

PROVERBS

The Rewards of Instruction

Can you remember a time as a child when it only took a paper Burger King crown to make you feel like a king? Or (if you are a girl) how just putting on a plastic silver tiara and colored candy necklace made you feel like a real princess? It was fun to dress up and pretend to be royalty. However, as you got a little older (perhaps about age 9-10), you began to see things differently—the candy necklace left your neck feeling sticky and the paper crown gave you hat-hair and made you feel like a dork!

What if there was a way to obtain a *real* crown and *legitimate* jewelry that would never tarnish (or dissolve)? Would you rather have the imitation or the real deal? Most people considering those options would choose what has lasting value over what does not. Proverbs 1:8-19 tells us that there is a wise way to obtain a reward and a foolish way. In this passage the king of Israel instructs his son to be alert to the reality of fleeting deadly pleasure and eternal life-preserving pleasure, and he encourages him to make the right decision regarding the two.

It is crucial for men and women of all ages to heed the wisdom of those who, through experience, have learned the difference between foolish and wise living. This is multiplied many times over when it concerns those who serve the Living God.

King Solomon, a servant of the King of

Kings, tells his son to “hear the instruction” of his father and to “not forsake the law” of his mother. This was not a matter of “who’s boss” – this was a matter of the son’s well-being! The incentive for heeding parental instruction is great—“For they will be a graceful ornament on your head, and chains about your neck”. The great blessing of this is that the son will obtain everlasting reward if he will heed the godly instruction of his parents.

The tragic alternative of heeding godly parental instruction would be to, as young men often do, listen to fools who would live foolishly. The negative influence of sinners is enticing and promises reward (“we shall find all kinds of precious possessions, we shall fill our houses with spoil”, v. 12). They could scarcely be more deceived! Solomon tells his son that by listening to his father’s wise instruction and walking on the good path of the Lord he will obtain an *unfading* treasure. There is great gain in godliness with contentment. Godless greed for earthly pleasure results in great earthly pain and forsakes the great reward in Christ belonging to those who with contentment seek everlasting reward in the life to come (1 Tim 6:6-10). Sinners’ so-called spoils are merely Burger King crowns and candy necklaces, which they will pay for with their own life blood. Whose instruction will you prefer?



LOOK CLOSELY

observation

Proverbs 1:8-19 (NKJV)

8 My son, hear the instruction of your father, And do not forsake the law of your mother; 9 For they will be a graceful ornament on your head, And chains about your neck. 10 My son, if sinners entice you, Do not consent. 11 If they say, "Come with us, Let us lie in wait to shed blood; Let us lurk secretly for the innocent without cause; 12 Let us swallow them alive like Sheol, And whole, like those who go down to the Pit; 13 We shall find all kinds of precious possessions, We shall fill our houses with spoil; 14 Cast in your lot among us, Let us all have one purse"— 15 My son, do not walk in the way with them, Keep your foot from their path; 16 For their feet run to evil, And they make haste to shed blood. 17 Surely, in vain the net is spread In the sight of any bird; 18 But they lie in wait for their own blood, They lurk secretly for their own lives. 19 So are the ways of everyone who is greedy for gain; It takes away the life of its owners.

What is your initial impression of this passage?

Before you decide what this passage means, look closely at what it says.

Read the passage and mark every reference to 'my son.'

Mark the people or groups mentioned in vv 8, 10.

Mark the actions of the 'son' in v 8.

Mark what the parents give in v 8.

Mark the words used to picture guidance in v 9.

Mark the word used to describe the action of the group in v 10.

Mark the phrases 'Do not consent' in v 10, 'Do not walk' in v 15, and 'Keep your foot' in v 15.

Mark the action words in v 16.

Mark the action words in v 18.

Mark the two phrases in v 18 that begin with 'for their...'

Identification Key

Develop your own key for identifying the various words and phrases in the text provided. Use different colored pencils, circles, boxes, underlining, etc., but be consistent from week-to-week



THINK CAREFULLY

interpretation

“...**hear...**” means to listen with the intent to receive and follow what is given.

“...**instruction...**” refers to the kind of instruction that comes through both direction and correction.

“...**Do not forsake...**” means do not reject, cast away, or push aside.

“...**law...**” In Proverbs, law refers to the Mosaic Law only in 24:4, 9 and 29:19. *In every other instance* it refers to moral teaching.

“...**ornament...chains...**” In the external physical sense, this ornamentation is intended to make one attractive physically. However, when this kind of ornamentation is used in Proverbs, it pictures the symbolic attractiveness of internal moral character.

“...**Do not walk...**” means “Do not choose this way of life.”

“...**Keep your feet...**” The word *keep* indicates restraint. The invitation may sound appealing, but the son must restrain himself from taking even one step in that foolish direction.

“...**run...mark haste...**” These words indicate that there is an eagerness to engage in what is evil.

“...**in vain the net is spread...**” Just as a bird does not see the net intended to catch it, any who are on the path of evil don’t see that the net they are spreading is for their own destruction.

“...**They lie in wait for their own blood...**” The one pursuing evil is setting an ambush for his own soul.

Describe the parent’s role from this passage toward their children’s protection.

In what ways do the instruction and teaching of godly parents build inner character (“graceful ornament on your head,” and “chains about your neck”) in the lives of their children?

What is the responsibility of children toward the instruction and teaching of their parents?

Notice the “enticing” invitation: “come with us” (v 11), “let us” (vv 11, 12), and “you’re cast in your lot among us” (v 14). What might be alluring or appealing about being invited to join others who are heading down the wrong path?

Identify the sins that are listed in these verses.

List some of the consequences that are given for consenting to the enticement of sinners (v 16-19).

Describe a time in your life when your sin caused you great harm.



RESPOND WISELY

application

In what ways are you as a parent passing on God's wisdom to your children?

How do the boundaries we set for our children protect them?

What changes do you need to make about the way you parent?

How are you being enticed to walk on a path that may lead to self-destruction?

As a Family:

Read Proverbs 13:20. What are the results of walking with those who are wise as opposed to walking with those who are fools?

Have your children share with you what wisdom they have learned from God about choosing friends from this passage?

Ask your children how God wants them to think about:

- Money
- Friends
- Those who don't follow God