

# Straightforward: Don't Turn Right or Left

September 15, 2024 / [Proverbs 4](#)

## Straightforward: Don't Turn Right or Left

Sermon by Pastor Bob Johnson / Sept 15, 2024

Text: [Proverbs 4:23-27](#)

### Introduction

[Proverbs 4:1-2](#) "Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father, and attend to know understanding. For I give you good doctrine, forsake ye not my law."

[Proverbs 4:10](#) "Hear, O my son, and receive my sayings; and the years of thy life shall be many."

[Pro 4:20](#) "My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings."

Solomon concludes his plea for his son to get wisdom and to listen to his words in verses 23-27, which is our main text this morning.

[Proverbs 4:23-27](#) "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life. Put away from thee a froward mouth, and perverse lips put far from thee. Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee. Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. **Turn not to the right hand nor to the left**. remove thy foot from evil.

### Straightforward – Don't Turn Right or Left

Straightforward – Straightforward means going or directed straight ahead, direct, not roundabout or detour.

[Proverbs 4:5](#) Get wisdom, get understanding: forget it not; neither decline from the words of my mouth.

[Proverbs 4:6](#) Forsake her not, and she shall preserve thee: love her, and she shall keep thee.

[Proverbs 4:7](#) Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding.

### "What is wisdom?"

The dictionary defines wisdom as "the ability to discern or judge what is true, right, or lasting." Knowledge, on the other hand, is "information gained through experience, reasoning, or acquaintance."

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We are to walk in line with wisdom!

[Job 28:28](#) "And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding."

[1 Corinthians 1:24](#) "But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God."

[1 Corinthians 1:30](#) "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:"

[James 3:17](#) "But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy."

Therefore, to walk in line with wisdom is to walk with God. As Solomon pleads with his son to walk with God, to walk straightforward, he gives him two warnings.

## **Two Warnings**

The two warnings are found in verse 25 and 27.

[Proverbs 4:25](#) Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee.

[Proverbs 4:27](#) Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil.

The verbs "look" and "turn" are in the Hebrew Jussive form, which means, these statements are commands in the third person indicating a warning to the subject and the influences.

### **#1 – Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee.**

Solomon was warning his son to look right on and to look straight.

Look Right On = Look intently at what is in front, to regard with care what is straightforward.

Look Straight = To be straight, in other words, your feet follow your eyes.

Solomon knew that if his eyes drifted from truth, he would drift from God.

### **#2 – Turn not to the right hand nor to the left**

He is warning his son regarding all the distractions and temptations that could pull him away from wisdom.

It is easy for our eyes to get distracted and cause us to turn right or left.

Temptation also likes to get our eye's attention.

So, there's the warning, **straightforward, don't turn right or left.** However, Solomon doesn't give his son a warning without showing him how to follow the warning. Therefore, Solomon gave his son four commands that must be observed to go

straightforward!

### **Four Commands (Imperatives)**

These commands must be followed for you to go straightforward in your walk with God. You can't neglect them, pretend to do them, or do them half-heartedly.

Here is the first command found in verse 23.

#### **#1 – Keep thy heart with all diligence!**

[\*Proverbs 4:23\*](#) *Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.*

Notice that the verse says, for out of it are the issues of life. This phrase is comparing the heart to a fountain of water.

Solomon is saying that if the heart is contaminated, the whole life is, therefore, guard your heart! First the fountain, then the streams; first the heart and then the life-course.

*Is your heart alert to God's voice?*

*Is your heart aligned with God's Word?*

*Is your heart in tune with God's Spirit?*

*Is your heart tender and soft or is it cold and hard?*

*Are you guarding your heart?*

***Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.***

#### **#2 – Put away a forward/perverse mouth!**

[\*Proverbs 4:24\*](#) *Put away from thee a froward mouth, and perverse lips put far from thee.*

-Your eyes are the windows to your heart

-Your mouth is the expression of your heart

Solomon is saying, you must remove the rubbish before you build the building. Our words, our speech, our twisting or perversion of the truth is one of the first things that should be removed as we build our lives on God's Word.

### #3 – Ponder the path of thy feet!

The best time to ponder any path is not at the end or even in the middle but at the beginning of it.

Solomon is telling his son that he has a long path ahead of him, so he better ponder which path he will tread!

[\*Joshua 1:7\*](#) Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest.

[\*Joshua 1:8\*](#) This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

### #4 – Remove thy foot from evil!

Avoid all crooked ways. Be an upright, downright, and straightforward man. Avoid tricks, wiles, and deceptions of any kind. The evil of sin brings on the evil of punishment.

You become like those you hang around.

Solomon already warned his son to avoid evil men.

[\*Proverbs 4:14\*](#) Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men.

[\*Proverbs 4:15\*](#) Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away.

[\*Proverbs 4:16\*](#) For they sleep not, except they have done mischief; and their sleep is taken away, unless they cause some to fall.

[\*Proverbs 4:17\*](#) For they eat the bread of wickedness, and drink the wine of violence.

[\*Proverbs 4:19\*](#) The way of the wicked is as darkness: they know not at what they stumble.

Have you turned to the right or to the left?

Have you drifted?

Have you moved away from the straight path of wisdom?

## What to Do This Week

- Evaluate your viewing habits. (Movies, shows, social media, time)
- Keep your eyes from drawing you away to the right or left.
- Thank God for something different in your life each day.
- It's hard to covet what others have if you are thankful for what you have.
- Memorize [Proverbs 4:23-27](#)
- Hide God's Word in your heart – alignment!

Here are a few **sermon illustrations** for [Proverbs 4:23-27](#) that might **inspire** you:

### 1. **Guarding Your Heart:**

- Imagine a wellspring that provides fresh water to an entire village. If the source becomes contaminated, the whole village suffers. Similarly, [Proverbs 4:23](#) emphasizes the importance of guarding your heart because it is the source of life. [Just as the villagers would protect their water source, we must protect our hearts from negative influences<sup>1</sup>.](#)

### 2. **Straight Paths:**

- Picture a hiker navigating through a dense forest. If they stray from the path, they risk getting lost or encountering danger. [Proverbs 4:25-27](#) advises us to keep our eyes straight ahead and not to turn to the right or left. [This can be likened to staying focused on our spiritual journey and avoiding distractions that lead us astray<sup>2</sup>.](#)

### 3. **Words Matter:**

- Consider a gardener who carefully tends to their plants, removing weeds and ensuring the soil is fertile. [Proverbs 4:24](#) speaks about putting away a deceitful mouth and perverse lips. [Just as the gardener removes harmful elements to allow plants to thrive, we should be mindful of our words, ensuring they are truthful and uplifting<sup>2</sup>.](#)

These illustrations can help convey the practical wisdom found in [Proverbs 4:23-27](#) in a relatable and engaging way. Do

any of these resonate with you, or would you like more examples?