

# 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 our tongue, etc.). In the center of the room have the children gather in a circle. Have them take their cup and lay them in a straight line together. On the second cup have them write a blessing of wisdom (examples: joy, peace, contentment, etc.). Then have them stack 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 this stack of cups to introduce today’s lesson. Explain to the children that we need God’s wisdom as a foundation in our lives. It will produce good things in our lives like joy and peace. Then we can do all that the Lord would like us to when we live a life of wisdom. Next ask them 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. It is very important to listen to our

parents and to the Lord who love us and desires to teach us God's wisdom. **Our heavenly Father knows what is best for us.**

## LESSON TIME!

When you need to know how to do something, where do you go? There are probably a lot of times you go to your dad for help with things. You look to him for wisdom and knowledge. In the proverb that we are studying today we are instructed to listen and give heed to the words of our father. But where did dad get all this wisdom? If a father is walking with the Lord he received his wisdom from God, our heavenly Father.

We are commanded to obey our parents and this proverb shows that in listening and learning from the advice of our father, our lives will be blessed in return. **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."

At the beginning of this proverb we see a loving father who is giving instruction to his children. He is explaining to them that they need to listen to what he has to share with them. If they will listen to instruction it will be life for them.

We see the father sharing with his children where he received his wisdom. He said that he learned it from his father. In the first four verses of this proverb this father is sharing with his children what his father had taught him. He was passing on a legacy. Do you know what a legacy is? It is when something of value is passed on to the next generation. The legacy that this dad is passing on to his children is the same that he received. It is the truth of God's Word and God's wisdom.

This father began telling his children that he had gained this knowledge from his father and now he was going to share it with them. This father loved his children so much that his desire for them was to have the necessary wisdom and understanding to help them live a fruitful life. His father taught him at a tender age (a very young age), and now he was going to teach them while they were young also.

But what happens to children who don't have an earthly father to teach them? Perhaps he is not living or he is not living with them due to divorce. Does it mean that these children will grow up without wisdom? No, the Lord wants all of His children to have wisdom of who He is, and that is why, even if we don't have a father here with us on earth, we will always have a heavenly father that loves and cherishes us. In the Psalms he is called the "father of the fatherless" (Psalm 68:5). The Lord is our Father, which means that we can call upon Him any time that we need to. We also need to listen to what our earthly father wants to teach us and we need to believe that **Our heavenly Father knows what is best for us.**

### **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, the father is telling his children that they need to, “get wisdom, get understanding.” But how do we get wisdom and understanding? In James 1:5 we are told that if anyone lacks wisdom all he or she needs to do is ask the Lord in faith, and it will be given to him or her liberally. That means that God wants and will give wisdom to us in abundance. The scriptures are filled with ways the Lord shares with us how to receive wisdom. In Proverbs 3:5 the Lord tells us not to “lean on our own understanding” because we don’t know what is the way we should go, but **Our heavenly Father knows what is best for us.**

We can either choose the way of wisdom or the way of foolishness, but the choice is up to us. By remembering wisdom and loving wisdom, we are promised that our way will be protected and kept safe and secure. Here the father is not saying wisdom will keep you from ever having a bad day. No, he is telling them that whatever may happen in life, they will be kept secure with the Lord, and in every situation they would face they would know how to handle it.

In verses 7-9, we are taught that wisdom is what we need to pray for in every area of our lives, and with getting wisdom we will surely be blessed! Just like a husband that loves his wife and places her above himself. If we place wisdom high above in our thoughts, by exalting her, she will do us good and not harm. When we are walking in wisdom and seeking the will of the Lord for all of our ways, no matter what may happen to us, we can stand on our promise. When the world is against us, and it will be if we are truly

following the Lord, wisdom will lift us high above the cares of this world when we pursue her. Seek wisdom for **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.

Here the father knows that he has done well by teaching his son in the ways of wisdom. He is not only preparing him how to live his life as a child but also as an adult. The Lord wants us to learn His ways so we may teach our children His truths as well. Just as children are to obey their parents, so are parents to obey their heavenly Father.

This father knew that he was obeying the call on his life as a father to teach his son the ways of the Lord. He knew from his own life that by listening to his father and obeying his commands that he would be blessed as a result. He knew that the world would be tempting to his son and that there would be two roads for him to take. He wanted to let his son know in advance what the consequences would be for choosing wisdom or evil. Choosing wisdom over foolishness will always result in life for **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 don't 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.

This is a good illustration that things may not always be the way we think. God knows everything, He created us and we are certainly not wiser than He is. We need to listen to His wisdom for our lives and trust in Him to know 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.

This passage makes it very clear that the Lord wants us to avoid all evil and wickedness and that we have a choice in which road we will choose to take each day of our lives. Evil can come in many ways and the devil is wise as a serpent when it comes to deceiving people. Evil can look very tempting and be very 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;” it is the same for us today. We need to be careful of the devil and his tricks.

When we pray for wisdom the Lord will reveal evil to us so we don't end up on that road. He will direct our paths in all the ways in which we should travel. As verses 15-16 show us, the wicked do not have rest until they do evil. But the rest they have is not permanent and their evil appetites will just have to be fed more and more. The only way we can be sure not to choose evil is to place our trust in the Lord Jesus and ask for wisdom in everything we do.

The Lord makes it very clear that we are not to associate with wicked people and do evil to others. The Lord loves us and wants to show us the ways that will keep us safe and filled with peace. In choosing the road of the Lord we can be assured and guaranteed a life of joy and security. These verses show that **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.

The proverb closes with more instruction in the ways that the child of God ought to walk. In verse 20 “my words...my sayings” are referring to the commands of the Lord. The words of the Lord will always lead to life and fulfillment and by meditation and keeping our hearts fixed upon the Lord we will always be satisfied. Verse 23 goes on to teach us that whatever we hold in our heart, that is what our life will reflect.

Jesus spoke of this when He was speaking to the religious leaders in Matthew 12:34 “...For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.” We need to be cautious in all that we put in front of our eyes and what we listen to. With everything that we do we are also feeding into our heart. If we spend our time worshipping the Lord our life will reflect that. If we waste our time on worldly pursuits our life will show that.

The Lord does not force His will upon anyone for we are all free to receive His gift of salvation or to refuse Him. But when we do accept His invitation He will guide our steps and help us make the right decisions for our lives. God gave us our minds so that we would use them. As verse 26 tells us, “ponder the path of your feet.” We have a responsibility in making the right choice and being patient to wait upon the Lord to direct our paths, then we can be sure that the Lord will establish our ways. **Our heavenly Father knows what is best for us.**

These closing verses remind us that the path in serving the Lord and leading to heaven is narrow and difficult (Matthew 7:14). Yet, if we don't stray from that path, it will lead to eternal life with our heavenly Father. As long as we keep our eyes on the goal, looking straight ahead towards heaven, we will walk in wisdom and have a blessed life. **Our heavenly Father knows what is best for us.**

## **Application Pathfinder**

As a review of 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 you have 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 our fathers and the wisdom they pass on to us. Ask the Lord to help you to listen to wisdom and then obey. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the gospel, give them opportunity to do so.

Template - All In How You Look At It

