

## PROVERBS 4

## “HEAR, YE CHILDREN!”

When the things of God are to be taught, precept must be upon precept, and line upon line – not only because the things themselves are of great worth and weight; but also because people’s minds, even at their best, are reluctant to acknowledge them, and are commonly prejudiced against them. Therefore, Solomon – with a great variety of expression, and a pleasant powerful flood of Divine eloquence – inculcates the same things here that he had pressed upon his readers in the foregoing chapters.

In this chapter, we have another earnest exhortation to the study of wisdom – that is, of true religion and Godliness. This exhortation was borrowed from the good instructions which Solomon’s own father and mother had given him, and enforced with many reasonable arguments (verses 1-13). The wise father cautioned his children against bad company, and against all fellowship with unfruitful works of darkness (verses 14-19); and he gave particular directions for the attaining and preserving of wisdom, and for bringing forth the fruits of it (verses 20-27). So plainly and so pressingly is the case laid before us, that we shall be forever inexcusable if we perish in our folly!

Solomon’s parents loved him; and therefore, they taught and instructed him. Wise and godly men – in every age of the world, and in every rank in society – agree that true wisdom consists in obedience, and that it is united with true happiness. Get wisdom, then! Take great pains to obtain it! Mortify the corruptions of your flesh, and take more pains to get wisdom than you would to get the wealth of this world. An interest in Christ’s salvation is necessary – this wisdom is the “one thing needful!” A soul without this true wisdom and grace is a dead soul. How poor, how contemptible, and how wretched are those who – despite all their wealth and power – die without understanding, without hope, and without Christ! Let us give heed to the sayings of Him Who has the words of eternal life, for then our path will be plain before us. By taking hold and keeping hold of instruction, we shall avoid stumbling in life’s pathway.

The way of evil men may seem to be pleasant, and it may appear to be the nearest and easiest way to accomplish some goal; but it is an evil way, and it will end badly. If you love your God and your soul, avoid it! The wise man does not say, “Keep at a *proper* distance.” No! He says, “Keep at a *great* distance!” Never think that you can get far enough from it!

**Outline of the chapter:**

- ❖ An earnest exhortation to the study of true wisdom, based upon the good instructions which Solomon’s own parents had given him – verses 1-13
- ❖ A caution against bad company and fellowship with darkness – verses 14-19
- ❖ Directions for the attaining of wisdom, and for bringing forth the fruits of it – verses 20-27



In verses 18 and 19, the contrast is finely drawn between the state of a justified soul in Christ, and the unawakened and unsanctified soul of the wicked. “The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day” (verse 18). The way of the righteous is light; for Christ is their Way, and He is the Light! He is both the Light and the Life of His people. And the progressive state of souls that are justified in His blood and righteousness is like the advance of the morning sun to its noon-time brightness. The Lord’s saints will not be perfect until they reach heaven; but there, they shall shine like the sun in his strength. On the contrary, however, the way of sin is like darkness (verse 19). The way of wicked persons is dark, and therefore it is dangerous; they fall into sin, but they do not know how to avoid it. They fall into trouble; but they never seek to know the reason why God contends with them, nor what will be the eternal outcome of it. This is the way that we are told to shun.

Attentive listening to the Word of God is a good sign of a work of His grace having been begun in the heart, and it is also a good means of carrying it on. In the Word of God, we may freely find a proper remedy for all diseases of the soul. But we must also keep our hearts with all diligence. We must set a strict guard upon our souls – keeping our hearts from doing hurt, and also from getting hurt. And while these words very strongly recommend that we keep our hearts with all diligence, they also imply the necessity of looking to God to keep them. We should seek from the Lord Jesus that living water, which springs forth unto everlasting life. Thus shall we be enabled to put away a froward mouth and perverse lips. Our eyes will then be turned away from beholding vanity; they shall look straight forward, and walk by the rule of God’s Word – treading in the steps of our Lord and Master. Lord! Forgive the past, and enable us to follow You more closely in time to come!

*Lord, we thank You for kind and faithful parents, who have exhorted (or still do exhort us!) to the study of wisdom and Godliness. Thank You also that we, as Your children, are traveling nearer and nearer to the perfect day! Amen.*