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## Don't Follow the Path of the Wicked 4: 10-19

**A proverb is a short and memorable saying designed to be our blueprint for living in the world that ADONAI has created. It is important to note that proverbs are not promises; they are generally true principles, all other things being equal.**

**The father's sixth teaching (to see link click [Aj](#) - Proverbs for the Youth)** consists of two parts: the typical introduction that includes the addressees of **sons** and **grandsons**, warnings to listen and retain **his** teaching (**4:1-2**), and the lesson (**4:3-9**), which is **his** grandfather's instruction. This chapter breaks down like this: How to get going (**4:1-9**), how to keep going (**4:10-19**), and how not to get lost along the way (**4:20-27**).<sup>108</sup>

Isolated from the broader context of the book, this speech is not very theological in the narrow sense. **The father** does not explicitly mention **ADONAI**. However, by invoking the **two-path** theology that dominates the first part of the book, we can see exactly how theological the speech is. As described, **the two paths** include **the path** on which **the father** has set **his son**, and now **he** urges **him** to continue on that track; this contrasts with the warnings **he** issues **the son** against going on **the path of the wicked**. By this time, we know that **the father's path** is the one that **God** protects. It is the way of **YHVH**. It is **the path** of light, which leads to life, as opposed to the darkness of the way of wickedness. **The two-path** theology does not allow for a third, compromising way. One is either on the straight **path** or on **the crooked path**.<sup>109</sup> In the TaNaKh, **the two-path** theology is reminiscent of the teaching of **Psalm 1**, properly categorized as a **wisdom psalm** (see the commentary on **Psalms Af - The Two Ways**), and in the B'rit Chadashah, it can be seen **Yeshua's** teaching of **the narrow gate that leads to life and the wide gate that leads to destruction** (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Dw - The Narrow and Wide Gates**). There are two **gates**, **narrow** and **wide**; two **ways**, **narrow** and **broad**; two **destinations**, **life** and **destruction**; two **groups**, **the few** and **the many**. Then **Yeshua** continues in **Matthew 7:16-27** to describe two kinds of **trees**, **good** and **bad**; two kinds of **fruit**, **good** and **bad**; two kinds of

**builders, wise and foolish**; and two **foundations, rock and sand**. There is no middle ground. **Yeshua** demands a decision. We are at the crossroads, and each of us must choose.

**Listen, my son, and accept what I say, and you will live a long and good life (4:10 Hebrew)**. Every person can choose between **two paths**. To the right is a long straight road leading toward blessing. To the left is a shortcut that meanders in and out of the forest. The left leads to pleasures and comforts that some say are better than the blessings of the first path. But don't believe them, **Solomon** says, "Stay on the long straight road, shortcuts will only disappoint you in the end."



**I will teach you in the way of wisdom and lead you in straight paths. When you walk, your steps will not be hampered; when you run, you will not stumble (4:11-12 NIV)**. Concerning **the path** on the right, **Solomon** tells us that it is level and clear of debris that would cause us to stumble. We can walk smoothly on it. These metaphors refer to life's troubles that plague the wicked. Divorce, sexual diseases, depression, conflict, and ruined health are just some examples of the consequences of sinful and unwise living. But peace, joy, material blessing, and good health are some of the consequences of righteous and wise living. In other places in the Bible (**Job, Ecc, and Psalm 73**) exceptions to this spiritual principle are noted. But the exceptions do not invalidate the principle: **Hold on to my instructions and don't let them go. Guard them, for wisdom is your life (4:13 NLT)**.<sup>110</sup>

Now **Solomon** gives us a warning. It is not a threat. **He** is not saying, "Here are my arbitrary rules to control you. Keep them or else! **He** is simply explaining that one of these two **paths** leads to a minefield. **Don't follow the path of the wicked, and do not walk in the way of the evil (4:14 ESV)**. **Avoid it, do not travel on it;**

**turn from it and go on your way (4:15 NIV).** Then **he** gives the reason for the urgency. **For evil people can't sleep until they've done their evil deed for the day. They can't rest until they've caused someone to stumble (4:16 NLT).** The **wicked** need to sin before **they** can **sleep**, and **they** view their sin as food for **their** hungry souls. **For they eat the bread of wickedness, and drink the wine of violence (4:17 Hebrew).** The Adversary uses tactics and devices to lead us away from **ADONAI**, and he is always at work against us. Those who do not actively follow **the path of righteousness** inevitably follow **the path of wickedness**, and end up doing the work of the Evil One.<sup>111</sup> There's only two kinds of spiritual food; there's angel's food and there's devil's food. And if you aren't feasting on the food of **righteousness** . . . you're eating the other.

**The way of the wicked is like darkness; they don't know what makes them stumble (4:19 NIV).** It's sad but true that many people whose lives are filled with sadness and heartache cannot see what's causing their trouble. They may wreck their marriages, careers, and health, but as long as they get to enjoy their small pleasures of **wickedness**, they think that they are getting all they can out of life.<sup>112</sup> **Evil** becomes compulsive, and none of us is above it, because this is the nature of our depraved hearts (**Psalm 14:3; Isaiah 64:6; Romans 3:23**). **Yeshua** said: **Everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin (John 8:34).** Sin is a slavery deep inside of us, an emotional engine we cannot shut down just by choosing to do so. How do we see this dynamic at work today? Think of politics. Human politics is not just about winning; it is about destroying the other person, and there is no stopping it. Think of the gambling industry, with its antisocial impact, but there's no stopping it. We can hardly understand the dark powers we unleash inside ourselves when we turn one step away from **the path of Messiah's** wisdom.<sup>113</sup>

**But the path of the righteous (the way of wisdom) is like the light of dawn.** This is the key verse in **Chapter 4.** **The light** is faint and on the horizon, but it grows **brighter and brighter until the full light (4:18 NIV).** In this remarkable metaphor, **Solomon** describes the paradox of **righteousness.** **Righteousness** leads to blessings, but at the beginning they seem dim and far off. **Righteousness** is a longer road and, to those used to the immediate gratification from **the path of wickedness,** its promises seem dim. Inner peace has a difficult time competing with the counterfeit, mind-numbing deceit of addictive substances, whatever they may be. Intimacy with **ADONAI** seems abstract compared to sexual intimacy. Future blessings and hope seem too far off compared with the quick money to be had today. Many choose **the path** to the left because it offers quick and easy

promises that cause us to overlook the consequences of walking on it.<sup>114</sup>

What keeps us moving forward in the way of **God's wisdom** is hope, confidence, and expectancy. You might not think your walk with **the Lord** is going great right now. But if you have chosen **Messiah**, **He** is becoming **like the light of dawn** in your life. There might only be a glimmer of **light** on your horizon right now. But the sun is rising and **the darkness** cannot stop it. **Yeshua, who has begun a good work in you will bring it to completion on the day of Messiah (Philippians 1:6)**. That bright Gospel confidence is how you keep going, step by step, moment by moment, on **the right path**.<sup>115</sup>

*Dear heavenly **Father**, praise **You** for being so wonderful and that when **Your wisdom** is followed, it always brings the best results! It is **wise** to follow the path that you lay out in **Your Word**. Everyone wants to be loved and protected. By following **Your** path, it is the path that **You** protect. It is **the path of light**, which leads to **life**, as opposed to **the darkness** of the way of **wickedness**.*

*Life is often so very busy with many important and some not so important things. There seems to always be something to do or someone to reply to, but making time for you is the most important that anyone can do. Time seems to fly by. The years whiz away. Life on this earth will be gone in a moment. The **wisest** thing for everyone to do is to start and end their day praising **You** and living their lives in a way that shows love and honor to you. No **shame** in **trusting You** as **Lord and Savior**. **For if you confess with your mouth that Yeshua is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart it is believed for righteousness, and with the mouth it is confessed for salvation. For the Bible says, "Whoever trusts in Him will not be put to shame" (Rom 10:9-11)**.*

*You promise rewards for those who serve you with a loving heart. **You** will judge the deeds to see if the heart did the good deed out of selfishness or out of obedience for **You**. **For no one can lay any other foundation than what is already laid - which is Yeshua the Messiah. Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become clear. For the Day will show it, because it is to be revealed by fire; and the fire itself will test each one's work - what sort it is. If anyone's work built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward (1 Cor 3:11-14)**. In **Messiah Yeshua's** holy **Name** and power of **His** resurrection. Amen*