

Proverbs 4

Hear, my son. Hear, my children.

- A. Get Wisdom (Prov. 4:1-9)**
- B. Walk in Wisdom (Prov. 4:10-19)**
- C. Cherish the Wisdom (Prov. 4:20-27)**

When we talk about discipline and growth, we can think it is somebody else's responsibility. In this proverb we will study that this sentence is not necessarily true and how is the real dynamic we should be looking for. We will be studying this from the sight of a parent, a child or young adult, but more important in the sight of our **own** Christian walk, no matter our stage in life. We will be studying some ("*awkward*") truths. In this chapter we will realize that we need to grow first before pretending to teach and requiring certain behaviors from others. How can we expect something from someone if we are not doing it?

A. Get Wisdom (Prov. 4:1-9)

(Prov. 4:1-4) Who is teaching wisdom to the kids? Is the school, their friends, the babysitter, television, Internet, maybe? As a parent we should teach them and instruct them.

First truth: It is the parents' first responsibility to teach the children and model the Christian life at home. It is not the church's responsibility only. Bringing the kids to the Sunday School for an hour or two won't be effective to their lives. Is not enough. A Christian home should teach and grow all the Christian principles.

The kids repeat everything they see at home. The respect, the love, the service, kindness and more important the fear of the Lord.

Our children should learn from us and not from others. They will learn everything they see and hear from us. It's a responsibility given from God, and we are accountable for it in front of Him: Accountable for everything I taught to my children.

It will require time and effort, yes. But is a great blessing to see the children in the Word of God and serving to the body in the church.

The wisdom of the world is not good at all. Our children are being attacked with trash on the internet and the "modern" world ideologies.

The kids should be able to study the Word of God as soon they start to read and even before by the instruction of their parents. They need to be equipped for the outside world. They should see this in our lives to us to be able to exhort them: "*Do not forsake the Word of God. Have it close to your heart. Study the Word*". They need to understand that is a mandate. This parent should teach the Word of God that is the only perfect book. A book to instruct, to teach, to discipline.

It is applicable to us all. It's not outdated, it's not obsolete and it will never be. Live a saint life. Be set apart for God. If you do so (parents), this wisdom will be taught to the next generation. What a blessing for a godly grandparent to see their children teaching their grandchildren the Word of God. We need to start now.

Show them that for you the most important thing is the Word of God! Remember: We should be modeling this in our life. The way to direct a Christian home is to be the example. Give them the tools to make good decisions. They will face the world and they need to be prepared.

(Prov. 4:5-7) Second truth: The children or young adult or the adult (that means You and Me) need to receive and apply this wisdom. Get wisdom. Seek the wisdom. Learn, understand, apply it. It is everyone's responsibility.

Wisdom is the principal thing. To know God and to be transformed. It is the wisdom of God, not the world.

We need to make a decision in some point. We as Christians we need to be willing and be asking to God to show us Him and ourselves and to be transformed. It will be a daily decision during our whole life.

And in all your getting, get understanding: It is not getting information but understanding. No matter it is just one verse, meditate in that verse. No matter is a full chapter meditate in that chapter.

It's to put the information in the heart, not the head. There is a lot of smart people around but not wise people. They know a lot of doctrine and information about God but don't apply it. So, what is the point?

It is not **to do** things either. There are others that confuse this and like just to do and do. It is not to be busy. God wants our heart surrendered to Him. He will lead us. If you are busy doing things for the Lord and you don't have time to pray or study the Word, I can tell you that there is something wrong for sure.

(Prov. 4:8-9) Stay in the Word and love the Word. Remember everything you read. 2 Timothy 3:16 (*All scripture is profitable...*)

If you are a kid or young adult, or an adult and your parent didn't teach you this, so good news you are listening NOW and, guess what? It is the same responsibility in this moment. You should get wisdom and understanding. Stop blaming your parents, your past, your friends, the church. You have it now and should start listening and applying wisdom. Die to your sinful behaviors and seek God in His Word.

And, if you are a parent that didn't do it, so repent and start over. Never is too late. Maybe your children are still around, and they can start seeing the change in you and if not, I'm sure that you could be a witness to others with your character and your new life in Christ.

Study every day. Join to the bible studies, have fellowship. Start a bible study with your family and friends. Start a small group at home. Do your devotionals...

Preserve you: It is the discernment. This is the benefit of wisdom.

You will experience the grace and favor in front of God and the man. You will be different, and you will follow God's voice as your digging in His word.

The Word of God will guide you in the way. And to avoid the wicked way.

What are the things are the people worried about today? Secureness: Financial, Health, Housing... It is normal and natural to think about that, but we forget to exercise and be diligent with the most important thing that is our relationship with Christ.

(Wisdom is the principal thing). Mature! We need to receive the Word of God and STOP trying to find just what we want. Stop making excuses. Die to yourself every day! Open your heart to the Word of God to listen and understand!

If I say I am a Christian, so let's be Christian all the time. Not only when I am at the church. That is not what is like. I should exercise this gift from God in my private time. At home, with my family, friends, coworkers, at the supermarket, in the highway...

B. Walk in Wisdom (Prov. 4:10-19)

(Prov. 4:10) This doesn't mean that you will live one hundred years, necessarily. It is referring to the blessings of applying wisdom in your life. By applying it, we will be avoiding consequences by avoiding sinful behavior. Drunkenness, sexual immorality, drugs, gambling ... to name some, have consequences. You will be protected of all the associated dangers. You will have peace with God and yourself.

(Prov. 4:11) You shouldn't say to your kids: *"Go and imitate the pastor or your youth leader or this preacher, or that person"*. Should be saying instead: *"Imitate me as I do imitate Christ"*. Be the example. The character is tested in the private and with your family. Have integrity!

Our responsibility as parents (and this applies to all Christians): Model and walk the path. Step by step. God will show us His will little by little. Just be faithful. Be in His Word and practice it. Be the example!

(Prov. 4:12) I will be able to avoid the obstacles. Either external and my own obstacles. I will be able to know that my flesh, the world and the devil will try to put me down, but I will be able to identify these obstacles and just keep moving. Isn't this wonderful? Everything I need is Christ, and I can find Him in the Word!

(Prov. 4:13-15) Third Truth: We are living in this world. We are not in a bubble so we should live, but live differently.

Be **Light** and **Salt**. It is a mistake of the church and Christians to try to be accepted by the world. If Jesus Himself was hated by the world, why are we expecting something different? The entertainment, the programs, the buildings, the activities, the *talks*, the shows.... Everything to try to be *relevant* and *cool*. All this effort to try to be as the world and to be "*attractive*" to it.

No. We need to be different, be faithful in the study **and** teaching of the Word.

We should have integrity. We should build strong foundations. We will be at the school, work, with family, acquaintances, coworkers, teammates, classmates... And that's fine (we are not in a bubble) only if you are not being dragged to sinful behavior. If they make you sin you should stand up and leave the place. Don't laugh of their jokes. Don't share the gossips. Don't be part of the party... You will be called puritan, boring, old-school, dumb. Well, we are seeking something bigger. **Be Light and Salt**. Have Integrity.

We can note 4 actions to take (V14-15):

1. Do not enter the path. It is a decision!
2. Avoid it. Do not travel on it!
3. Turn away from it. Get out immediately!
4. Pass on. Don't stop even to inquire nothing. Pass on!

Don't play on it. Don't overestimate yourself. Don't take the risk!

1 Corinthians 10:12 – "Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall."

(Prov. 4:16-19) There is not conviction in them. The immorality, the violence, the lies, the perversity and sexual depravation are examples of the wicked life. It's not enough to him or her to live like this but to drag others to it.

The wicked can convince weak people to do the wrong, saying that is not that bad and there are others worse than you. Starts with simple things and start going up little by little. Starts with small actions, but the snowball starts running downhill getting bigger and bigger, becoming unstoppable in our strength. There is not small sin.

Our human nature is to sin. But our difference with them (the wicked): They don't realize that they are enjoying doing wickedly. That's their heart. Again, be light and salt. We have the Holy Spirit and Word of God that convict us every day. There is not excuse. Living in the light is a choice. And this is not to reject people but reject their sinful behavior. (Remember, we are sinners also) but we have new life with Christ. And we are trying to keep us for Him.

They do not know what makes them stumble: Don't laugh of the jokes, don't repeat the curses, don't gossip, etc. We need to be light. They need Christ. We need to reflect Jesus. That's why missions and reaching out are very important but is more important to keep a good testimony and be example. First of all, be an example in your family, friends, coworkers... Then, you can impact the local community, the American and also international mission field.

We need friends to draw us near to Christ, not the opposite. We should be that friend to draw others to Christ. It's a contrast. We should be different.

C. Cherish the Wisdom (Prov. 4:20-27)

(Prov. 4:20-22) The phrase "*incline your ear*" is denoting urgency and importance. It is an intentional action, a deep concentration in the matter.

We can identify a progression in all this proverb

Listen → Read → Study → Meditate → Memorize → **Apply**

A lot of people will prefer the experiences, the shows, the relevant motivational speeches as they don't want to follow this process. This process requires humbleness and brokenness.

So as the church and individuals, we need to be faithful to study and to teach the Word of God. It's everything we need. The numbers and the outcome are not the measure of success. It is the maturity level and that's on God -not us- to measure. Be faithful. Put ALL the Word in your heart. Not in the head!

(Prov. 4:23) ALL DILIGENCE. Keep the heart full! Full of what? -We can ask- Christ. Wisdom. The Word of God. Why are we occupied trying to fill it with trash? Keep your heart for God. It is the first place where everything starts. The change starts in your heart, give it to Jesus. God renews our heart every day. Keep it for Him.

Look at Solomon: he had all the information, but he forgot to keep his heart and we know his ending. Keep your heart!

Ask to yourself: Who is in the throne of my heart? Me? Another person? Money? Health? My job? No. Should be Christ. He doesn't change. He was the same yesterday; He is the same today and He will be the same tomorrow. Our Lord and Savior. The source of all wisdom and we have access to Him through the Word by the Spirit of God.

(Prov. 4:24) Don't speak evil. PERIOD. Mathew 12:34 – "... For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks." If your heart is full of the Word of God, you won't be speaking evil.

God is working in our hearts every day. God will change our life.

Check this every day: What is coming out of your mouth? Are you involved in gossiping? Cursing? Check your heart!

We have self-dominion. You can hold your tongue! You can say no to sin with your mouth and your ears.

(Prov. 4:25) Our eyes put in Christ. What are you watching? If you have wisdom in your heart, you will change the TV channel when something immoral appears! Again: self-dominion. You can direct your eyes! You can quit to sin with your eyes.

Now, how about your goals? Look right before you. Stop thinking about the past! Stop thinking only in the treasures of this world. Our eyes put in Christ. Look ahead, the prize.

(Prov. 4:26-27) CHECK where you are walking to, Everyday!! Check your heart! Ask God and He will show you in light of the Word. Seek His way. Wait upon the Lord!

Fourth truth: It is a personal responsibility. Everyone is accountable of his path.

Stop comparing your way with others. There is only one way and that is Christ's. The Word of God is a mirror and a magnifying glass, and we can see ourselves as God sees us. Keep your heart and exercise your relationship with God!!