

**Proverbs Collection I: A Father's Instruction – Part 2 (c. 969t – 932t BC)****Proverbs 4–6****A Heritage of Wisdom**

- 4:1 Listen, children, to a father's instruction,  
and pay attention so that you may gain discernment.
- 2 Because I give you good instruction,  
do not forsake my teaching.
- 3 When I was a son to my father,  
a tender only child before my mother,
- 4 he taught me, and he said to me:  
"Let your heart lay hold of my words;  
keep my commands so that you will live.
- 5 Acquire wisdom, acquire understanding;  
do not forget and do not turn aside from the words I speak.
- 6 Do not forsake wisdom, and she will protect you;  
love her, and she will guard you.
- 7 Wisdom is supreme—so acquire wisdom,  
and whatever you acquire, acquire understanding!
- 8 Esteem her highly and she will exalt you;  
she will honor you if you embrace her.
- 9 She will place a fair garland on your head;  
she will bestow a beautiful crown on you."

**Avoid the Path of the Wicked**

- 10 Listen, my child, and accept my words,  
so that the years of your life will be many.
- 11 I will guide you in the way of wisdom  
and I will lead you in upright paths.
- 12 When you walk, your steps will not be hampered,  
and when you run, you will not stumble.
- 13 Hold on to instruction, do not let it go;  
protect it, because it is your life.
- 14 Do not enter the path of the wicked  
or walk in the way of those who are evil.
- 15 Avoid it, do not go on it;  
turn away from it, and go on.
- 16 For they cannot sleep unless they cause harm;  
they are robbed of sleep until they make someone stumble.
- 17 For they eat bread gained from wickedness  
and drink wine obtained from violence.
- 18 But the path of the righteous is like the bright morning light,  
growing brighter and brighter until full day.
- 19 The way of the wicked is like gloomy darkness;  
they do not know what causes them to stumble.

**Never Turn from the Right Path**

- 20 My child, pay attention to my words;  
listen attentively to my sayings.
- 21 Do not let them depart from your sight,  
guard them within your heart;
- 22 for they are life to those who find them  
and healing to one's entire body.
- 23 Guard your heart with all vigilance,  
for from it are the sources of life.
- 24 Remove perverse speech from your mouth;  
keep devious talk far from your lips.
- 25 Let your eyes look directly in front of you  
and let your gaze look straight before you.

- 26 Make the path for your feet level,  
so that all your ways may be established.
- 27 Do not turn to the right or to the left;  
turn yourself away from evil.

**Do Not Lust after the Adulterous Woman**

- 5:1 My child, be attentive to my wisdom,  
pay close attention to my understanding,  
2 in order to safeguard discretion,  
and that your lips may guard knowledge.
- 3 For the lips of the adulterous woman drip honey,  
and her seductive words are smoother than olive oil,  
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 lead straight to the grave.
- 6 Lest she should make level the path leading to life,  
her paths are unstable but she does not know it.
- 7 So now, children, listen to me;  
do not turn aside from the words I speak.
- 8 Keep yourself far from her,  
and do not go near the door of her house,  
9 lest you give your vigor to others  
and your years to a cruel person,  
10 lest strangers devour your strength,  
and your labor benefit another man's house.
- 11 And at the end of your life you will groan  
when your flesh and your body are wasted away.
- 12 And you will say, "How I hated discipline!  
My heart spurned reproof!
- 13 For I did not obey my teachers  
and I did not heed my instructors.
- 14 I almost came to complete ruin  
in the midst of the whole congregation!"

**Be Captivated with Your Own Wife**

- 15 Drink water from your own cistern  
and running water from your own well.
- 16 Should your springs be dispersed outside,  
your streams of water in the wide plazas?
- 17 Let them be for yourself alone,  
and not for strangers with you.
- 18 May your fountain be blessed,  
and may you rejoice in your young wife—  
19 a loving doe, a graceful deer;  
may her breasts satisfy you at all times,  
may you be captivated by her love always.
- 20 But why should you be captivated, my son, by an adulteress,  
and embrace the bosom of a different woman?
- 21 For the ways of a person are in front of the LORD's eyes,  
and the LORD weighs all that person's paths.
- 22 The wicked will be captured by his own iniquities,  
and he will be held by the cords of his own sin.
- 23 He will die because there was no discipline;  
because of the greatness of his folly he will reel.

**Do Not Guarantee Another's Debts**

- 6:1 My child, if you have made a pledge for your neighbor,  
and have become a guarantor for a stranger,  
2 if you have been ensnared by the words you have uttered,  
and have been caught by the words you have spoken,  
3 then, my child, do this in order to deliver yourself,  
because you have fallen into your neighbor's power:  
go, humble yourself,  
and appeal firmly to your neighbor.  
4 Permit no sleep to your eyes  
or slumber to your eyelids.  
5 Deliver yourself like a gazelle from a snare,  
and like a bird from the trap of the fowler.

**Do Not Give in to Laziness**

- 6 Go to the ant, you sluggard;  
observe its ways and be wise!  
7 It has no commander,  
overseer, or ruler,  
8 yet it prepares its food in the summer;  
it gathers at the harvest what it will eat.  
9 How long, you sluggard, will you lie there?  
When will you rise from your sleep?  
10 A little sleep, a little slumber,  
a little folding of the hands to relax,  
11 and your poverty will come like a robber,  
and your need like an armed man.

**Warning Against Deviousness**

- 12 A worthless and wicked person  
walks around saying perverse things;  
13 he winks with his eyes,  
signals with his feet,  
and points with his fingers;  
14 he plots evil with perverse thoughts in his heart,  
he spreads contention at all times.  
15 Therefore, his disaster will come suddenly;  
in an instant he will be broken, and there will be no remedy.

**Conduct God Hates**

- 16 There are six things that the LORD hates,  
even seven things that 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 are swift to run to evil,  
19 a false witness who pours out lies,  
and a person who spreads discord among family members.

**Guard Your Heart Against the Adulterous Woman**

- 20 My child, guard the commands of your father  
and do not forsake the instruction of your mother.  
21 Bind them on your heart continually;  
fasten them around your neck.  
22 When you walk about, they will guide you;  
when you lie down, they will watch over you;  
when you wake up, they will talk to you.  
23 For the commandments are like a lamp,

instruction is like a light,  
and rebukes of discipline are like the road leading to life,  
24 by keeping you from the evil woman,  
from the smooth tongue of the loose woman.  
25 Do not lust in your heart for her beauty,  
and do not let her captivate you with her alluring eyes;  
26 for on account of a prostitute one is brought down to a loaf of bread,  
but the wife of another man preys on your precious life.  
27 Can a man hold fire against his chest  
without burning his clothes?  
28 Can a man walk on hot coals  
without scorching his feet?  
29 So it is with the one who has sex with his neighbor's wife;  
no one who touches her will escape punishment.  
30 People do not despise a thief when he steals  
to fulfill his need when he is hungry.  
31 Yet if he is caught he must repay seven times over,  
he might even have to give all the wealth of his house.  
32 A man who commits adultery with a woman lacks wisdom,  
whoever does it destroys his own life.  
33 He will be beaten and despised,  
and his reproach will not be wiped away;  
34 for jealousy kindles a husband's rage,  
and he will not show mercy when he takes revenge.  
35 He will not consider any compensation;  
he will not be willing, even if you multiply the compensation.

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