

“Impetus for the Righteous Path” (Prov. 4)

1. Proven Family Traditions (1-9)

a. Healthy Household

- i. Father (1), son/children (1, 10, 20) , grandfather (3), grandmother (3), lady wisdom (6, 8, 9).
- ii. “Instruction” from parents and wisdom is authoritative and personal e.g. “tender” (4).

b. Loving Law

- i. The instruction and “commands” (4) are for the son’s benefit viz.:
 1. Preservation (4, 6)
 2. Perception (5, 7)
 3. Prominence (8-9) cf. 3:4 and Lu. 2:52. Not the prominence of the world but such as will serve you even among your enemies (Prov. 16:7). But ultimately it is a prominence in the Kingdom.

c. Righteous Relationships

- i. When we respect legitimate authority we honor our duties to teach and obey.
- ii. We also will enjoy the prosperity of applying “good doctrine” (2).
- iii. A healthy marriage begets a healthy family which begets a healthy society.
- iv. Community’s root is commune and communion is the wonderful end game of God, viz. that He will be our God and we will be His people.
- v. The son is told in essence, abide in wisdom and “she” will take good care of you. Even our relationship with wisdom is personal and intimate because she is a representation of God’s nature and desire. Jesus clearly stated this love relationship indicated by obedience to the Law of Lady Wisdom who represents Him (Jn. 14:15).
- vi. The believer is made right (reconciled) with the Creator and then learns to love the Law because it is an¹ essence of God’s nature.
- vii. Morality is indicative of Law and when one heeds the Law, he is at peace with God and his neighbor (cf. Ro. 12:18).

2. Life’s Paths (10-19)

a. Path of Prosperity (10-13, 18)

- i. Love: we see this in vv. 1-9.
- ii. Longevity: v. 10.
- iii. Life: v. 13, 22, cf. 4. Such connotes eternal life or abundant life (Jn. 10:10 cf. Jn. 5:21-24).
- iv. Light: v. 18 ***more on this momentarily.**

b. Path of Perdition (14-17, 19)

- i. Rejection (14-15). As the wicked reject the Laws, we must reject their ways.
- ii. Relentless (16a). No sleep is had till a day filled with evil.
- iii. Restlessness (16b). They cannot sleep as it is “taken away” unless they do harm. Hell is necessary!
- iv. Reason (17). They live to do evil. It is their food and drink – opposed to Jesus’ food which was to do the work of God (Jn. 4:34).
- v. Reprobate vs. Regenerate (18-19). These verses act as another antithetical summary (contrasting summary). Whereas the wise can see the path clearly as they walk in the light (cf. v. 12; Jn. 8:12; 12:35-6; 1 Jn. 1:7), the wicked ignorantly stumble in the darkness as they prefer it to the light (Jn. 3:19). *Perhaps another contrast of night and day is expressed in that they can’t sleep till they do evil viz. at night. It was (and

¹ Other essences of His nature are omniscience, holiness, aseity, etc.

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sometimes is) safer to conduct life in the light of day rather than be caught by the wicked in the dark of night.

- vi. *Revelation (18) Light is indicative of truth and revelation (Mat. 5:14-15), hence those who walk in it receive the revelation with gratitude and it leads us into clarity, safety, obedience, and ultimately holiness (perfection).

3. “Heart” of the Matter (20-27)

- a. 1 Tim. 4:16 is a summation of the wisdom literature in that it says what these speeches in Proverbs emphasize viz. match up your teachings with your walk. Allow the instruction of the Law from the ‘father’ to inform your heart that it will be lived out in love, logic, life, and light.
- b. The author addressed the walk with regard to the paths and life or death, and in light or darkness. And now he addresses the heart which is the target of the Law. * The Law targets the heart but the execution of societal law must govern actions.
- c. And, he addresses the vehicles of expression of the heart in employing body parts.
 - i. Ears (20) must give attention to instruction.
 - ii. Eyes (21, 25) must stay singularly focused on such. * “eye lids” is a difficult translation, possibly “gaze” or the like.
 - iii. Heart (23) Because of The Fall the heart is wicked (Ro. 5:12; 1 Cor. 15:21-22; Jer. 17:9); thus when we turn to Christ, we are regenerated to lead our hearts to God. Ro. 10:9! We see the same instruction in Prov. 3:3-6. We already considered Jn. 14:15 but it is pertinent to this vital point also.
 - iv. Mouth/Lips (24) Mat. 15:18 directly links the heart and tongue. Our speech is directly informed by our hearts. Isa. 6:5 relates our speech to our condition. Wisdom is necessary to inform the heart which in turn informs the tongue. Life’s adversities and adversaries war against the Wisdom and Word of God. Therefore, we must be aware of such and that such is the ancient battle which rages today (Gen. 3:1-5) The Fall. →
 - v. Feet (26-27) Knowing the strategy and tactics of the evil one and – more importantly – knowing and loving the household of faith and its family traditions of authority, communion, purity, and transparency equip us to tread the path of life steadily and sturdily, being established in truth and resolved unto righteousness. We have steady feet on an established foundation (26). And we have directed feet which are directed in the paths of righteousness (27).

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There are reasons for obeying the law. We avoid penalties and punishments when we are law abiding citizens. We contribute to safety and efficiency when we work together to keep the laws of order e.g. traffic lights and driving on a single side of the road one way. There are obvious reasons to obey the laws of nature e.g. not jumping from a two story building ignoring the law of gravity. The Bible gives us God’s perfect moral Law and there is much reason to heed it. The Old Testament acknowledges the benefits of embracing it (as here where such leads to life) and the New Testament reveals how its fulfillment is essential to our eternal life! The Gospel is not a way around the Law nor an abrogation of it – rather, it is the salvific person and work of Messiah who perfectly fulfilled it so that we can be saved unto it! The righteous path is one that we can only tread when we follow Jesus into a relationship of perfect righteousness.