

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION
Proverbs: Motivating Teens And Adults To Align With God's Fixed Moral Order
Part II: Explaining The Value Of Heeding God's Fixed Moral Order, Proverbs 1:8-9:18
I. Learning The Great Need To Manage One's Inner Man
(Proverbs 4:20-27)

I. Introduction

- A. Not only young adults and maturing teens, but even mature adults can fall into the trap of unbiblical thinking that pulls them into a downward spiral of emotional, mental and spiritual defeat.
- B. Accordingly, there is a great need for us to manage our own thinking for health and for life, and Proverbs 4:20-27 offers a wonderful and very practical program for doing so (as follows):

II. Learning The Great Need To Manage One's Inner Man, Proverbs 4:20-27.

- A. In the introductory section of the Proverbs 4:20-27 segment, Solomon called his maturing son to heed his words, not to let them escape from his sight, for they were not only his life, a fact he mentioned in the Proverbs 4:10-19 segment (at Proverbs 4:13b), but also his whole body's *health*, Proverbs 4:20-22 NIV!
- B. Since the Hebrew word for "health" in Proverbs 4:22b KJV is the noun *marpe*, meaning either "health" or "healing" depending on the context (B. D. B., *Hebr. and Eng. Lex. of the O. T.*, p. 951), Proverbs 4:23-27 offers insight that not only guards one's physical life, but even works to *sustain* one's **health** from *negative entities that threaten to HARM OR EVEN TO HEAL one from the harm already suffered!*
- C. Well, Proverbs 4:23-27 deals with **MANAGING one's INNER MAN** for **BLESSING** as follows:
 - 1. One must *guard his inner man*, his "heart," for if he lets that part of himself be affected by problem viewpoints, he lets that part of him which is the source of his whole earthly life be harmed, Prov. 4:23. This implies protecting our emotions, our motivation, our spirit, our values, etc. that give us the means to be good and productive, for letting our heart be hurt leaves us disastrously open to all failure!
 - 2. Proverbs 4:24-27 then shows **HOW** one is to *guard his inner man* (*Bible Know. Com., O. T.*, p. 914):
 - a. One must guard his inner man by *not voicing words that deviate from what is upright*, Prov. 4:24. Jesus Himself taught on the close relationship of one's heart to his words in Luke 6:45c, *Ibid* ., and Paul revealed that false teachers will deceive and be deceived, showing a cause-effect relationship between bad words and their effect of furthering bad thinking, 2 Timothy 3:13!
 - b. One must guard his inner man by **CONTINUING to FOCUS on upright goals**, Proverbs 4:25. 2 Timothy 2:4 NIV similarly claims we must not let ourselves be distracted by Biblically lawful but yet irrelevant, side issues that detract from us our divine assignments when our Commanding Officer, Christ, calls us as His spiritual soldiers to a higher calling. When we are thus focused, it is hard for manipulative, harmful, self-serving entities to influence us go the wrong way!
 - c. One must guard his inner man by *taking sensible paths to the upright goals he has set*, Proverbs 4:26. (1) Solomon called on his son to make "level paths" for his feet, paths that did not climb steep hills that wore him out, nor paths that led downhill that were too easy and unproductive, and that caused him to reach less-desirable goals than was intended or was possible, Prov. 4:26a NIV with 4:11b NIV. (2) Rather, he called his son to take ways that were firm, that minimized risk of failure, Prov. 4:26b. (3) Thus, Solomon called his son to take *sensible* paths, paths that would protect him from being too tempted to heed errant manipulators out of fatigue or fear (due to hard, upward, risky ways), or to be too easy and consequently unproductive (a downhill path), cf. Proverbs 30:7-9.
 - d. One must guard his inner man by *sticking to the right path once he has taken it*, Prov. 4:27. If God leads us to be convinced a certain path is the right one to take, He intends that we stay on that path, a truth verified in 2 Timothy 3:14 of the New Testament. This sticking to the right path helps keep us immune from evil influences that would lure us to shift away from that path to go the wrong way.

Lesson and Application: *Due to the threat of very destructive, evil ideas coming from others and of very destructive, evil ideas arising from within our own selves, ideas that eventually threaten our lives and our health, we must guard our inner man as follows: (1) we must not speak what is not upright lest doing so wrongly and harmfully impact our thinking, (2) we must focus on upright goals, (3) we must take sensible paths to reach those goals and then (4) stick to those paths regardless of all distractions!*