



10 Hear, O my son, and receive my sayings; and the years of thy life shall be many. 11 I have taught thee in the way of wisdom; I have led thee in right paths. 12 When thou goest, thy steps shall not be straitened; and when thou runnest, thou shalt not stumble. 13 Take fast hold of instruction; let her not go: keep her; for she is thy life. 14 Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. 15 Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away. 16 For they sleep not, except they have done mischief; and their sleep is taken away, unless they cause some to fall. 17 For they eat the bread of wickedness, and drink the wine of violence. 18 But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. 19 The way of the wicked is as darkness: they know not at what they stumble. 20 My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings. 21 Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart. 22 For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh. 23 Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life. 24 Put away from thee a froward mouth, and perverse lips put far from thee. 25 Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee. 26 Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. 27 Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil. (Prov 4:10-27)

In the previous devotion, we examined David's counsel to Solomon. Wisdom is a treasure to be passed on from father (Father) to son or daughter, and so Solomon passes the same Wisdom on to his son, Rehoboam that he received from his own father. Wisdom is a useful and valuable resource, but only if it is employed. Unfortunately, Rehoboam received the Wisdom taught him by his father, Solomon, and immediately disregarded the same. We learned in the previous lesson (v 1-9) three ways that we must handle Wisdom: 1) We must first **ACQUIRE** Wisdom by search and seizure; 2) When Wisdom is near, we must **EMBRACE** it as a beloved friend; and 3) We must love and **CHERISH** Wisdom as the darling daughter of our heart. Today's devotion (Prov 4:10-27) informs how Wisdom must be employed. 1) Let wisdom be the Light that guides and guards our steps; 2) Let Wisdom be the secure door of your heart; 3) Let Wisdom be the Ruler of your Tongue; and 4) Let Wisdom be the blinders that keep your eyes from wondering.

How do we make Wisdom to be the Light of our path and the Lamp of our feet? *10 Hear, O my son, and receive my sayings; and the years of thy life shall be many.* Wisdom is not a single issue treasure. It is multifaceted and all-encompassing of the issues of life. A wise man is not a glutton but diets wisely; not a spendthrift, but manages the resources God has placed under his purview. If we hear the wisdom and counsel of our mothers and fathers, our lives shall be long upon the earth – and our

health will be benefitted as well. Only a wise father, who lives by the law of Wisdom, can make the following claim: **11 I have taught thee in the way of wisdom; I have led thee in right paths.** If one has not lived and taught Wisdom, it is not possible to lead in right paths. "...**if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.**" (Matt 15:14)

According to Albert Einstein, the only absolute known in science is the speed of light – it is always constant in every place and at every time. Light travels in a straight line and does not venture from its appointed path. It is quite economic in its travel for it always travels the shortest possible distance between two points – a straight line. Perhaps we should learn from Wisdom to do the same. **12 When thou goest, thy steps shall not be straitened; and when thou runnest, thou shalt not stumble.** There are no obstacles to straight and honest dealings with others. We will not be cramped in style if we abide in the house of Wisdom. **13 Take fast hold of instruction; let her not go: keep her; for she is thy life.** What Wisdom has a newborn baby except that provided in its care by a mother? Without the mother's Wisdom, the baby would perish. The mother knows instinctively to wash and feed the baby at the proper intervals – to make a sanitary environment and good place for the baby to sleep. Wisdom, in its very essence, is the Way of Life. It was, as well, the Tree of Life in the midst of the Garden eastward in Eden.

14 Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoidance of the first sin will preclude an avalanche of sin later. A woman once saw a number of honey bees going and coming from the forward vent of her roof. She paid no heed to this seeming innocent activity. After all, what damage could a few honey bees do to a strong house. But the honey bees kept on coming until one day, her entire roof collapsed from the weight of the honeycombs. This teaches us a compelling lesson about sin. If the first is not allowed, the profound abundance of them can never overpower us. By the way, when we go the WAY of evil men, we also come to the destination of their sins. Psalms 1:1-3 tells us that sin is a DIRECTION. If we do not walk with the sinner, we will not find ourselves pausing to discuss the delights of sin, or finally find ourselves at home with them by sitting with the scornful as did Lot in the gates of Sodom. It is the first step that leads to the remaining 999 steps. As Confucius has said, "A journey of 1,000 miles begins with the first step. **15 Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away.** Rather than believing the Voice of wisdom, Eve learned a hard lesson by experience. She did not avoid the ill-famed Tree; she did not pass by it but rather stopped there before it; once there, she did not turn from it; and she even listened to the wicked voice therefrom. Since that moment, mankind has had Hell to pay unless they accept that payment made for them by the Lord Jesus Christ.

The text now turns to the nature of the wicked mentioned in v 14. **16 For they sleep not, except they have done mischief; and their sleep is taken away, unless they cause some to fall.** What days of the year are murders, rapes robberies, adulteries proscribed by the Devil? If you answered NONE, you are very right. The Devil does not take a holiday – EVER! He knows his term is time-limited, so he must accomplish all the mischief he is able to do while the sun shines, or rather while the long dark night continues. The wicked are precisely like their father the devil. They cannot rest until they have lived out their perversions. They behold the righteous to their dismay and seek to cause them to fall and become sinners like unto themselves. What does your soul consume for its sustenance? It must consume SOMETHING! There is the Bread of Heaven which is the Word of God, or there is the bread of damnation served up in Satan's fast-food restaurants. **17 For they eat the bread of wickedness, and drink the wine of violence.** To listen to the dialogues of the wicked is to eat their bread. Their wine leads to violence and utter disorder. **18 But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more**

and more unto the perfect day. Why does it shine more and more to the perfect day? Because it is the straight path that leads up to the Narrow Gate which is Heaven. The closer we draw in sanctification to Heaven, the brighter the path. ***Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.*** (Matt 7:13-14)

19 The way of the wicked is as darkness: they know not at what they stumble. Which one among us can travel on a straight, or even crooked trail, in pitch darkness without going off course? Darkness yields no guidance or counsel as to the path of safety. Sin is abject darkness. Darkness is the total absence of light. Darkness is the light of Hell.

Repetition aids retention – a profound principle in the science of learning. So Solomon often repeats the cardinal points of Wisdom for the sake of emphasis! 20 My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings. 21 Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart. If we INCLINE our ears TOWARD Wisdom, we will disincline them towards wickedness. Wisdom is expressed in words, but which? Every Word that comes from the Mind of God in Scripture. Keep your eyes fixed upon God's Holy Word. Consume them voraciously and let them be digested in the soul and hidden in the heart that we may not sin against God. ***Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.*** (Psalms 119:11) Do not hide them in the outer chambers of the heart, but at the very CENTER (v21). 22 For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh. Life of the spirit and even health to the flesh are hidden in the treasure chest of Wisdom. Why would any parent not desire above all else to impart Wisdom of God to their children?

23 Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life. When I was growing up as a boy, my mother had a large garden. It fell my part to hoe and weed that garden and to insure that the surrounding fence was in good repair to prevent the animals of the world from intruding. The heart is also a garden of delight and life that requires guarding. If the first weed or rodent is allowed free place, there will not be a garden of vegetables but of weeds. The heart is the same. If we harbor one sin in our hearts, that one sin will invite all of its cousins to come and live there. ***A garden inclosed is my sister, my spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed.*** (Song 4:12) Remember: vegetables (righteousness) need cultivation and care – weeds (sins) do not!

24 Put away from thee a froward mouth, and perverse lips put far from thee. Words have meaning and consequence. Do not utter words of contempt or hate for those words will engender more of the same. The return investment is not good. 25 Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee. If you have time, go out to the yard and drop a straight line on the ground. Try to walk along that straight line with the eyes cast over either shoulder to the rear. How does that work out for you? Those things that are past, are past. We must stay fixed on the goal laid out by God that is ahead for us. We must plow a straight furrow by concentrating on the future path and not that which is behind. ***No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.*** (Luke 9:62) The wise man or woman comprehends every evidence, and reference point, that marks the proper course for the future. 26 Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established.

27 Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil. None can be perfect in righteousness, but we can claim that perfect righteousness imputed us by

Christ; however, if we are lackluster in our walk with Christ, wandering here and there away from His path of righteousness, we shall soon look up and find that the Master Shepherd is no longer in sight – and we are LOST. If we place our steps in His nail-scarred footprints, we are walking in righteousness which is not ours, but His.