

light upon the earth, and thence mounts the heavens with increasing intensity of brilliance, till he reaches the meridian of his glory."

- 3) This is a beautiful picture of how the path of a righteous person begins with a small light and advances into full brightness. The right path, the path of wisdom, has a bright future. (Psalms 119:130) "**The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.**"

b. The path of the wicked is a dark path (v.19)

- 1) The path of the wicked is the opposite. It is full of darkness and deceit.
- 2) The wicked sin in darkness, live in darkness, and hide in darkness. "There is no light on which they can look back with pleasure; none to which they can look forward with hope." Wardlaw
- 3) The darkness that engulfs the way of the wicked is like a raging river rushing swiftly toward a waterfall that plunges into outer darkness. (Psalms 9:17) "**The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.**"
- 4) In that darkness, they stumble and fall. The darkness traps them, and they stumble while looking for an escape.
- 5) The path of the wicked is a path of darkness and doom.

Conclusion: As we have contemplated Solomon's instructions about wrong paths of the wicked, we have clearly heard his six warnings. We have noted his reasons that the path of the wicked is bad. We have been enlightened by his comparison of the paths of the just and the wicked. Now we need to ask God to cement these truths in our hearts that we may apply them to our lives. While these words are particularly addressed to young people, they apply equally to each of us.

If you have been visiting the path of the wicked, you must heed Solomon's warnings immediately. To delay may be deadly.

Song: Stay Awake!

Insights for Life – Wrong Paths

13 November 2022 PM – Proverbs 4:14-19 – Insights – Scott Childs

Introduction: Todd and Fred were going camping. Todd was driving, and he planned to take a shortcut to their destination. However, at the entrance of the shortcut a large sign read, "**Road Closed, Do Not Enter**". Against Fred's objections, Todd went around the sign. All went well for several kilometres. However, when they reach the river, the bridge was washed out. Todd had to drive all the way back. When they got to the main road, someone had written on the back of the "**Road Closed**" sign, "Welcome back rebel." God does not want us to be like that stubborn Todd.

He wants us to obey the "Do Not Enter" signs in life.

Transition: As Solomon was teaching his son about the wrong paths in life, he gave him warnings, reasons and comparisons to help him. These offer direction to us as well.

1. Warnings about the wrong path (v.14-15)

Solomon has just instructed us not to let go of instruction (v.13). However, one of the main sources of temptation to disobey comes from **bad friends and companions**. For this reason, Solomon gives six commands about the wrong path of evil friends.

a. Do Not Enter It

- 1) This is a clear command. Do not enter the path of the wicked! Keep out! The **wicked** include bad people, guilty people, those who are anti God, and even criminals. At first, they are those who break the rules, disobey orders, cheat, swear, lie, deceive, and push the limits. They do not respect authority. Some wicked people are not as easy to detect. They may be university professors bent on promoting evolution and crushing a Christian's faith. They may be a sincere cult leader seeking to turn people to their erring doctrine. **Who are the wicked around you?**
- 2) The Psalmist defined some of the paths of the wicked in Psalm 1:1 "**Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.**"
- 3) If you ignore God's sign "**Do Not Enter the path of the**

wicked”, you are heading for trouble, and danger.

b. Do not go in it

- 1) Do not go in the way of evil companions.
- 2) This command warns us not to advance in the direction of the evil way.

c. Avoid it

- 1) To avoid, means to let go.
- 2) If a friendship leads you toward the wrong path, you must let go of that friendship. It takes guts to let go of a bad friendship, but those who do are the winners. (Genesis 6:8) **"But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD."** Why? Because he courageously stood for God.

d. Pass not by it

- 1) The emphasis of this command is not to pass through the wicked path. Do not go around the “Keep Out” sign.
- 2) God does not want you to “check it out” to see if it is truly bad. He wants you to stay away from it.

e. Turn from it

- 1) This command is to turn away or to deviate. Change your direction.
- 2) If you are with friends that are planning to do something that you know God is against, God commands you to turn from their path. That is difficult, but right. (Proverbs 22:3) **"A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished."** Daniel saw evil in eating the king’s food, and he turned away at the risk of his life (Dan 1:8).

f. Pass away from it

- 1) Here we have a command that means to emigrate, leave the country. **Get out of there!**
- 2) That’s what Joseph wisely did when tempted (Gen 39).
- 3) As we look at these warnings, can you see the progression? They build on each other.

2. Reasons wrong paths are bad (v.16-17)

Young people often plead with their parents, “**What harm is there in that path?**” or “**Everybody is going that way.**” Let the examples of Lot moving to Sodom (Gen 13:10-13), Dinah visiting the

daughters of the land (Gen 34:1-2), and Solomon multiplying wives (1Ki 11:1-5) be sufficient to give you wisdom.

a. Wicked people love evil more than sleep (v.16)

- 1) The darkness of night is their prime time.
- 2) They cannot sleep until they have done their evil deeds for the day. There is more thievery, murder, and wickedness done at night than any other time. Night is the prime time for gaming, pornography, gambling, and immorality.
- 3) They are sleepless until they have caused someone to stumble. They rob others of purity, decency, and integrity. Jesus said (John 3:19) **"And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."**

b. Wicked people thrive on wickedness (v.17)

- 1) They love wickedness and violence. It is their food. They eat it up. They enjoy it.
- 2) This verse may also mean that they get their living from their wicked activities, stealing, cheating, drug deals, corrupt payments, etc.
- 3) The wrong path of the wicked is addictive. It often traps its victims, once on it is difficult to get off. Innocent people may be in a vehicle with those who commit a crime, and they get arrested too.
- 4) Without question, the wrong paths of the wicked are bad paths to be on.

3. Comparisons of right and wrong paths (v.18-19)

a. The path of the just is a bright path (v.18)

- 1) What Solomon is saying here is that the path of the just (i.e., righteous person) is like the light at daybreak that proceeds and becomes lighter until the day is established.
- 2) Let me read how Richard Wardlaw describes it. **"We have before us the feeble glimmerings of the morning dawn, gradually brightening, dispelling the lingering shadows, tinging the eastern clouds and the mountain tops, till at length the risen sun pours the fullness of his gladdening**