

The Wise Words Of A Loving Dad

Proverbs 4

MEMORY VERSE

PROVERBS 4:23

“Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life.”

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

Styrofoam or paper cups and markers.

An “All in How You Look at It” template and scissors.

ATTENTION GETTER!

Laying the Foundation

For this activity, you will need Styrofoam or paper cups and markers. Give each child 2 or 3 cups and a marker. Ask them to write on one cup something that they have either learned from their fathers or the Lord to help them to have a blessed life (examples: be wise, obey, watch your tongue, etc.). In the center of the room, ask the children to gather in a circle. Ask them to take their cup and lay them in a straight line together. On the second cup, ask them to write a blessing of wisdom (examples: joy, peace, contentment, etc.). Then have them stack these on top of the first cups to make a pyramid shape (or upside down V). On the third cup have the children write what they would like to do for the Lord (examples: share Jesus with a friend, be nice to others, etc.). Then have them stack a third row.

Use the stack of cups to introduce today’s lesson. We need God’s wisdom as a foundation in our lives. If God’s wisdom rules our lives, good things will result--like joy and peace. What would happen if our pyramid didn’t have the foundation of wisdom? Remove one or two cups from the base and see what happens. The Lord, our moms and dads, and our teachers, all give us important

instructions for life. How wise it is to listen to the Lord and those around us who love God and desire our good. **Our heavenly Father knows what is best for us.**

LESSON TIME!

When you need to know how to do something, where do you go? You may be blessed with a great father who you often go to when you need help. If your father loves the Lord, he is someone you can look to for godly wisdom as well. In the Proverbs 4, we are instructed to listen and give heed to the words of our father. If we listen and obey godly parents, our lives will be blessed.

Not all of us have been blessed with godly fathers on this earth. Some are not Christians; some, no longer live at home; some, have gone to be with the Lord. All of us, though, have a Heavenly Father who loves and cherishes us. In the Psalms, He is called the “Father of the fatherless” (Psalm 68:5). We can call upon our Father at any time. He will walk us through this life, providing us with the wisdom and instruction necessary to live a full, rich life. **Our heavenly Father knows what is best for us.**

PROVERBS 4:1-4

Hear, my children, the instruction of a father, and give attention to know understanding;

For I give you good doctrine: do not forsake my law.

When I was my father’s son, tender and the only one in the sight of my mother,

He also taught me, and said to me: “Let your heart retain my words; keep my commands, and live.”

Solomon admonished his children to listen to instruction. How important was it that they pay attention? Solomon remembers his father's words: "Let your heart retain my words; keep my commands, and live." Listening to instruction and living wisely is to choose life and blessing.

Solomon received his wisdom and instruction in God's Word from his father, David. He passed on the legacy to his own children. Do you know what a legacy is? A legacy is something of value passed on to the next generation.

PROVERBS 4:5-9

Get wisdom! Get understanding! Do not forget, nor turn away from the words of my mouth.

Do not forsake her, and she will preserve you; love her, and she will keep you.

Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom. And in all your getting, get understanding.

Exalt her, and she will promote you; she will bring you honor, when you embrace her.

She will place on your head an ornament of grace; a crown of glory she will deliver to you."

In verse five, Solomon instructs his children to get wisdom and understanding. How do we get wisdom and understanding? In James 1:5, God promises to freely give His wisdom to those who seek it: "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him" (James 1:5). God wants and will give wisdom to us in abundance. **Our heavenly Father knows what is best for us.**

We can either choose the way of wisdom or the way of foolishness—we must choose. Those who choose to “love” wisdom will be kept safe and secure. Wisdom will not keep you from ever having a bad day; but, it will give you instructions—instructions that will keep you from making poor choices that will destroy you and others and will equip you to make good choices, leading to a fully blessed life.

Just like a husband that loves his wife, placing her above himself, finds rich returns as his wife responds by blessing him; so wisdom will honor the one who loves her. If wisdom has a place of high esteem in our lives—if we exalt her above our own thoughts, we are promised she will do us good and not harm. In fact, wisdom will be like an ornament of grace placed on our head. God’s beauty and graciousness will be clearly visible in the one who highly values wisdom. **Our heavenly Father knows what is best for us.**

PROVERBS 4:10-13

Hear, my son, and receive my sayings, and the years of your life will be many.

I have taught you in the way of wisdom; I have led you in right paths.

When you walk, your steps will not be hindered, and when you run, you will not stumble.

Take firm hold of instruction, do not let go; keep her, for she is your life.

Solomon knows he has done well by teaching his son in the ways of wisdom. He is not only preparing his son to live life well a child, but also as an adult.

A concerned father realizes his children will face temptations. We have a natural tendency to be attracted to those things that would destroy us and others. Solomon urges his son to not only receive his sayings, but to *take firm hold* of instruction and not let go!

How tightly would you hold on to something if you were told your life depended on it? Imagine holding a rope as you swung to safety over a dangerous ravine. So, let us take firm hold on instruction as though our life depends upon it. Indeed, our spiritual life does depend on it. Those who have taken firm hold on instruction will not be hindered or stumble. When facing temptation or important decisions, they will know the right path, the way of wisdom. **Our heavenly Father knows what is best for us.**

All in How You Look at It

For this activity, you will need a curriculum template and scissors. This activity will illustrate that we do not always see things the same way the Lord sees things. We need to trust that the Lord knows what is best for us, because He sees everything just the way it is. He has given us His wisdom to help us to live our lives.

Cut out the rectangle shape from the curriculum template. Ask the children if they believe that you can pass your hand through the rectangle of paper. Ask if they can do it. The answer should be, “no way!” Fold the rectangle lengthwise, down the middle on the line. Cut on the lines as shown from the top and bottom. Open the shape again and cut on the center fold line, just to the X's. Spread out the separated parts of the shape to make a ring large enough to pass your hand through.

Things may not always be the way we think. God knows everything. He created us and we are certainly not wiser than Him. We need to listen to His wisdom for our lives and trust that He knows what is best for us. **Our heavenly Father knows what is best for us.**

PROVERBS 4:14-19

Do not enter the path of the wicked, and do not walk in the way of evil.

Avoid it, do not travel on it; turn away from it and pass on.

For they do not sleep unless they have done evil; and their sleep is taken away unless they make someone fall.

For they eat the bread of wickedness, and drink the wine of violence.

But the path of the just is like the shining sun, that shines ever brighter unto the perfect day.

The way of the wicked is like darkness; they do not know what makes them stumble.

Choices. Once more we are reminded that our choices bring significant consequences. The Lord exhorts us to avoid all evil. Do not think about what could be if you follow that path. Do not toy with the idea; do not take even a few steps in that direction; instead, “turn away from it and pass on” or “get out of there.”

The devil is wise as a serpent when it comes to deceiving people. Evil can come in many forms and be very tempting and persuasive. When Jesus was commissioning the twelve disciples to go out and preach the Gospel, He told them to be “wise as serpents and harmless as doves;” we need God’s wisdom to be aware of the trickery of the enemy and turn away from evil.

God desires to give us the wisdom we need to avoid the paths of enemy. He will enable us to look down a path and see where it leads.

We read in verses 15-16 show us, the wicked do not have rest until they do evil. Even once they have accomplished evil, they will not experience much rest for their evil appetites must be fed more and more. How sad! They have yielded to their natural tendencies to destroy themselves and others.

We too, have destructive natural tendencies. How do we make the right choices under pressure? God desires to equip us with His wisdom. Let us carefully guard our associations with others, take firm hold on instruction, and turn away from evil. **Our heavenly Father knows what is best for us.**

PROVERBS 4:20-27

My son, give attention to my words; incline your ear to my sayings.

Do not let them depart from your eyes; keep them in the midst of your heart;

For they are life to those who find them, and health to all their flesh.

Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life.

Put away from you a deceitful mouth, and put perverse lips far from you.

Let your eyes look straight ahead, and your eyelids look right before you.

Ponder the path of your feet, and let all your ways be established.

Do not turn to the right or the left; remove your foot from evil.

Solomon exhorts his son to give attention to his words and sayings—referring to the commands of the Lord. He encourages his son to not let them depart from his eyes and keep them in the midst of his heart. In other words, let God’s words be your continual meditation. The result will be a fruitful, fulfilling life.

In verse 23, Solomon exhorts his son to keep his heart with all diligence. Your life will reflect whatever you hold in your heart. Jesus said, “...For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks” (Matthew 12:34). What does your heart hold? Let us not entertain sinful thoughts, and let us be cautious of what we put in front of our eyes and what we listen to. We are not just feeding our mind; we are feeding into our heart. Our life will reflect what our heart is holding. If we focus our time and energy on worldly pursuits, our life will reveal what our heart is holding. If we spend our time worshipping the Lord and He is at the center of our heart, our life will reveal our love for Him.

In verse 26, Solomon instructs his son to ponder the path of his feet and let his ways be established. In other words, really “think” about your direction, the path you are on. God gave us our minds so that we would use them. It is God’s desire to establish us—that we would become well rooted in the wisdom He gives us to live life as He intended and experience all the blessings that will result.

In verse 27, Solomon warns, “Do not turn to the right or the left; remove your foot from evil.” May we keep our eyes focused on Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith and not allow ourselves to be sidetracked or hindered. May we allow God’s wisdom to keep us from the many pitfalls the enemy puts before us and lead us into a life He will fully bless. **Our heavenly Father knows what is best for us.**

Application Pathfinder

To review today's lesson, draw two large paths (large enough to write in) that come together at one place. Draw a little stick figure (or get more artistic if you like) to represent us at the fork of the road. At the top of one of the roads write, "The path of wisdom" and at the top of the other road write, "The path of wickedness." Then, ask the children to give examples from our lesson of what each path is like and what they lead to.

When finished, ask the children which path they would like to follow. Split up into small groups of two or three and have the children pray for one another (if comfortable) that the Lord would help them to always choose the right path.

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of thanksgiving for their parents who pass on godly wisdom and, especially, to God—the author of wisdom. Pray with the children for hearts willing to hear and yield to God's wisdom. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the Gospel, give them opportunity.

