


STRUCTURAL INSIGHTS: PROVERBS 4:20-27


Pr 4:20 My son,

give attention to my words;
Incline your ear to my sayings.

21 Do not let them depart from your eyes;
Keep them in the midst of your heart;

22 For they *are* life to those who find them,
And health to all their flesh.

23 Keep your heart with all diligence,
For out of it *spring* the issues of life.

24 Put away from you
a deceitful mouth,
And put perverse lips
far from you.

25 Let your eyes look straight ahead,
And your eyelids look right before you.

26 Ponder the path of your feet,
And let all your ways be established.

27 Do not turn to the right or the left;
Remove your foot from evil.

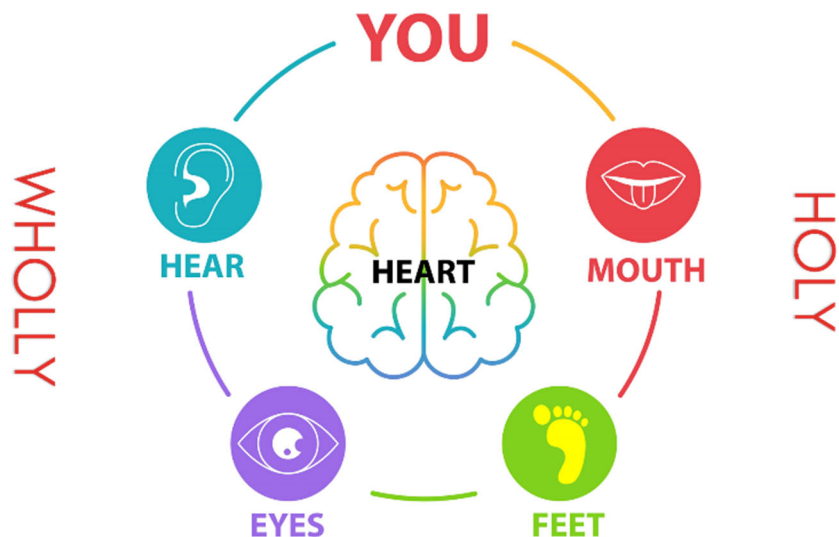
QUICK REVIEW:

- A. Foundational Principle:** The Word of God must be "Heard" & "Received" (4:10)
- B. Faithful Pattern:** The Word of God must be "Taught" & "Lived" (4:11)
- C. Fortified Passageway:** The Word of God will give you "Freedom" & "Liberty"(4:12)
- D. Fervent Perseverance:** The Word of God requires "Passion" & "Priority" (4:13)
- E. Faithless Path:** The Way of the Sinners is "Wickedness" & "Violence" (4:14-17)
- F. Final Purpose:** The Word of God reveals "Redemption" & "Retribution" (4:18-19)

EXPLANATION

G. Father's Plea: The Ways of God require "Wholly You" and "Holy You" (4:20-27)
Name that Tune:

- O be Careful Little Eyes
 - O be careful little eyes what you see
 - O be careful little ears what you hear
 - O be careful little tongue what you say
 - O be careful little hands what you do
 - O be careful little feet where you go
 - O be careful little heart whom you trust
 - O be careful little mind what you think
 - Chorus:
 - For the Father up above
Is looking down in love
So, be careful little




CHAISTIC STRUCTURE

20 My son, give attention to my words;
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And health to all their flesh.



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For out of it spring the issues of life.

24 Put away from you a deceitful mouth,
And put perverse lips far from you.

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27 Do not turn to the right or the left; Remove your foot from evil.

WORLDLY EXPRESSION: GIGO – Garbage in, Garbage Out

REDEEMED EXPRESSION: God in, God out

20 My son, give attention to my words;
Incline your ear to my sayings.

21 Do not let them depart from your eyes;
Keep them in the midst of your heart;

IN

22 For they *are* life to those who find them,
And health to all their flesh.

23 Keep your heart with all diligence,
For out of it spring the issues of life.

24 Put away from you a deceitful mouth,
And put perverse lips far from you.

25 Let your eyes look straight ahead,
And your eyelids look right before you.

OUT

26 Ponder the path of your feet, And let all your ways be established.
27 Do not turn to the right or the left; Remove your foot from evil.

Proverbs 4:20 "My Son"

BACKGROUND "MY SON" 20x in Proverbs (See Proverbs 1:15)

21. Listen to Dad & Mom (1:8-9)
22. Don't be Enticed by Sinners (1:10-14)
23. Don't Walk in the Way of Sinners (1:15-19)
24. Treasure Wisdom (2:1-22)
25. Don't Forget the Law (3:1-10)
26. Receive the Lord's Chastening (3:11-20)
27. Study and Apply God's Word (3:21-35)
28. Wisdom is a Priority (4:1-9)
29. Know there is a Right and Wrong Path (4:10-19)
30. Control Your Speech+ (4:20-27)

- 31. Control your Body, P1 (Sexuality) (5:1-23)
- 32. Control Your Wealth (6:1-19)
- 33. Control your Body, P2 (Sexuality) (6:20-35)
- 34. Control your Body, P3 (Sexuality) (7:1-27)
- 35. Don't Envy Sinners (23:15-18)
- 36. Beware of Substance Abuse, P1 (23:19-25)
- 37. Beware of Substance Abuse, P2 (23:26-35)
- 38. Guard against Hating Your Neighbor (24:13-20)
- 39. Be wise toward the authorities (24:21-22)
- 40. Learn about Prudence (27:11-27)

Explanation: Solomon is setting the stage for the next several chapters.

1. HEAR/EARS & FEET → Bring yourself to the source of God's wisdom!

Proverbs 4:20

My son, give attention to my words;
Incline your ear to my sayings.

Keywords:

- **Give Attention (Commands)** – Pay attention to my words! Be alert!
- Incline (command) – Bend or stretch
 - Expression - Mark Antony from Shakespeare's *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar*
 - "Friends, Romans, Countrymen, lend me your ears..."

NOTE: I included "feet" in this section because you must use your feet to bring yourself close enough to hear and because of the parallelism in Proverbs 4:26-27.

Implication: If you can't agree on the source of wisdom/truth there will be problems!

- **2 Co 6-7:11** O Corinthians! We have spoken openly to you, our heart is wide open. **12** You are not restricted by us, but you are restricted by your *own* affections. **13** Now in return for the same (I speak as to children), you also be open. **14** Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? **15** And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? **16** And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "*I will dwell in*

them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people." 17
Therefore *"Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you." 18 "I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the LORD Almighty." 1* Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

Humor: Farside Comic "The Greystokes at Marriage Counseling"

2. EYES → Bring God's word to the center of your mind!

Pr 4:21 Do not let them depart from your eyes;
Keep them in the midst of your heart;

Keywords:

- Do not let them (God's Word) Depart (Jussive) – escape someone's site
- **Keep (Shomre) (Command)** – Guard and watch over, can mean guard one's life
- **Heart:** mind/will/thinking

Implication: Learn and bring the word into your thoughts for reflection and mediation and application.

- **Ps 40:8** I desired to do thy will, O my God, and thy law in the midst of mine heart.
- **Ps 19:14** Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart Be acceptable in You're the sight, O LORD, my strength and my Redeemer.

The New Covenant:

- **Eze 36:26** And I will give you a new heart, and will put a new spirit in you: and I will take away the heart of stone out of your flesh, and will give you a heart of flesh.

NT Insight:

2 Ti 2:15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Application: Meditate, Memorize, Move

3. MOUTH → Receive God's Word and be saved!

Pr 4:22 For they *are* life to those who find them, And health to all their flesh.

Keywords:

- **Life:** Physical but implied eternal
- **Health:** Normally refers to healing. But in the case of repentance, the ravages of sin begin to "heal." This is particularly relevant for Israel under the covenant. For NT believers, our chastening for sin ends with our repentance.
 - **Pr 6:15** Therefore his calamity shall come suddenly; Suddenly he shall be broken without remedy.
 - **Pr 16:24** Pleasant words *are like* a honeycomb, Sweetness to the soul and health to the bones.

Implication: Repentance and faith is implied here as one hears and believers

- **Ro 10:8** But what does it say? "*The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart*" (that is, the word of faith which we preach): **9** that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. **10** For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. **11** For the Scripture says, "*Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.*" **12** For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. **13** For "*whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.*" **14** How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?

4. HEART/MIND → Apply God's Word

Pr 4:23 Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it *spring* the issues of life.

Keywords:

- **Keep (Nastor) (Command):** Holding on, Protects; can mean guards one way, Protect your mind! So you think, so you are! Vigilance is implied here.

- **Pr 16:17** The highway of the upright *is* to depart from evil; He who keeps (shomer/life) his way preserves (nastor/way) his soul.
- In Hebrew, the word order is different: "He who guards his soul/life, guards his way."
- **Diligence:** sentinel, custody, guard of a prison
- **Issues of Life:** "fountainhead," "springs of life," starting point that goes out

Image: It's all about the heart

NOTE: This is the center of the chiasmic structure. This transition reveals the hinge by which we live our Christian walk. We transition from "in" to "out," from "receiving God's word" to "applying God's Word."

Question: How is your hinge? Old and rusty, or in good working order?

- **Ps 119:11** Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You.
- **Jas 1:14** But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. **15** Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.

5. MOUTH → From within, your heart speaks! Protect your speech!

Pr 4:24 Put away from you a deceitful mouth, And put perverse lips far from you.

Keywords:

- **Put (Haser) (Command)** – abolish, cease, depart
- **Deceitful** - falsehood, perversion
- **Mouth** - Opening
- **Put (Harchek) (Command)** – Send far away, avoid
- **Perverse** – Crooked rather than straight
- **Lips** – language

Negative Application (Put Off): Solomon is saying don't even open your mouth and give a foothold for a falsehood, don't even say a word. In fact, take those words and send them away, far away.

- **Ps 141:3** Set a guard, O LORD, over my mouth; Keep watch over the door of my lips.
- **Lk 6:45** A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.
- **Jas 1:26** If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion *is* useless.
- **Col 3:8** But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth.

6. EYES → Be careful what you fix your gaze upon!

Pr 4:25 Let your eyes look straight ahead, And your eyelids look right before you.

Keywords:

- Look (Yabbitu) (Jussive) – gaze, stare upon
- **Look (Yashiru) (Jussive)** – examine the straight path, don't look right or left

Image: Can you see the cross?

Positive Application (Put on): Solomon stresses the need to keep your gaze upon the right path, right way, and right things.

- **Ex 2:12** So he looked this way and that way, and when he saw no one, he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand.
 - He never looked up!
- **Mt 6:22** "The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light.

Far Side Comic: Early Microscope

7. FEET → Determine where you will go and how you will live.

Pr 4:26 Ponder the path of your feet, And let all your ways be established.

Pr 4:27 Do not turn to the right or the left; Remove your foot from evil.

Keywords:

- **Ponder (Command)** – Weigh out and make level
- **Be established** – prepared, directed, set in proper order and placement
- **Do not turn (Jussive)**- being used as an idiom for "don't be deceived or enticed"
- **Remove (Command)**– retreat, depart, desists, turn away, run away

Application: Solomon is challenging his sons and us to think before we act, consider our options, and choose thoughtfully and intentionally the best course of godly and wise action. And sometimes that means to resist or even run in the other direction.

Far Side Comic: 300 BC Wall of China

Review and Summary:

1. HEAR/EARS & FEET → Bring yourself to the source of God's wisdom! (4:20)
2. EYES → Bring God's word to the center of your mind! (4:21)
3. MOUTH → Receive God's Word and be saved! (4:22)
4. HEART/MIND → Apply God's Word (4:23)
5. MOUTH → From within, your heart speaks! Protect your speech! (4:24)
6. EYES → Be careful what you fix your gaze upon! (4:25)
7. FEET → Determine where you will go and how you will live. (4:26-27)