

## Proverbs 3-4

### ~ My Son...Keep Wisdom ~

#### Introduction

Well it's estimated that the Crown Jewels of England are **arguably** some of the **most guarded** and **well-protected items** in the entire world...

According to an article written in 2019 by the *International Fire & Security Exhibition Conferences* (or **IFSEC** for short):<sup>1</sup>

*The Jewels are protected by bombproof glass – there are over 100 hidden CCTV cameras throughout the tower...there is a 22-strong guard presence of the British Army whose sole purpose is to watch the Jewels at all times, [there are] 38 Yeomen officers or beef-eaters (ex-military personnel) used to manage the large numbers of visitors who come to the tower to visit...*

The Yeomen are **permanently present** and live inside of the tower itself sometimes with their families – or sometimes by themselves!

#### PRICE

And according to another article written by **IFSEC** – putting an exact price on the Jewels has proven to be difficult:<sup>2</sup>

*There are 23,578 delicate stones in the collection and over 140 objects as part of the Crown Jewels...thus the Jewels are said to be valued at over 3 thousand million British pounds or:*

6.21 Billion Australian Dollars!

Making them one of the **most guarded** and **well-protected items** in the world!

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ifsecglobal.com/borders-infrastructure/securing-the-worlds-most-protected-artefacts/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ifsecglobal.com/borders-infrastructure/securing-the-worlds-most-protected-artefacts/>

You'll only ever see the Jewels come out for special occasions – the funeral of the Queen – the crowning of the King – the coronation of British Monarchs... but **other than that** the Jewels remain locked up – kept safe – and constantly guarded:

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – 365 days of the year!

### Proverbs 3-4

So what's with all of the **drama**...the **effort**...the **theatrics** of it all...

I mean couldn't they just have a couple of men guarding the Jewels **every so often**...?!?!

I mean all this **security** – all of this **drama** for a bunch of **shiny stones**?!?!

### The Throne

Well presumably these men believe that they are guarding something **precious** – something **valuable** – something **significant** – and of **lasting value**!

The Jewels **it's said** represent the history of the English people!

It's a sign of their **power**, their **presence**, their national **identity** as a nation under God!

The Jewels are priceless – because **they represent** something that is **priceless**:

These Jewels have **come from** the very **presence** and the **throne** of the King and the Queen!

And thus the **value** of the stones **flow directly** from the source of their identity!

The stones are **precious** because the **King** is precious!

The stones are **precious** because the **Queen** is precious!

It's **NOT just** about the value of the stones!

It's about **the glory** they represent – it's about **the history** that they carry!

## Proverbs 3-4

And in the **very same way** Solomon here is urging his sons:

To guard the glory of wisdom!

To **recognise** its value – to **receive** its virtue – and to **remember** its glory!

**NOT only** because the wisdom that Solomon gives may one day **just save** their very lives – but because the wisdom that **he has received**:

**Comes from** the very throne room of God – the One who made the world of wisdom!

Last week we saw in chapter 2 that Solomon was **urging his sons** to **acquire godly wisdom** because wisdom is a priceless possession!

It is something that if we are to get serious about getting – it's takes **labour** – it takes **time** – it takes **effort** – it takes **work**!

This week Solomon takes it **one step further** – and says that **NOT only** are we **to acquire** this godly wisdom with everything that we have – but we are **commanded**:

To **keep this** wisdom – and to **guard this** wisdom with everything we ever have!

## Main Point

And so the main point that Solomon is wanting us to see as we come to this section in the book of Proverbs – is that:

*A life that is fixed on guarding godly wisdom must be a life fixed on putting God first!*

## Outline

4 ways in which Solomon is telling us to guard this godly wisdom:

Remember its source **[3:1-12]**

Recognize its value **[3:13-35]**

Recall its transmission [4:1-9]

Remain on its path [4:10-27]

### Proverbs 3

So Proverbs chapter 3 beginning at verse 1 – Solomon begins:

*My son, do not forget my teaching, but let your heart keep my commands; <sup>2</sup> for they will bring you many days, a full life, and well-being. <sup>3</sup> Never let loyalty and faithfulness leave you. Tie them around your neck; write them on the tablet of your heart. <sup>4</sup> Then you will find favour and high regard with God and people. <sup>5</sup> Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding; <sup>6</sup> in all your ways know Him, and He will make your paths straight. <sup>7</sup> Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and turn away from evil. <sup>8</sup> This will be healing for your body and strengthening for your bones. <sup>9</sup> Honor the LORD with your possessions and with the first produce of your entire harvest; <sup>10</sup> then your barns will be completely filled, and your vats will overflow with new wine. <sup>11</sup> Do not despise the LORD'S instruction, my son, and do not loathe His discipline; <sup>12</sup> for the LORD disciplines the one He loves, just as a father disciplines the son in whom He delights...*

### Opening Gambit

The Father makes **several appeals** to his son about the guarding godly wisdom!

What are the things that we are to do to keep wisdom safe and close to our very hearts?

Well notice the first thing he says in chapter 3:

*We are to guard godly wisdom by looking to its source X2*

And we kind of saw that briefly last week in chapter 2 – remember Yahweh was the source of godly wisdom in verse 6 of chapter 2 – but now in chapter 3 Solomon unpacks this **same idea** but with **far more** clarity!

Notice chapter 3 verse 5:

*Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight...*

And that's **really the essence** of these first 12 verses!

### **No Wicked**

You see what sets **chapter 3** apart more than **any other chapter** in the entire book of Proverbs are these **2 main things**:

First you may have noticed that there is **no explicit mention** of the **wicked** and **their ways** that we saw back in chapters 1 & 2...

There is no enticements of sinners – there's no adulterous woman – there is no voice of the wicked – **except maybe** the consequences that are due to the wicked at the end of the chapter in verses **25 to 35 of chapter 3!**

**But other than that** there is **no mention/ enticement/ or voice of the wicked** – there is **only** this **alluring/ this inviting/ all encompassing** presentation of what wisdom is – what wisdom does – and why it is that we need to guard her with our entire lives!

### **God-Centredness**

Now the other thing that sets this chapter apart in chapter 3 is its **riveting focus** and **repeated emphasis** on trusting God – on looking to God!

You'll notice that the divine name of God has been **mentioned sparingly** in the previous chapters:

Chapter **1 verse 7** – Chapter **1 verse 29** – and only **2 twice** in chapter 2!

But when we **get to chapter 3** we see the divine name of God (Yahweh – the covenant name of God to Israel) mentioned **all throughout** this chapter!

It's being used **over and over and over and over** again:

*The LORD is to be trusted with our hearts and our allegiance (verse 5)*

*The LORD is the one that we are to fear (verse 7)*

*The LORD is the one that you honour with your wealth and your possessions (verse 9)*

*The LORD's discipline is **NOT** to be **rejected** or **despised** (verse 11)*

*The LORD's discipline reminds us of His steadfast love (verse 12)*

*By wisdom the LORD laid the earth's foundation (verse 19)*

*The LORD is your confidence and rock in times of temptation (verse 26)*

And then the **chapter concludes** with the LORD'S **blessings & curses** upon those who honour the LORD – and those who reject Him – **verse 33**:

*The Lord's curse is on the household of the wicked, but He blesses the home of the righteous...*

### **Source and Substance**

And so time and time again throughout this chapter the Divine-Covenant Name of God (Yahweh) is mentioned **several times** to remind us of the **God-centredness** & the **God grounded-ness** of our daily wisdom...

And to remind us that **if we are to guard** godly wisdom above all other things – then we are to ultimately keep our **eyes fixed** on the One who is the very **source** & the **substance** of what that wisdom is!

### **Dead Horse**

And I wonder if that's a **bit too simplistic** for you!

I wonder if maybe you feel like that's an **overly used** cliché in this church – it's a bit like the flogging of a dead horse – like:

Haven't heard that one before!  
Keep your eyes on God – have faith in God – keep looking to God!

I've heard it once – I've heard it a thousand times!

Look to God – Trust God – keep leaning on God!

### **Eyes off**

But there's a **reason why** you keep falling into the **repeated patterns** of sin & temptations that you **always seem to do...**

There's a reason why **sin continues** to ravage the Christian church in the world – and leaders continue to **fall** – and husbands continue to **fail** – and wives **continue to lament** – even though God's word tells us that:

*We are a **new creation in Christ!***

Sin somehow **still seems to have** victory in the lives of so many Christians!

### **Basic Command**

The reason is because **so often** as Christians – and even as a new-creations– we **so often forget** the most basic command of all of Scripture to:

**KEEP OUR EYES FIXED & FOCUSED ON THE LORD OUR GOD!**

The command that:

We are to love the LORD our God with all of our hearts – and all of our minds – and all of our strength – and all of our wisdom!

We so often **take our eyes off** of the LORD and begin to take confidence in our **own human condition** because that is the **natural tendency** of the human heart!

And it's one of the **primary ways** that Christians fail to **daily guard** the wisdom of God!

This is why verse 5 says:

*To NOT lean on our own understanding...*

Verse 7 says to:

*NOT be wise in our own eyes!*

Solomon would **NOT** feel the need to **repeat that** if this wasn't a daily habitual sin & temptation that we're constantly prone to do!

The **natural tendency** of the human heart (even as Christians) – is to **gain confidence** in the flesh – and to **minimise** dependence in God!

And so the first thing Solomon reminds us of in these first 12 verses is:

To take our eyes consistently **off of ourselves** and to plant them firmly on **the one** who is the **source** of wisdom!

And so he says there in verse 5:

*To trust in the LORD with all of your heart, and do NOT rely on your own understanding...*

### **Phil Johnson**

Phil Johnson in commenting on these verses says that these verses **perfectly summarise** the **curves** & **contours** of the gospel – he says:

*It includes a **call to faith**; trust in the LORD with all your heart...*

*There is a summons to **self-denial**; lean not on your own understanding...*

*And there is a **mandate for Christian obedience**; in all your ways acknowledge Him...*

And so **in this** it perfectly outlines the contours of the gospel!

The gospel is **first** and **foremost** about:



Fixing our eyes on God – the author and perfecter of our faith!

### Verses 1-12

But we have to understand that these verses are **NOT in isolation** from the rest of chapter 3 – but they follow a **very structured & well-organized** pattern of Hebrew poetry:

Notice that in the first 12 verses you have **6 couplets** all alternating between both **admonitions** and **blessings**

OR if you like:

**One verse** gives a command – and **the other** gives the reason.

And this is **the pattern** of these **first 12 verses** – verse 1 is the **command**:

*My son, do not forget my teaching, but let your heart keep my commandments...*

Verse 2 is the **reason**:

*For they will bring you many days, a full life, and well-being...*

Verse 3 is **command**:

*Never let loyalty and faithfulness leave you. Tie them around your neck; write them on the tablet of your heart...*

Verse 4 is the **reason**:

*Then you will find favour and high regard with God and people...*

Verse 5 **command**:

*Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean NOT on your own understanding...*

Verse 6 **reason:**

*In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight...*

Verse 7 **command:**

*Don't be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and turn away from evil.*

Verse 8 **reason:**

*For this will be healing for your body and strengthening to your bones...*

Verse 9 **command:**

*Honor the LORD with your possessions and with the first produce of your harvest...*

Verse 10 **reason:**

*Then your barns will be filled, and your vats overflow with wine...*

Verse 11 **command:**

*Do not despise the LORD instruction, and do not loathe His discipline...*

Verse 12 **reason:**

*For the LORD disciplines the one He loves, as a father disciplines the son in whom He delights...*

**6 commands** all followed with a further **6 reasons!**

The commands are:

To learn from the Scriptures – **verse 1**  
 To be steadfast in love and faithfulness – **verse 3**  
 To trust in the LORD – **verse 5**  
 To fear the LORD – **verse 7**  
 To honour the LORD – **verse 9**  
 And to welcome the LORD’S discipline – **verse 11**

WHY?!?!

What are the reasons for us to be **obeying** these commands?!?!

Well because it’s the best way to live – **verse 2**  
 Because it’s the key to earthly blessing – **verse 4**  
 Because it makes all of life better – **verse 6**  
 Because it promotes general health – **verse 8**  
 Because it’s the path to real prosperity – **verse 10**  
 And because it signifies the very sonship of God – **verse 12**

### Verses 5-6

And so **all of this** of course contributes to the overall message of these first 12 verses that:

Godly wisdom **if it is** to be **guarded** – must **always be centred** on Yahweh Himself!

It must be centred on the **right things** – if it is to be **protected!**

You see **if you have** godly wisdom – you trust in the LORD with all your heart!

**If you have** godly wisdom – you **acknowledge Him** in all of your ways!

And **if you have** godly wisdom then you fear the LORD and turn away from evil!

In order to **guard godly wisdom** – we must **live lives in total submission & allegiance** to God!

Because the wisdom that we **received from** Him – can **only be protected** by **going back to the source!**

It means putting God first in all of our decisions because we recognise that the **moment we don't** – we're on the path to losing that wisdom!

It means reading the Scriptures and seeing what they say to do in a certain situations – lest we sin and are on the path to folly!

It means considering your options and doing what brings **most glory** to God – **rather than** glory to yourself!

### **Application #1**

And so just a few basic **questions of application** to test your heart in this first area of Scripture – maybe begin by asking yourselves:

- Where is the **first place** you turn when tragedy seems to strike?
- What is your **first port** of call when you need to make a choice or a difficult life decision?
- How much prayer did you invest in **this week** simply because you wanted to have **fellowship with God?**
- How much **time** and **attention** are you giving to God's word right now in your life rather than other earthly things?
- And finally: In what areas of your life are you **NOT** in **total submission** to the LORD your God?

Solomon says that a life that is **fixed** on **guarding godly** wisdom – is a life that is **fixed on** putting **God first!**

On seeking God first!

Or the way that Jesus said this in Matthew chapter 6 was:

*To seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you....*

And so this is the command first and foremost:

**To remember godly wisdom X2**

To remember its **source** and remember its **substance**!

### **13-35 – Point 2**

The **second way** that we are to guard this godly wisdom is by:

*Recognising its value*

You see if you recognize **something** as **precious** – if you see something as **utterly** valuable – then you're obviously going to guard it with **everything you have**!

You're **NOT** going to guard something that is **useless** – or of **little value** – you're **only going to guard** that which is:

Most precious!

And most valuable!

Jesus says:

*Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also...*

This is what Solomon is saying in verses **13 to 35** – recognize the **value of wisdom** in order to **guard it** – and so he says in verse 13:

*Happy is a man who finds wisdom and who acquires understanding, <sup>14</sup>for she is more profitable than silver, and her revenue is better than gold. <sup>15</sup>She is more precious than jewels; nothing you desire can equal her. <sup>16</sup>Long life is in her right hand; in her left, riches*

*and honour. <sup>17</sup> Her ways are pleasant, and all her paths, are peaceful. <sup>18</sup> She is a tree of life to those who embrace her, and those who hold on to her are happy...*

Solomon is really trying to demonstrate here the guarding of godly wisdom by recognising **her value** – **her beauty** – **her worth**:

She is more profitable than silver!

She is more valuable than gold!

More precious than jewels!

Long life is in her right hand!

Riches and honour are in her left hand!

Happy is the one who **NOT only** finds her – but **guards** her – who **keeps** her – who **holds on** to her **for life!**

Like a **tree of life!**

### **Wisdom Vs. Money**

Maybe we could modernise this – by giving a hypothetical:

Imagine for a moment that I walked in here this morning with a **sack full** of \$100 bills – and said:

*Anyone who wants this sack of money – come up and take it!*

I imagine that **most of you** would come and take that sack of \$100 bills and spend it on something good!

You might spend it on a family trip!

You might invest it in something solid!

You might use it to bless your neighbour!

You might use it to buy a new bible!

**Something to that effect!**

But suppose for a moment that I held up a **similar sack** – **NOT full** of \$100 bills – but this time it was a **sack full of wisdom!**

Which one would you **go for** first?!?!?

Which sack would have your **utmost desire?!?!!**

Because this text says that **if you go for the Benjamins** – if you go for the money:

You've made the **wrong** decision!

You have made a **bad** choice!

You're on the path to folly!

### **WHY?!?!!**

Because **this text** tells us that you **already have** what's **more valuable** than gold – **more precious** than silver – **more lasting** than all the money in the world – because what you have:

Created the world!

### **Creation**

This is where Solomon goes in verses 19 & 20 – notice:

*The LORD founded the earth **by wisdom** and established the heavens **by understanding**.<sup>20</sup> By **His knowledge** the watery depths broke open, and the clouds dripped with dew...*

So why is wisdom better than money – why is wisdom better than gold?!?

Well because wisdom is **the very tool** used by God **to build** the earth's foundation!

It was **the very tool** God uses to structure the creation of the cosmos!

So Wisdom is better than money – because **wisdom was** the very thing that created our currency & wealth!

The thing that money is made of – wisdom actually created!

You see the **very same wisdom** that we are being called to **pursue** – called to **guard** – called to **keep safe** is the **same wisdom** that:

Built the heavens and the earth!

That laid the earth's foundation!

That built the world's economy!

The same wisdom that created man and woman in the image of God – and **told them to pursue** a life that is glorifying to God!

A life that both **upward** focused – and **outward** focused!

### **Others**

This is why he goes on in the rest of the chapter to speak about the ways in which we are to **glorify God** and display the **riches of His wisdom** to all men – and to all people:

Verse 27:

*Do not withhold good from the one to whom it belongs...*

Verse 28:

*Do not say to your neighbour, "Go away! Come back later. I'll give it tomorrow"*

Verse 29:

*Do not plan harm against your neighbour...*

Verse 30:

*Do not accuse anyone without cause...*



Verse 31:

*Do not envy a violent man or choose any of his ways...*

He's **NOT** simply giving us a list of commands to **obtain** wisdom – it's a list of commands to **display** wisdom!

See part of recognising the **value** and the **beauty** of godly wisdom is **also recognising** that its value **extends to other people!**

Wisdom is **NOT just** something to be **held onto** – but something to be **handed out!**

Wisdom is **NOT just** an **upward** and **onward** focus on God – but an **outward** and **man-ward focus** on others!

I mean so far **in this chapter** we've seen that wisdom is spoken of primarily as something that *blesses us – prospers us* – it's been about *our trust* – and *our faith* – and *our confidence* in God:

It's all suspiciously been about us!

But now Solomon turns in these **final few verses** to speak about the blessing of other people!

Wisdom **blesses** and **extends** life to other people – and we see that in the negative!

### **Humility**

He actually gives **5 negative commands** which **begin** in verse 27 – but culminate in these **final 2 verses** 34 & 35 – where it's said that:

*God mocks the mocker – but gives grace to the humble!*

It's the humble who are wise in this world!

It's the humble who are able to serve!

It is the humble who will inherit the earth in Matthew 5!

It's the humble who see their profound need for the grace of God and they **want to extend that grace** to other people!

## **Romans 12**

We see a **more positive** way of saying this **in the New Testament** in Romans chapter 12 – where Paul says:

*If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all men...*

Paul is saying that we would **NOT plan** evil or **plot** evil:

If we just had more wisdom!

Because wisdom says – that:

We are to **maintain peace** with all men – to **exercise love** – and to **cultivate trust** – so far as it depends on us!

You see godly wisdom friends **is NOT pugnacious!**

It **doesn't** pick fights on the internet!

It doesn't **create accounts** and proceed to **slander other people!**

It doesn't **exalt itself** on Twitter!

It **doesn't look down** on other people!

But godly wisdom:

De-escalates the drama!

It doesn't pass on the gossip!

It doesn't **stir up** strife among brothers!

But instead, as we've been **learning so far** in the book of Proverbs – the life of godly wisdom:

Fears the LORD!

It puts others first!

It listens to other people!

It heeds to a father and a mother!

It **doesn't despise** the teaching of the Scriptures!

It **doesn't give** ear to the enticement of sinners!

And it enjoys **labouring hard** in search of the Scriptures!

These are **all ways** that the wisdom of God is being displayed in the book of Proverbs – and here in chapter 3 we see that:

In order to recognize the value of godly wisdom – we have to recognize it's profound value and beauty **in the lives of others!**

Wisdom is always an **outward** expression!

It's always an **outward** focus!

Wisdom is **NOT** just something that you store up – it's something that you **hand out!**

We **NOT** only enjoy the peace of Christ through knowing God in the gospel – but we now **extend that peace** to all men!

And in this we are **guarding godly wisdom** – **NOT** by keeping it to ourselves but by:

**Passing it on to others X2**

### **Point 3**

That's what we see in this **third major section** of our text – godly wisdom is **NOT just guarded** by:

*Remembering its source!*

It is **NOT just guarded** by:

*Recognizing its value and extending its beauty!*

But third – godly wisdom is guarded by:

*Recalling its transmission*

Notice verse 1 of chapter 4 – Solomon says:

*Listen, sons, to a father's discipline, and pay attention that you may gain understanding, <sup>2</sup> for I am giving you good instruction. So **don't abandon** my teaching...*

## **Shema**

Now you'll notice that Solomon **immediately uses** that **famous** Hebrew expression – it's the prayer of Deuteronomy 6 – it's the famous Hebraic expression known as:

Shema

Or listen!

***Hear O Israel – the LORD our God the LORD is One!***

This is that famous prayer of **Deuteronomy** that the children of parents were to teach **their kids daily!**

It's a Hebrew word to speak of **NOT just** of listening to information – but of obeying it!

Of Heeding it!

Of paying special attention!

Do **NOT** lose sight of it!

This is **NOT just** to *listen* – but it's to listen and to respond!

To put into action!

To trust and to obey!

And it was **a reminder** that the God who had brought His people out of the land of Egypt was giving them commandments – he was giving them laws:

**NOT** to **take away** their lives – but to **preserve** them!

To **keep them** and to give them **life** in the **land**!

And **life** in His **presence**!

But here in Proverbs 4 – you'll notice that God is **NOT just** speaking to one son but:

To all **sons**!

To all **daughters**!

To **all Hebrew children** reading the Proverbs!

And **by extension** – **all of us** who are in Christ here this morning!

## **Inheritance**

And what's in focus in these **verses** is this idea of:

Inheritance **X2**

It's a *divestiture*!

It's a passing on of wisdom!

Of knowledge!

One pastor says:

*He grabs the sons by the collar and he says to **pay attention!***

*To listen and obey!*

### **Former Generations**

And then he proceeds to give the wisdom in **verse 3**:

*When I was a son with my father, tender and precious to my mother... he taught me and said...*

So he's extending the knowledge and information that he's giving to his son to include **NOT only** the future **generation** of Solomon and his sons – and his grandchildren – and his great grandchildren – but he's **actually looking back** – He actually looks back to:

**A former generation!**

**A former inheritance!**

That Solomon **gained** NOT just from the Scriptures – but:

From **his father** David!

Like King David!

Israel's greatest King!

The most famous King in all of Israel!

And he's saying:

*Here's what my **father** David taught me when I was your age – and now I'm passing it on to you!*

So now we see that there is this transmission of **knowledge** – this transfer of **information** from:

One generation to the next!  
 This is **NOT** just a father to his sons!  
 This is a grandfather to his grandchildren!  
 It's the language of **inheritance**!  
 It's the language of **transmission**!  
 It is a *passing down* of **former information**!

## Home

I'm NOT sure if you've ever had the opportunity of cleaning out your **parents' home** – or your maybe **grandparents' garage** – where there is just *piles and piles* of garbage!

But of course it's **NOT** garbage to them – it's important information!

It's books – and articles – and magazines – and knickknacks – and patty whacks – zig-zags – polly wockles – flu-flames!

And all of these old rickety knickknacks that they **find valuable**!

That's what we **often think** of as *inheritance*!

Or maybe we think of it in terms of more positive things like:

Cash or cars or property!

But either way – the inheritance that's spoken of in verse 3 – is NOT some pile of old garbage – its:

The transfer of wisdom!  
 The transfer of knowledge!

Verse 3:

*When I was a son with my father here is what **he taught me**!*

You see the greatest gift that a father can give to his children **as an inheritance**:

It's **NOT** an old truck!

It's **NOT** a shed full of old possessions!

It's **NOT** a storehouse of **wealth** or a property to inherit!

It **is and always will be** the inheritance of:

**The Truth X2**

The Scriptures!

The sound teaching of the Scriptures!

You **don't** have to be **rich** in order to leave your children with the **greatest inheritance** that they could possibly incur!

It is the **transfer** and **transmission** of the Scriptures from one **generation** to the next!

And so Solomon looks back at his father David – **imperfect** as he was – as sinful as he was – and he says:

*This is what my father David taught me!*

### **Repetition**

And then **he proceeds** to give what the wisdom of David was – notice verse 5:

*Get wisdom & to get understanding!*

Verse 4:

*Keep my commandments!*



Verse 6:

*Don't abandon wisdom...*

Verse 8:

*Cherish wisdom...*

Verse 9:

*Embrace wisdom for she will place a garland of favour on your head; and she will give you a crown of beauty to display...*

I mean this is **all stuff** we've already seen before in chapter 1 & in chapter 2 – because it's stuff that Solomon had picked up from his father that he was **now reverberating** to his sons!

And so **now we start** to see why there is so much **repetition** in the book of Proverbs – and it's because:

Solomon was teaching sons the wisdom **that he learned** from his **father** – and from his **grandfather** – and **great grandfather** – **great great grandfather** – and **great great great grandfather!**

And it's just **another reminder** in the book of Proverbs that if we are to **guard** wisdom – to **keep** wisdom – and to **protect** wisdom – then:

We must give that to the **next generation!**

We are to **NOT** only recall the information – but we are to verse 1:

*Shema it!*

*Heed it!*

*Remember it!*

*And obey it!*

**WHY?!?!?**

## **Life**

Well because verse 4 says to:

*Keep my commands and live X2*

These commandments are **NOT** just **boring** commandments – but they are **life** to a man's soul!!!

You see so much of parenting is **keeping your children alive!**

It's feeding them!

It's clothing them!

It's teaching them!

It's **NOT** letting them run in front of traffic!

Don't plug that into the outlet!

Don't touch the stove!

Don't play with matches!

Don't run with knives!

Don't put that in your mouth!

And sometimes in parenting it's **hard to differentiate** between all those **earthly commands** that parents give (as good as they are/ as glorious as they are) – from the commands of Scripture – like:

*Trust in the LORD with all your heart!*

*Do NOT lean on your own understanding!*

*Repent and trust in the gospel!*

*Repent and come to Jesus!*

And that's **NOT** necessarily a bad thing – it's just a reality!

## The Heart

But here in Proverbs 4 – Solomon tries to **zero in** on those particular words of his father David that are **most in line** with **truth** – and **most in line** with **wisdom**!

And so from all of these Proverbs – and all these commandments – and all of this wisdom that Solomon could have chosen he **zeroes in** and he **centres upon** – NOT the **10,000 commands** of imperatives that **parents give** to children – but he **centres upon** those most basic commands that have to with:

The **preservation** & the **restoration** of His son's **HEART**!

## His Heart!

### Point 4

And that's where he goes in the final section of chapter 4:

*Remain on the path of wisdom*

Remain on the path – by guarding your heart!

Notice all the ways that Solomon describes guarding wisdom as being on the path of life – notice:

*Verse 11 – way!*

*Verse 11 – guide!*

*Verse 11 – path!*

*Verse 12 – steps!*

*Verse 12 – run!*

*Verse 12 – stumble!*

*Verse 13 – travel!*

*Verse 14 – path!*

*Verse 14 – way!*

*Verse 15 – travel!*

*Verse 15 – pass!*

*Verse 18 – path!*

*Verse 19 – way!*

*Verse 19 – stumble!*

I mean it's all just this **repetition** and **language** reminiscent of chapter 1 – and **staying off** the path of sinners and remaining on the **path of life!**

Verse 18:

*The path of the righteous is like the dawn of light...*

Verse 19:

*But the way of the wicked is like the darkest gloom...*

This is typical language in the book of Proverbs to speak of your general life direction!

### **The Heart**

And then after showing these 2 paths – he shows us the **care** and **attentiveness** needed to remain on the path of life – verse 20:

*My son, pay attention to my words; listen closely to my sayings. Don't lose sight of them;  
**keep them in your heart...***

This is the same thing he's saying in verse 23:

***Guard your heart** above all things, for it is the source of life...*

Some of your translations may say:

*The wellspring of life!*

*It determines your life!*

*Out of it are the issues of life!*

And they're all pretty good ways to speak of the issue of the heart!

You see when the bible speaks of this idea of:

### *Heart*

It's **NOT speaking** of that **physical/literal organ** in the chest that pumps **blood & oxygen** to your brain – it is **NOT** the **literal heart** sitting in your chest...

Rather when the bible speaks of the **heart** it's speaking of that:

Inner most person of the soul!

It is the mind – and the thoughts – the affections – & desires – everything **you are** – everything **you seek** – everything you **long for** as a person:

**Has to do** with the condition of your **heart!**

And often the word heart is used to refer to

So the heart can also be ***another word*** to refer to your mind!

It is that inner most **directional** – and **affectional** – and **decision-istic** part of who you **truly are!**

And in **Hebrew conception** – the heart is where all of your thoughts and feelings come from!

This is why Jesus said in Mark 7:

*For **from within**, out of the **heart of man**, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from **within**, and they defile a person...*

So the heart can be a way to speak of:

The thoughts – the actions – the feelings and intentions of a soul!

Proverbs 23 verse 7:

*As a man thinks **in his heart** so he is!*

Psalm 53 verse 1:

*The fool says **in his heart** there is no God!*

Or Hebrews 4:12 it **speaks of:**

*The **thoughts** and **intentions** of the heart!*

And so the heart really is the:

Inner most core & centre of **who** a man is!

### **Whole Person**

And so Solomon in order to protect the heart – speaks here of the **entire person**:

Verse 21:

*Do NOT let them out of your **sight**!*

Verse 21:

*Keep them within your **heart**!*

Verse 24:

*Keep your **mouth** from perversity!*

Verse 24:

*Keep your **lips** from corrupted speech!*

Verse 25:

*Let your **eyes** look straight ahead!*

Verse 26:

*Give careful **thought** to your paths!*

### **All of life**

So he's **purposely drawing** in all of these **different parts** of the body – to say:

*This is an **entire body experience**!*

We are to have our **entire lives** guarded and protected and safeguarded from sin & the temptation to sin!

And in order to keep hold of the truth and to walk in the ways of wisdom – we need to be constantly:

***Walking – and thinking – and looking – and hearing – and seeing:***

The reality of His word!

The reality of His grace!

And His gospel!

And His goodness!

And his glory!

We are to have those things on the **forefront** of our minds – because:

The things that you **value most** in this world will **dictate & determine** the reality of your life!

That's why verse 23 says:

*To guard your heart for it is the wellspring of your life!*

Because everything you do flows from where your heart **is directed!**

Jesus said:

Where your **treasure** is – there your **heart** will also be!

What you centre your **life upon** – will be **the thing** that you become **most like!**

We become what we worship!

We become what we love!

And if your heart and your life is centred on God and His word then:

That is what you will become most like!

And so Solomon here is commanding us:

To fix our hearts!

To Fix our eyes!

To Fix our feet!

To Fix our hands!

On everything God's word tells us!

In order to **guard godly wisdom** we must:

Fix our eyes on putting Yahweh first!

How do we do that:



Well we go back to the source [3:1-12]

We recognize its value [3:13-35]

We recall its transmission [4:1-9]

And we remain on its path [4:10-27]

Or in the words of verse 26:

*We carefully consider the path of our feet, so that all our ways will be established!*

It's sounds so **simple** – so **basic** – so **modest** – but:

Are we actually doing this?!?!

Are we actually putting God first?!?!

Are we actually guarding our hearts?!?!

Jesus said:

*Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks!*

## **Gospel**

And so Solomon is coming to us as a father to a son – a father to a daughter and he says:

My son, my son what is the condition of your heart here this morning?

What are the things that you've been **doing** – and **thinking** – and **speaking** – and feeling – and  
hiding away in your heart:

That reflects the **condition** of your soul?!?!

Because the same God who pours out His judgment & wrath on all men and their **hearts** – Romans  
chapter 1!

Is the **same God** who offers **redemption** and **reconciliation** through Jesus Christ!

### **Ezekiel 36**

In fact there's a passage in **Ezekiel 36** that speaks of this grace!

Of a time where God Himself promises to come to dwell with His people – and He will:

Cleanse their hearts!

He will wash their sins!

He will cleanse their impurities by His grace!

And He will give them a new heart!

And a new spirit!

And **remove** the heart of **stone** and **give** His heart of flesh!

And that's the promise that we have in the gospel!

That's the promise that we have in Jesus!

And so Jesus comes John chapter 7 – he says the same thing:

*If anyone is thirsty him come to me and drink... and I will give to Him streams of living water!*

it's a metaphor for trusting in Jesus – believing in Jesus – having faith in Jesus!

He says:

*Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has promised, will have streams of living water flow from deep within...*

Rivers of living water will flow from your heart when you come to trust in the God of grace!

And He promises to give you a **new heart** and a **new mind** and a **new way** of life!

And **in order to guard** that precious source of wisdom – then we must strive to put God first!

Putting God first in everything we do – because He is our prize!

## Proverbs 3-4

### Discussion Questions

**[Read Proverbs 3-4].**

**Main Point:** *A life that is fixed on guarding godly wisdom must be a life fixed on putting God first!*

**Q1.** What is the main point of this section? – According to Proverbs 3:5–6, what does it mean to trust in the LORD with all your heart? – How can we actively avoid “leaning on our own understanding” in daily life? – Solomon repeats the name of Yahweh throughout Proverbs 3. Why is this repetition significant? – In what practical ways do you “honour the LORD with your possessions” (v. 9)? – How does this relate to trusting God? – How can we discern whether we are putting God first in all our decisions?

**Q2. [Read verses 13-20].** What is the main point of this section? – How does Proverbs 3:19–20 link God’s wisdom to the creation of the world? – What implications does this have for the role of wisdom in our lives? – Reflect on verses 27–35. How do these instructions help us live wisely in community with others? Which one is most challenging for you personally, and why?

**Q3. [Read Proverbs 4:1-9].** What is the main point of this section? – What does it mean to pass on godly wisdom to the next generation? How does this look practically in your own life & family? **[Hear from others].** – Solomon reflects on what his father David taught him. What godly lessons or truths have been passed down to you from family or mentors that you still hold onto today? – How have they shaped your own life?

**Q4. [Read Proverbs 4:10-27].** Proverbs 4 repeatedly uses “path” and “way” imagery. What does this tell us about the nature of the Christian life? – Verse 23 says, “Guard your heart above all else.” Why is the heart so central in biblical wisdom? – What things have you been feeding your heart this week? – What are some practical ways to guard your heart?

**Q5.** How does this passage ultimately point us to Christ as the wisdom of God? – **[Read Ezekiel 36:22-32].** How is this promise fulfilled in the gospel? – How does this passage ultimately point us to the work of Christ in us? **[See John 7:37-39].**