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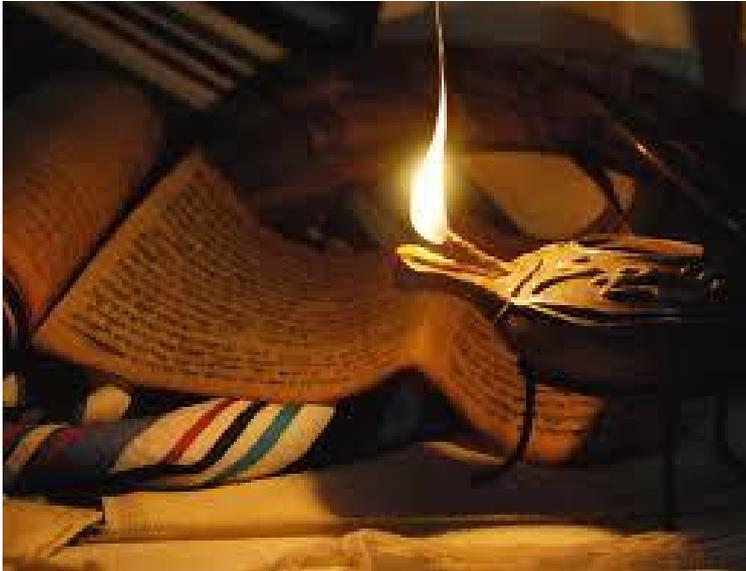
## Torah is Light

### 6: 20-23

**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.**

This is **Solomon's** tenth teaching (**to see link click [Aj](#) - Proverbs for the Youth**). **He** offers several insights about the value of placing **God's Word** at the center of our lives. Let's begin with **Proverbs 4:4**, where **the wise king** recalled the instruction of **his own father, David**, when **he** said: **Let your heart hold (Hebrew: *tamak*) fast to my words, keep my mitzvah, and you will live (4:4)**. Take note of the words **hold fast**. In the Hebrew, the word translated "**hold fast**" means to *grasp, have a firm grip of, or seize*. It is the same verb, *tamak*, found in the **Isaiah 4:10** statement of **God's** promise to **His** covenant people: **Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I Am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; moreover I will uphold you with My righteous right hand (41:10)**. The word **uphold** is a translation of the same verb, *tamak*. This Hebrew word most often appears in two contexts: **God's** people holding fast to biblical **wisdom (3:18)**. As **God's Word** gets a *firm grip* on **you**, it truly does **uphold you!**<sup>155</sup>

**My son, obey your father and mother's commands, and don't neglect your mother's teaching (6:20 NIV)**. Up to now, we have inferred to the teaching in this section as that of **Solomon**, and indeed **he** is the one who speaks. On the other hand, it is important to point out that **he** represents not only **his** own **wisdom**, but also that of **the son's mother** as well. As **the mother** is mentioned elsewhere (see **[Ak](#) - Obey Your Parents**), we point out that this is a rarity when compared with the wisdom teaching of other, related Near Eastern texts.



**Always bind them to your heart.** Perhaps **the heart** is mentioned here because it is the core of one's personality. If one's **heart** is disobedient, then disobedience will follow soon afterward. **And tie them around your neck (6:21 Hebrew).** Note **3:3**, where covenant love and faithfulness are to be bound on **the wise person's neck**. Also, **7:3** charges the son to bind **the father's teaching** on **his fingers**. The image recalls the instruction **ADONAI** gave **Isra'el** upon entering Canaan. After commanding **His** people to **love Him with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength (Deuteronomy 6:5)**, God said this: **These words, which I am commanding you today, are to be on your heart. You are to teach them diligently to your children. Speak of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down and when you rise up. Bind them as a sign on your hand, they are to be as frontlets (phylacteries) between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts (Hebrew: mezuzahs) of your house and on your gates (Deuteronomy 6:6-9).**

**God's** covenant people took these words so seriously that they crafted little leather pouches, phylacteries, placed copies of important scriptures inside, and then literally **bound them** to their right hands and their foreheads. Faithful Jews do this for important ceremonies to this very day. **The Israelites** also attach *mezuzahs* to their **doorposts**. These small containers also hold important, handwritten Scriptures written on strips of paper. While there's nothing wrong with these traditions, **the LORD's** point is more practical. **He** wants **His Word** to permeate every household and to penetrate each heart. **He** wants our culture and lifestyle to revolve around Scripture. It's great to have family devotions, but it's even better to

make the Bible as common in conversation as the weather, sports, daily news, public events, or neighborhood happenings.<sup>156</sup>

Then **the father** informs **the son** that **his** teaching will bring benefits all the time. **When you walk, they will guide you; when you lie down, they will watch over you; when you awake they will speak to you (6:22 BSB). For their command is a lamp and their instruction a light (6:23a NLT)**, giving guidance to one's conduct. As signaled by the initial "**For,**" this verse provides a reason to maintain obedience to the teaching of **the parents** in this passage, and **they** do so throughout the book. **The command** (not yet spoken) will illuminate **the path** - thus implying that **the son's** journey will not meet unseen obstacles. That **path** is called **the path** of life because it promotes a long and rich life experience.<sup>157</sup> **Psalm 119:105** declares: **Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.** This suggests we should actively rehearse principles of righteousness in our minds. This mitzvah is the commandment our parents are to give us. For those who did not have the sort of wise upbringing that would help them in these areas, **Solomon's wisdom** in the book of **Proverbs** is an apt substitute. And for those who were privileged to have boundaries and **wisdom** taught parents, **Solomon** calls for us to remember their lessons and heed them well.<sup>158</sup>

However, even though that **path** is well lit, staying on **it** is not easy. It involves **corrective discipline (1:2 and 7)**. These two words are also frequently used in the book and refer to the hard work, suggestive even of physical punishment, that it takes to keep doing the right thing. **The son's** own sin nature would be to give in to the strong temptations that might lead **him** to leave **the** right **path**, so **corrective discipline** is sometimes necessary. Although painful (see the commentary on **Hebrews Cz - God Disciplines His Children**) keeps us on **the** right **path**, leading us in **the way of life (6:23b NLT)**.<sup>159</sup>

If you want to make Scripture a more natural part of your household culture, the transformation begins with you, regardless of your position in the family So don't tell anyone, but try this experiment: For the next month, set aside fifteen minutes each day to read between ten and twenty verses of the Bible and then think quietly about them. Keep a record of comments people make about the changes they notice in you.<sup>160</sup>

*Dear heavenly **Father**, praise **You** for **Your Word**. When I meditate on **Your Word** it reveals how great **You** are - it is the most peaceful and comforting thing that anyone can do! Renewing our minds is so important for everyone to do, especially*

for me. **But whoever did receive Him, those trusting in His name, to these He gave the right to become children of God (John 1:12).** A fresh look at life, by renewing our thoughts on **You**, is so encouraging and gives me the strength and wisdom to fight against worldly thoughts and to win the battle! **Be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the will of God - what is good and acceptable and perfect (Romans 12:2b-c).** In **Messiah Yeshua's** holy **Name** and power of **His** resurrection. Amen