

Proverbs Collection I: A Father's Instruction – Part 2 (c. 969t – 932t BC)

Proverbs 4–6

A Heritage of Wisdom

- 4:1 Hear, O sons, the instruction of a father,
And give attention that you may gain understanding,
2 For I give you sound teaching;
Do not abandon my instruction.
3 When I was a son to my father,
Tender and the only son in the sight of my mother,
4 Then he taught me and said to me,
“Let your heart hold fast my words;
Keep my commandments and live;
5 Acquire wisdom! Acquire understanding!
Do not forget nor turn away from the words of my mouth.
6 “Do not forsake her, and she will guard you;
Love her, and she will watch over you.
7 “The beginning of wisdom *is*: Acquire wisdom;
And with all your acquiring, get understanding.
8 “Prize her, and she will exalt you;
She will honor you if you embrace her.
9 “She will place on your head a garland of grace;
She will present you with a crown of beauty.”

Avoid the Path of the Wicked

- 10 Hear, my son, and accept my sayings
And the years of your life will be many.
11 I have directed you in the way of wisdom;
I have led you in upright paths.
12 When you walk, your steps will not be impeded;
And if you run, you will not stumble.
13 Take hold of instruction; do not let go.
Guard her, for she is your life.
14 Do not enter the path of the wicked
And do not proceed in the way of evil men.
15 Avoid it, do not pass by it;
Turn away from it and pass on.
16 For they cannot sleep unless they do evil;
And they are robbed of sleep unless they make *someone* stumble.
17 For they eat the bread of wickedness
And drink the wine of violence.
18 But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn,
That shines brighter and brighter until the full day.
19 The way of the wicked is like darkness;
They do not know over what they stumble.

Never Turn from the Right Path

- 20 My son, give attention to my words;
Incline your ear to my sayings.

- 21 Do not let them depart from your sight;
Keep them in the midst of your heart.
- 22 For they are life to those who find them
And health to all their body.
- 23 Watch over your heart with all diligence,
For from it *flow* the springs of life.
- 24 Put away from you a deceitful mouth
And put devious speech far from you.
- 25 Let your eyes look directly ahead
And let your gaze be fixed straight in front of you.
- 26 Watch the path of your feet
And all your ways will be established.
- 27 Do not turn to the right nor to the left;
Turn your foot from evil.

Do Not Lust after the Adulterous Woman

- 5:1 My son, give attention to my wisdom,
Incline your ear to my understanding;
2 That you may observe discretion
And your lips may reserve knowledge.
3 For the lips of an adulteress drip honey
And smoother than oil is her speech;
4 But in the end she is bitter as wormwood,
Sharp as a two-edged sword.
5 Her feet go down to death,
Her steps take hold of Sheol.
6 She does not ponder the path of life;
Her ways are unstable, she does not know *it*.
7 Now then, *my sons*, listen to me
And do not depart from the words of my mouth.
8 Keep your way far from her
And do not go near the door of her house,
9 Or you will give your vigor to others
And your years to the cruel one;
10 And strangers will be filled with your strength
And your hard-earned goods *will go* to the house of an alien;
11 And you groan at your final end,
When your flesh and your body are consumed;
12 And you say, “How I have hated instruction!
And my heart spurned reproof!
13 “I have not listened to the voice of my teachers,
Nor inclined my ear to my instructors!
14 “I was almost in utter ruin
In the midst of the assembly and congregation.”

Be Captivated with Your Own Wife

- 15 Drink water from your own cistern
And fresh water from your own well.
16 Should your springs be dispersed abroad,

Streams of water in the streets?

- 17 Let them be yours alone
And not for strangers with you.
- 18 Let your fountain be blessed,
And rejoice in the wife of your youth.
- 19 As a loving hind and a graceful doe,
Let her breasts satisfy you at all times;
Be exhilarated always with her love.
- 20 For why should you, my son, be exhilarated with an adulteress
And embrace the bosom of a foreigner?
- 21 For the ways of a man are before the eyes of the LORD,
And He watches all his paths.
- 22 His own iniquities will capture the wicked,
And he will be held with the cords of his sin.
- 23 He will die for lack of instruction,
And in the greatness of his folly he will go astray.

Do Not Guarantee Another's Debts

- 6:1 My son, if you have become surety for your neighbor,
Have given a pledge for a stranger,
- 2 *If* you have been snared with the words of your mouth,
Have been caught with the words of your mouth,
- 3 Do this then, my son, and deliver yourself;
Since you have come into the hand of your neighbor,
Go, humble yourself, and importune your neighbor.
- 4 Give no sleep to your eyes,
Nor slumber to your eyelids;
- 5 Deliver yourself like a gazelle from *the hunter's* hand
And like a bird from the hand of the fowler.

Do Not Give in to Laziness

- 6 Go to the ant, O sluggard,
Observe her ways and be wise,
- 7 Which, having no chief,
Officer or ruler,
- 8 Prepares her food in the summer
And gathers her provision in the harvest.
- 9 How long will you lie down, O sluggard?
When will you arise from your sleep?
- 10 "A little sleep, a little slumber,
A little folding of the hands to rest" —
- 11 Your poverty will come in like a vagabond
And your need like an armed man.

Warning Against Deviousness

- 12 A worthless person, a wicked man,
Is the one who walks with a perverse mouth,
- 13 Who winks with his eyes, who signals with his feet,
Who points with his fingers;

- 14 Who *with* perversity in his heart continually devises evil,
Who spreads strife.
15 Therefore his calamity will come suddenly;
Instantly he will be broken and there will be no healing.

Conduct God Hates

- 16 There are six things which the LORD hates,
Yes, seven which are an abomination to Him:
17 Haughty eyes, a lying tongue,
And hands that shed innocent blood,
18 A heart that devises wicked plans,
Feet that run rapidly to evil,
19 A false witness *who* utters lies,
And one who spreads strife among brothers.

Guard Your Heart Against the Adulterous Woman

- 20 My son, observe the commandment of your father
And do not forsake the teaching of your mother;
21 Bind them continually on your heart;
Tie them around your neck.
22 When you walk about, they will guide you;
When you sleep, they will watch over you;
And when you awake, they will talk to you.
23 For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching is light;
And reproofs for discipline are the way of life
24 To keep you from the evil woman,
From the smooth tongue of the adulteress.
25 Do not desire her beauty in your heart,
Nor let her capture you with her eyelids.
26 For on account of a harlot *one is reduced* to a loaf of bread,
And an adulteress hunts for the precious life.
27 Can a man take fire in his bosom
And his clothes not be burned?
28 Or can a man walk on hot coals
And his feet not be scorched?
29 So is the one who goes in to his neighbor's wife;
Whoever touches her will not go unpunished.
30 Men do not despise a thief if he steals
To satisfy himself when he is hungry;
31 But when he is found, he must repay sevenfold;
He must give all the substance of his house.
32 The one who commits adultery with a woman is lacking sense;
He who would destroy himself does it.
33 Wounds and disgrace he will find,
And his reproach will not be blotted out.
34 For jealousy enrages a man,
And he will not spare in the day of vengeance.
35 He will not accept any ransom,
Nor will he be satisfied though you give many gifts.

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