

Contrasting Paths Pr. 4

Pr 4:26 *“Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established.”*

Guided Growth with Pastor Keith @ CBC Sunday, Jan 1, 2023

Many face a New Year with both hope & discouragement. Many are looking for some new trick or idea that will make lasting change easy and painless. Maturity and experience teach us that significant and lasting change is painful and requires Effort, Energy, and Commitment. For lasting success, we must weave into the fabric of our being basic principles by which we chose to operate. It's our commitment to these principles that enables us to rise above the mediocrity of the mundane and overcome the “gravity” or pull of this world on our lives.

What “Principles” guide (and guard) your journey?

Biblical Principles act as both a map and a compass to guide us when the paths and choices are confusing. (Ps 16:11; Pr. 4:18)

Proverbs 4 contrasts the two basic “paths” available to each of us.

1. The Path of Wisdom 4:1-13; 18-27

A. The Price of Wisdom. Vs 5 *“Get wisdom, (ḥokmâ’: life skills) get understanding:...”*
(bînâ’: to distinguish, perceive)

1) “Get” (qānâ’) means to procure by purchase! (See Is. 55:1,2; Rev 3:18)

B. The Protection of Wisdom. Vs 6 *“Forsake her not, and she shall preserve thee: (shāmar’: protect) love her, and she shall keep thee.”* (nāṣar: guard)

C. The Priority of Wisdom. Vs 7 *“Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding.”* (bînâ’: from bîn; perception, ability to distinguish/discern)

D. The Prosperity of Wisdom. 8,9 *“Exalt her, and she shall promote thee: she shall bring thee to honor, when thou dost embrace her. She shall give to thine head an ornament of grace: (ḥēn: favor, graciousness) a crown of glory shall she deliver to thee.”* See 2 Tim. 4:8

E. The Peace of Wisdom. 12-13 *“When thou goest, thy steps shall not be straitened; (yāṣar’ vexed, distressed) and when thou runnest, thou shalt not stumble.”*

F. The Process of Wisdom. 13 *“Take fast hold of (ḥāzaq’: strengthen, repair, fortify). instruction; (Mūsār’: reproof, correction) let her not go: keep her; (natsar: protect) for she is thy life.”* (ḥay’: vitality)

2. The Path of Wickedness. 4:14-17,24

A. It's a popular path. 14 *“Enter not into the path (’ōraḥ’: well traveled road) of the wicked, (rāshā’: condemned)*

1) Jesus called it the “broad way” in Mt. 7:13 (Eury’chōros: spacious)
“and many there be which go in thereat”

a) It has to be “broad” because we're all naturally “condemned”. (Ro. 3:10,23; Jn 3:18)

B. It's a Poison (Destructive) Path. 14 *“and go not in the way of evil men. (ra: mischief, misery) Pr 14:12; 16:25 “There is a way which seems right (Yashar’: straight) unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.”* (mā’wet: death, ruin) (See Mt 7:13)

Vs 16,17 *"For they sleep not, except they have done mischief; (rā' a': to spoil or break, vex) and their sleep is taken away, unless they cause some to fall. (kāshal': waver, stumble) For they eat the bread of wickedness and drink the wine of violence."*

C. It's a pretentious (**deceitful**) path. 24 *"Put away from thee a froward mouth, (Iqqeshût': distorted, false) and perverse lips put far from thee." (Lāzût': twisted, turned aside, to depart)*

D. It's a **Dark** Path 4:19 *"The way of the wicked is as darkness: (apēlâ': gloomy, dark, concealed) they know not (yada': recognize, understand) at what they stumble." (kashal: fall, be overthrown)*

18 *"but the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."*

Conclusion: Pr. 4:20-27 20 *"My son, attend to my words; incline thine ears...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, ...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 (palas': prepare, weigh) the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. (kûn: prepared, confirmed) 27 Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil."*

In Deut. 30:15-18 prepares the people to enter the promised land.

15 *"See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil; In that I command thee this day to love the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply: and the LORD thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it.*

17 *But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them; I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish, and that ye shall not prolong your days upon the land...19 I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live: 20 That thou mayest love the LORD thy God, ...obey his voice, and ...cleave unto him: for he is thy life, and the length of thy days: that thou mayest dwell in the land which the LORD swore unto thy fathers..."*

Application:

On the Damascus Road Christ intersected Saul and set him on a new path. Acts 26:16-19 *"I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness of these things which thou hast seen, ...18 To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me. Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision:"*

**Has the light of Christ intersected your life?
Does he have a purpose for you?
Are you being obedient to your heavenly calling?**