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Proverbs 4 - Part III

Keep your Heart with Diligence

This is the last part of the study of chapter 4. These few verses focus on the ears, eyes, mouth, lips and feet as figures of the spiritual journey. Something new mentioned here are the eyelids. All these are the primary parts of the body used to teach spiritual lessons.

Read Proverbs 4:20-22:

1. Following the instruction of verse 20, what action do you visualize and what does it mean inwardly? Pr 15:31 {Substitute the word “spread” for “incline” - does that change your picture? Ever cup the hand behind the ear to make it larger, so you could heard some faint sound? cp Job 12:11 & 1Jn 4:1: The ear is a figure for discernment, deciding the things we hear that are valuable, versus the things that tear down.}

2. In verse 21, what is meant by not letting words depart from your eyes? Ps 119:130; Eph 1:18

2a. What does it mean to keep the words in the midst/middle of the heart? (i.e. why midst/middle?) Mk 12:30 {heart: 1Sam 2:35; 1Ch 28:9 (Pr 20:27); Job 38:36 - anyone way of saying inner self, mind, spirit, Dan 2:20.}

2b. How/what are the issues of life out of the heart? Mt 12:35-37
{literally the heart is center of the body. Arteries leading from it carry life to every part of the body. If it stops working for some reason, life is diminished or lost. It is a type for the central focus, of the mind; and the spiritual life is determined by the quality of knowledge & understanding stored there. The good stuff comes only from the Father through the Son to humanity, & we share it.}

2c. How is the heart kept with diligence? Pr 4:4; 3:1; 30:8
{Here is an example of a bad heart: Isa 6:8-13 To make fat the heart is show a person their error. Literally, a fat heart reduces life to the body. Bad fat inwardly is a figure for riches good & bad, Neh 9:25; Ps 17:9-10. Fat of the sacrifice was burned on the altar, Lv 4:26, 35, as a type of the fire of God consuming false understanding.}

Verse 25: KJ - *Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee.*

NIV- *Let your eyes look straight ahead; fix your gaze directly before you.*

3. What is this verse saying? Ps 11:4; Pr 6:23-25 (30:13)

{Eyelids: eyes are a figure of understanding, eyelids protect the eyes. The eyelids opening are a figure of the light dawning, Job 3:9; 41:18. When closed they shut out the light; when they blink, it causes “rays of light”. When we gaze intently to see something, we do not blink. Verse 25 says *look straight ahead, gaze intently* - i.e. do not shut out any light, by figuratively keeping the eyes open, Ps 132:4-5. Beware of false light, Pr 6:23-25.}

Read Verses 26-27:

4. What is verse 26 (*ponder*^{h6424}) telling a person that they should do? Ps 57:6; 73:1-3, 16-17

{The spiritual path we take should be carefully weighed by our daily decisions in how we serve God. Isa 26:7 (*weigh*^{h6424}). Isaiah indicates God is the one who prepares the path we are to take.}

4a. Verse 27 says do not turn to the left or right; what else is implied? Isa 30:20-21

{It is God is directing our paths. So, to turn “left or right” is to be led astray by one’s own or another’s opinions. Teachers would be those through whom God has spoken truth; the tool we use is the Bible, cf Acts 26:26. As we collect true knowledge, it becomes our conscience to guide us.}