



## "REASONS TO REJOICE"

"Your Words were found and I ate them, and Your Word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart." Jeremiah 15:16

### PROVERBS LESSON 3

This week we'll continue our study in the fourth chapter of Proverbs. There aren't many "new" thoughts in this admonition to acquire wisdom, but Solomon brings them to us with more vigor and intensity. It is extremely important to him that his "sons" or students listen to him and take his counsel. I'm sure we've all felt that way in dealing with our own kids. We want so badly for them to avoid trouble and heartache, and, because of experience, we can advise them what to do and what "not" to do. We old people have been around the block! Sadly, some of our children listen and others don't. But it's the "wise" son or daughter that listens and obeys his/her parents. I pray that we take heed and listen up to all the counsel our Heavenly Father wants to bestow on us through His Word.

#### First Day

1. Read Proverbs 4:1-27. We find Solomon again giving advice and beseeching him to listen. As you read this chapter, what emotion or feeling do you detect in his tone?
2. How would you describe this chapter? What would you say is the main thought? Any repeated words? What would you choose as the key verse?

As previously stated, the word "hear" throughout the Proverbs has the connotation of obedience. So Solomon is saying more than just "listen." He's calling him, to listen, to process, and to obey!

3. How many references are there to the word "keep"?
4. From this chapter, can you list some benefits of following wisdom?
5. Do you see any contrasts or comparisons?
6. This chapter can be broken into three divisions. What verse in each section sums it up the best?
  - A. Getting Wisdom: (4:1-9)
  - B. Keeping Wisdom: (4:10-19)
  - C. Applying Wisdom: (4:20-27)

This chapter shows us how crucial it is to pass down the tradition of following the wisdom of God to the next generation. Lane said, "Let the cycle of wisdom roll on. Breaking the bad cycles and continuing the good ones are what wise parenting entails."

7. Did you have any "traditions" passed down to you that weren't Biblical? How can you break the "bad cycles" that you have inherited?

That's it for now. May you be aware of what you are passing down to your children and your friends. Are you setting a good example of walking down the path of wisdom?

**Memory Verse of the Week:** "But the path of the just is like the shining sun, that shines ever brighter unto the perfect day." Proverbs 4:18

### Second Day

**Review your memory verse.**

1. Read Proverbs 4:1-27. In verses 3-9, Solomon gives kind of an autobiography of his childrearing. Who were his parents? Read 2 Samuel 12:24. How many brothers did he have later, according to 1 Chronicles 3:5?

Here we see a picture of Solomon recalling the words of truth his parents spoke to him while he was growing up. What a beautiful picture of the passing of the baton. Both of his parents loved God, and Solomon was blessed to have this kind of legacy.

2. Read some of David's words to Solomon in 1 Chronicles 28:9-10 and 1 Kings 2:1-10. What are some of the main points? How did David live out Deuteronomy 6:1-9?
3. How does Solomon, speaking from his own "experience," strengthen his case?
4. How does Solomon personify wisdom in these verses?
5. Of these verses, Wiersbe wrote, "The father tells the son to treat wisdom the way they would treat their mother, sister, or wife: love her, honor her, embrace her, exalt her!" What does this mean?
6. These verses remind us that seeking wisdom is worth the cost. Verses 8-9 tell us that wisdom brings honor as well as makes for an attractive life, as pictured by a beautiful wreath. Can you explain this in your own words?
7. As parents, what practical things can we do to pass on the baton of faith and wisdom? If you're not a parent, are you released from the responsibility of declaring truth to the next generation? How can you also be part of leaving a godly legacy?

8. As a parent, what are YOU handing down? Are you investing in your children, as well as others in the next generation? (Deut. 6:3-9; Ephesians 6:1-4; 2 Timothy 1:3-5; 2:2; 3:14-17). Are you providing your children with a rich heritage? Are you training them formally and informally? Any changes need to be made?

In the commentary in my Bible, it tells us that parents have a threefold responsibility, according to Deut. 6:6-9. It says that we are to allow God's truth to govern our heart, to allow God's truth to govern our home, and to allow God's truth govern our habits and conduct personally, privately, and publicly. In summary, we are called to first be under the submission of our Father before we can, in turn, teach our own children.

9. Are you allowing God's truth to govern your habits both privately and publicly? (We forget sometimes that our kids see both!)

I pray that you take time today to contemplate the investment you're making in the next generation. It talks about "declaring the Lord to the next generation" all through the Psalms as well. I think God is serious about this. He is calling us to pass the baton. In a relay race, the runner holding the baton doesn't slow down before they pass; they keep on running as fast as they can. Ladies, don't slow down in your faith, take a time out, or run hesitantly. Run as hard as you can, as smooth as you can, and as focused as you can. Then pass it on without any regrets!

### Third Day

**Spend time on your memory verse today.**

1. Read Proverbs 4 again, focusing on verses 10-19. We're beginning the section on how to keep wisdom. How does he say to do this?

Solomon again addresses his son, urging him to listen. He seems to get more and more intense as the chapter goes on. Notice the urgency in verses 14-17.

2. A straight path is usually an "unrestricted" path. Why would that be easier to travel on? What kinds of things threaten to "restrict" our path?

If we stumble while running, we have a few options. We can stay down, feeling sorry for ourselves while allowing other runners to trample us. We can crawl off the path, being humiliated and embarrassed. Or, we can get up, brush ourselves off, and continue running. Picture this ... 1978. I was running in a 100 meter final at Laguna Beach High School and I was favored to win! When I took off out of the blocks, I was leaning forward way too far. About 20-30 meters in, I lost my balance and fell. Yes, I fell in the 100 meters. No one falls in the 100 meters. Maybe they fall in the hurdles, but not in the 100 meters. There were probably thousands of people there because it was a huge invitational. Talk about embarrassing! All I wanted to do was crawl off the track and find a hole to hide in. I don't recall ever being more humiliated. (At least at that time of my life - I have stories now!) Instead, I stood up, brushed myself off, and ran towards the finish line. Although, embarrassed, I needed to at least finish the race. It was the right thing to do. I still have a picture of myself, commemorating this horrible event. Why they would take that, I still have no idea.

3. What's the point of my story? Have you ever stumbled and fallen in your spiritual walk? Were you going strong and then temptation came and smacked you in the face? Perhaps it was a series of bad choices or decisions? Maybe you're still down on the track, too embarrassed and humiliated to move. Are you ready to get back up and start running again? Read Lamentations 3:22-24, Proverbs 24:16, and Isaiah 40:29-31. How do these verses encourage you? How can you encourage a friend as well?

4. In your own words, what are verses 16 and 17 saying? Why does he use bread and wine to explain it?
5. Why do you think "truth" is always represented by light, and evil by darkness?

Solomon's description of the wicked is very colorful. It's like they are totally addicted to sin and can't live without it. It's as if wickedness is their bread and butter! As with someone who is addicted to drugs or alcohol, a little experimentation with evil can cause you to be hooked forever. Sin is like that. It's like a web that can entangle you.

6. Read James 1:13-16 and John 8:34 and then summarize the progression of sin. How is it a "snare"?

I read something interesting about darkness by Eric Lane. He wrote, "The word translated 'darkness' in this verse is the same word translated 'deep darkness' in Exodus 10:22, the plague of darkness, so intense it could be felt, so 'total' their eyes could not adjust to it. Darkness stands for ignorance and error, misery and sin (Ephesians 4:18-19). Those who walk that way stumble; they are always in some kind of trouble, and ultimately come to ruin, consigned to outer darkness, a state which the light of God never penetrates."

7. Is there any "darkness" in your life that needs God's light to shine on it? Is there any area that you've been trying to hide from anyone, especially the Lord? God desires us to be open, transparent, and honest before Him. Take a few minutes and ask the Holy Spirit to search the inner depths of your heart. (Proverbs 20:27, Psalm 139:23-24) Then repent and ask the Lord for forgiveness! (1 John 1:9)

We're going to stop here for now. Stay on the path of the "just" as you go through your day. Watch out for roadblocks and things you can stumble over. Abhor evil and cling to what is good, like Paul said in Romans 12:9.

## Fourth and Fifth Days

**Write out your verse from memory.**

1. Read Proverbs 4 and focus on verses 20-27. This section now focuses on applying wisdom. In what familiar way does he open this section?
2. How many body parts does the author mention in this section? What do you think he's trying to say? (Read Romans 12:1)
3. How can we use each particular body part to bring honor and glory to the Lord?
  - A. Ears**
    1. How can we sin with our ears?
    2. How can we guard our ears?
    3. How can we bring Him glory?
    4. Are you bringing Him glory?
  - B. Eyes**
    1. How can we sin with our eyes?
    2. How can we protect our eyes?
    3. How can we bring Him glory?
    4. Are you bringing Him glory?
  - C. Mouth**
    1. How can we sin with our mouth?
    2. How can we guard our mouth?

3. How can we bring Him glory?

4. Are you bringing Him glory?

**D. Feet**

1. How can we sin with our feet?

2. How can we guard our feet?

3. How can we bring Him glory?

4. Are you bringing Him glory?

4. I think our heart is in a different category all its own. What do verses 21 and 23 tell us? What are the "issues of life"?

5. According to Jesus in Luke 6:45, what is the relationship between one's heart and his speech?

6. What kinds of "hearts" are we called to avoid, according to:

A. Psalm 12:2

B. Proverbs 28:14

C. Proverbs 21:4

D. Hebrews 3:12

E. Matthew 24:12

F. Psalm 51:10

7. What "state" is your heart in? Do you need prayer for it to change?

8. How do we practically "keep our heart with all diligence"?

**We'll end here for this week. Spend some time meditating on Ephesians 4:29. Bless you, dear friends!**