

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

Proverbs 4–6

A Heritage of Wisdom

- 4:1 Children, listen *to the* instruction of a father,
and be attentive *in order* to know insight.
- 2 For I have given you good instruction;
do not forsake my teaching.
- 3 When I was a son to my father,
tender and alone before my mother,
- 4 he taught me and said to me,
“May your heart hold fast *to* my words;
guard my commandments and live.
- 5 Get wisdom and insight;
do not forget and do not turn from the sayings of my mouth.
- 6 Do not forsake her—then she will guard you;
love her and she will keep you.
- 7 The beginning of wisdom: Get wisdom!
With all *that is in* your possession, gain insight.
- 8 Cherish her and she will exalt you;
she will honor you if you embrace her.
- 9 She will give a garland for your head;
she shall bestow a crown of glory upon you.”

Avoid the Path of the Wicked

- 10 Listen, my child, take my sayings,
and *the* years of your life shall be great.
- 11 In the way of wisdom I have instructed you;
I have led you in the path of uprightness.
- 12 When you walk, your step will not be hampered,
and if you run, you will not stumble.
- 13 Seize the instruction! Do not let go!
Guard her, for she is your life.
- 14 In the path of the wicked do not go;
do not walk in the way of those who do evil.
- 15 Avoid it; do not transgress it;
turn away from it and pass by.
- 16 For they will not sleep if they have not done wrong,
and they are robbed of their sleep if they do not cause stumbling.
- 17 For they ate the bread of wickedness,
and they drank the wine of violence.
- 18 But the path of the righteous ones *is* like the light of dawn,
leading and shining until the day is full.
- 19 The way of the wicked ones *is* like deep darkness;
they do not know what they stumble over.

Never Turn from the Right Path

- 20 My child, be attentive to my words;
to my sayings incline your ear.
- 21 May they not escape from your sight;
keep them in *the* midst of your heart.
- 22 For they are life to those who find them
and healing to the entire body.
- 23 With all vigilance, keep your heart,
for from it *comes* the source of life.
- 24 Remove from yourself deceitful speech,
and abolish devious talk from yourself.
- 25 May your eyes look forward
and your gaze be straight before you.

26 May the path of your foot be balanced
and all your ways be sure.

27 Do not swerve right or left;
remove your foot from evil.

Do Not Lust after the Adulterous Woman

5:1 My child, be attentive to my wisdom,
and to my understanding incline your ear;
2 *in order* to keep prudence,
and knowledge will guard your lips.
3 For the lips of the strange woman will drip honey,
and smoother than oil is her mouth.
4 But her end is bitter as the wormwood,
sharp as a two-edged sword.
5 Her feet go down *to* death;
her steps take hold *of* Sheol.
6 She does not observe the path of life;
her ways wander, *and* she does not know *it*.
7 Now, O children, listen to me;
do not depart from the sayings of my mouth.
8 Keep your paths far from her,
and do not go near to the door of her house,
9 lest you give your honor to the others,
and your years to the merciless,
10 lest strangers take *their* fill of your strength,
and your labors *go* to the house of a foreigner,
11 and you groan at your end,
when your flesh and body are consumed,
12 and say “How I hated discipline,
and I despised reproof!”
13 and “I did not listen to the voice of my teachers,
and I did not incline my ear to my instructors!
14 I was almost at utter ruin
in the midst of the assembly and congregation.”

Be Captivated with Your Own Wife

15 Drink water from your *own* cistern
and flowing waters from inside your own well.
16 Shall your springs be scattered outward?
In the streets, *shall there be* streams of water?
17 May they be yours alone,
and not for strangers *who are* with you.
18 May your fountain be blessed,
and rejoice in the wife of your youth.
19 *She is* a deer of love and a doe of grace;
may her breasts satisfy you always;
by her love may you be intoxicated continually.
20 Why should you be intoxicated, my child, by a strange woman,
and embrace the bosom of a foreigner?
21 For before the eyes of Yahweh *are* human ways,
and all his paths he examines.
22 His iniquities shall ensnare him, the evildoer,
and in the vanity of his sin he shall be caught.
23 He shall die for lack of discipline,
and in the greatness of his folly he shall be lost.

Do Not Guarantee Another's Debts

- 6:1 My child, if you have pledged to your neighbor,
if you have bound yourself to the stranger,
2 *if you are snared by the sayings of your mouth,*
if you are caught by the sayings of your mouth,
3 do this, then, my child, and save yourself,
for you have come into the palm of your neighbor's hand:
Go, humble yourself, plead with your neighbor.
4 Do not give sleep to your eyes,
or slumber to your eyelids.
5 Save yourself like a gazelle from a hand,
or like a bird from the hand of a fowler.

Do Not Give in to Laziness

- 6 Go to the ant, lazy!
Consider its ways and be wise.
7 It has no chief,
officer, or ruler.
8 In the summer, it prepares its food;
in the harvest, it gathers its sustenance.
9 How long will you lie down, lazy?
When will you rise up from your sleep?
10 A little sleep, a little slumber,
a little folding of the hands for rest—
11 like a robber shall your poverty come,
and what you lack like an armed man.

Warning Against Deviousness

- 12 A worthless man, an evil man,
goes around with deceitful speech.
13 Winking in his eye, shuffling in his foot,
pointing in his fingers,
14 perversion in his heart, he devises evil;
at all times he will send out discord.
15 Upon such a man, suddenly shall his calamity come;
in a moment he will be damaged and there is no healing.

Conduct God Hates

- 16 There are six *things* Yahweh hates,
and seven *things are* abominations of his soul:
17 haughty eyes, a lying tongue,
and hands that shed innocent blood,
18 a devising heart, plans of deception,
feet that hurry to run to evil,
19 a false witness who breathes lies
and sends out discord between brothers.

Guard Your Heart Against the Adulterous Woman

- 20 My child, keep *the* commandment of your father,
and do not disregard *the* instruction of your mother.
21 Bind them on your heart continually;
tie them upon your neck.
22 When you walk, she will lead you,
When you lie down, she will watch over you,
and *when* you awake, she will converse *with* you.
23 For *like* a lamp *is* a commandment, and instruction *is* light,
and the way of life *is the* reproof of discipline,
24 *in order* to preserve you from an evil woman,

- from the smoothness of *the* tongue of an adulteress.
- 25 Do not desire her beauty in your heart;
may she not capture you with her eyelashes.
- 26 For *the* price of a woman, a prostitute, *is the* price of a loaf of bread,
but the woman belonging to a man hunts precious life.
- 27 Can a man carry fire in his lap,
and his clothes not burn?
- 28 If a man walks upon the hot coals,
will his feet not be burned?
- 29 Thus, he who goes to the wife of his neighbor,
any who touches her shall not go unpunished.
- 30 *People* do not despise a thief when he steals
to fill himself when he is hungry.
- 31 But *if* he is found, he will pay sevenfold,
every possession of his house he shall give.
- 32 He who commits adultery *with* a woman lacks sense,
he destroys himself who does it.
- 33 A wound and dishonor he will find,
and his disgrace will not be wiped out.
- 34 For jealousy *is the* fury of a husband,
and he will not show restraint on the day of revenge.
- 35 He will not accept any compensation,
and he will not be willing, though the bribe is large.

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