of wisdom; I have led you in the paths of uprightness. 12When you walk, your step will not be hampered, and if you run, you will not stumble. 13Keep hold of instruction; do not let go; guard her, for she is your life.***

***14Do not enter the path of the wicked, and do not walk in the way of the evil. Avoid it; do not go on it; turn away from it and pass on. 16For they cannot sleep unless they have done wrong; they are robbed of sleep unless they have made someone stumble. 17For they eat the bread of wickedness and drink the wine of violence.***

***18But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, which shines brighter and brighter until full day.***
***19The way of the wicked is like deep darkness; they do not know over what they stumble.***

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**Listen, Look, Keep, and Ponder - The Seventh Appeal**

***20My son, be attentive to my words; incline your ear to my sayings. 21Let them not escape from your sight; keep them within your heart.22For 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.***

**Vs 23 –** Then the father looks you in the eye and says, guard your heart, keep your heart, for from your heart flows the **springs of life.** The word **heart occurs 77 times** in the book of Proverbs.

But what John records that Jesus says is extremely insightful:

***37****On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink.****38****Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’”****39****Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.*

Watch your emotions, sift your emotions, and make sure they are in line with the fruit of the Spirit. **KEEP YOUR HEART WITH ALL VIGILENCE.**

I want to do better this year at **guarding my emotions**, I want to do better this year at **keeping my heart**.

 ***24 Put away from you crooked speech, and put devious talk far from you. 25Let your eyes look directly forward, and your gaze be straight before you. 26Ponder the path of your feet; then all your ways will be sure. 27Do not swerve to the right or to the left; turn your foot away from evil.***

Three speeches from the Father, but they are all ultimately about putting yourself under the instruction of God, on the path of God, reliant on the Spirit of God. For it is there that we will find wisdom **חָכְמָה‎ (chokmah)*. How to live well in God’s world!*** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_