



## STRUCTURAL INSIGHTS: PROVERBS 4:1-9



**Pr 4:1** Hear, *my children,* the instruction of a father,  
And give attention to know understanding;  
**2** For I give you good doctrine:  
Do not forsake my law.

**3** When I was my father's son,  
Tender  
and the only one in the sight of my mother,

**4** He also taught me,  
and said to me: "Let your heart retain my words;  
Keep my commands,  
and live.

**5** Get wisdom!  
Get understanding!

Do not forget,  
nor turn away from the words of my mouth.

**6** Do not forsake her, and she will preserve you;  
Love her, and she will keep you.

**7** Wisdom *is* the principal thing;  
*Therefore* get wisdom.  
And in all your getting,  
get understanding.

**8** Exalt her, and she will promote you;  
She will bring you honor,  
when you embrace her.

**9** She will place on your head  
an ornament of grace;  
A crown of glory  
she will deliver to you."

## EXPLANATION

### I. Intergenerational Faith, Part 1 (Proverbs 4:1-4)

**Pr 4:1** Hear, *my* children, the instruction of a father, And give attention to know understanding; **2** For I give you good doctrine: Do not forsake my law. **3** When I was my father's son, Tender and the only one in the sight of my mother, **4** He also taught me, and said to me: "Let your heart retain my words; Keep my commands, and live.

- Keywords
  - Children: sons
  - **Hear (command):** listen with full attention (ears)
  - **Give Attention (Command):** listen with full attention (mind)
  - **Instruction:** This is wisdom gained from loving correction (error), rebuking (sinning), and exhorting (excel still more), as well as chastening and punishment by the world and the Lord.
    - **2 Ti 4:2** Preach the word! Be ready in season *and* out of season. Convince (confront), rebuke (charge), exhort (call), with all longsuffering (patience/slow to anger) and teaching (bible instruction).
  - **Understanding (bina):** This can be translated as discernment, but it focuses on insight, perceiving meaning.
  - **Give:** hand down and surrender (implying they are to take it up and carry it forth)
  - **Good:** orderly and morally excellent
  - **Doctrine:** truth for life integration
  - **Do not forsake:** abandon and let go
  - **Law:** emphasizing the clear commands of Scripture
  - **Tender:** Young, inexperienced
- God's Design:
  - The father leads and is ultimately responsible for the family knowing the word of God. It is taught and modeled primarily by him. The emphasis is particularly on the son because of the significant role he plays in leading his future family and his impact on society.
  - The mother has a significant role with the children in her complimentary, supportive role. Especially when the father is an unbeliever, missing from the picture, or not fulfilling God's calling.

- **2 Ti 1:5** when I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also.
  - 23 Million American children do not live with their biological fathers<sup>3</sup>
  - Seventy percent of kids in state reform institutions grew up without their fathers.<sup>4</sup>

**Table Talk:** If you had an earthly father, how did that affect you as a father or mother?

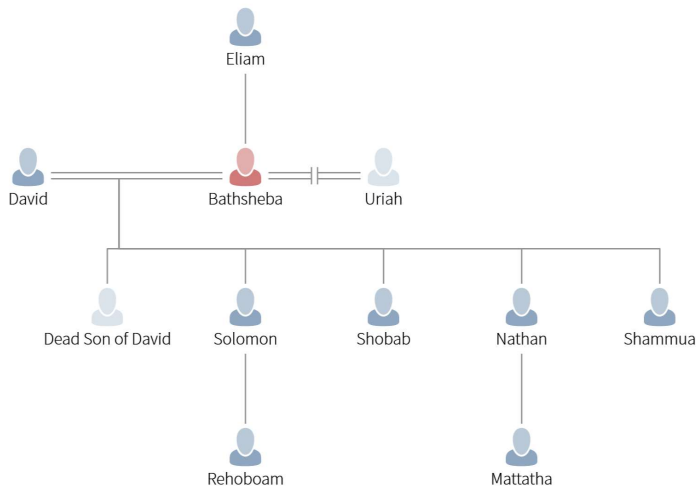
- Know, Think, and Live Biblically
  - The father leads the family to be concerned about Biblical knowledge, Biblical thinking, and Biblical living:
    - Hear → know what is righteousness /conform to God's standard
    - Give attention to know understanding → Judgment = Perceive and determine what is right
    - I give you good doctrine, Do not forsake → Equity = Receive, apply with the result of what is right & peaceable
    - **Pr 2:9** Then you will understand righteousness and justice, Equity and every good path.
- Intergenerational
  - **"My Father's Son":** David → Solomon → Sons
    - He (David) also taught (instructed) me (Solomon)
    - The fathers' primary role is clearly spelled out here, intergenerationally. However, others are expected to share in the responsibility.
  - Tender and the only one in the sight of my mother

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<sup>3</sup> Wade F. Horn of the National Fatherhood Initiative - <http://www.wisconsinfathers.org/fatherscount.htm>

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- **Only One:** Special term for favored son, heir
  - **Ge 22:2** Then He said, "Take now your son, your **only son** Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you." [ Ishmael was born at this time]
- **1 Ch 3:5** And these were born to him in Jerusalem: Shimea, Shobab, Nathan, and Solomon—four by Bathshua the daughter of Ammiel.
- **2 Sa 5:14** Now these *are* the names of those who were born to him in Jerusalem: Shammua, Shobab, Nathan, Solomon,
- **2 Sa 12:24** Then David comforted Bathsheba his wife, and went in to her and lay with her. So she bore a son, and he called his name Solomon. Now the LORD loved him, **25** and He sent *word* by the hand of Nathan the prophet: So he called his name Jedidiah, because of the LORD.
- **1 Ch 14:3** Then David took more wives in Jerusalem, and David begot more sons and daughters. **4** And these are the names of his children whom he had in Jerusalem: Shammua, Shobab, Nathan, Solomon, **5** Ibhar, Elishua, Elpelet, **6** Nogah, Nepheg, Japhia, **7** Elishama, Beeliada, and Eliphelet.



- The influence of the father on the son
  - **2 Ki 3:2** And he (Jehoram) did evil in the sight of the LORD, but not like his father (Ahab) and mother (Jezebel); for he put away the *sacred* pillar of Baal that his father had made. **3** Nevertheless he persisted in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who had made Israel sin; he did not depart from them.

Sons of Kings

JUDAH					ISRAEL				
King	Reign	Character		Prophet	King	Reign	Character		Prophet
1. Rehoboam	931-913 BC	(17 yrs.)	Bad	Shemaiah	1. Jeroboam I	931-910 BC	(22 yrs.)	Bad	Ahijah
2. Abijah	913-911	(3 yrs.)	Bad		2. Nadab	910-909	(2 yrs.)	Bad	
3. Asa	911-870	(41 yrs.)	Good		3. Baasha	909-886	(24 yrs.)	Bad	
					4. Elah	886-885	(2 yrs.)	Bad	
					5. Zimri	885	(7 days)	Bad	}
					6. Omri	885-874	(12 yrs.)	Bad	
4. Jehoshaphat	870-848*	(25 yrs.)	Good		7. Ahab	874-853	(22 yrs.)	Bad	}
5. Jehoram	848-841*	(8 yrs.)	Bad	Obadiah	8. Ahaziah	853-852	(2 yrs.)	Bad	
6. Ahaziah	841	(1 yr.)	Bad		9. Joram	852-841	(12 yrs.)	Bad	Elisha
7. Athaliah	841-835	(6 yrs.)	Bad		10. Jehu	841-814	(28 yrs.)	Bad	}
8. Joash	835-796	(40 yrs.)	Good	Joel	11. Jehoahaz	814-798	(17 yrs.)	Bad	
9. Amaziah	796-767	(29 yrs.)	Good		12. Jehoash	798-782*	(16 yrs.)	Bad	
10. Azariah (or Uzziah)	767-740*	(52 yrs.)	Good	Isaiah	13. Jeroboam II	782-753*	(41 yrs.)	Bad	
					14. Zechariah	753-752	(6 mo.)	Bad	
					15. Shallum	752	(1 mo.)	Bad	
					16. Menahem	752-742*	(10 yrs.)	Bad	
					17. Pekahiah	742-740	(2 yrs.)	Bad	
11. Jotham	740-732*	(16 yrs.)	Good	Micah	18. Pekah	740-732*	(20 yrs.)	Bad	
12. Ahaz	732-716*	(16 yrs.)	Bad		19. Hoshea	732-722	(9 yrs.)	Bad	
					<i>(Capture of Samaria and captivity of Israel)</i>				
13. Hezekiah	716-687*	(29 yrs.)	Good	}					
14. Manasseh	687-642*	(55 yrs.)	Bad		Nahum				
15. Amon	642-640	(2 yrs.)	Bad		Habakkuk				
16. Josiah	640-608	(31 yrs.)	Good		Zephaniah				
17. Jehoahaz	608	(3 mo.)	Bad	Jeremiah					
18. Jehoiakim	608-597	(11 yrs.)	Bad						
19. Jehoiachin	597	(3 mo.)	Bad						
20. Zedekiah	597-586	(11 yrs.)	Bad						

*(Destruction of Jerusalem and captivity of Judah)*

Consider the Psalm of Asaph

- Ps 78:** A Contemplation Of Asaph. **1** Give ear, O my people, *to* my law; Incline your ears to the words of my mouth. **2** I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings of old, **3** Which we have heard and known, And our fathers have told us. **4** **We will not hide *them* from their children, Telling to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, And His strength and His wonderful works that He has done.** **5** For He established a testimony in Jacob, And appointed a law in Israel, Which He commanded our fathers, **That they should make them known to their children;** **6** That the generation to come might know *them*, **The children *who* would be born, *That* they may arise and declare *them* to their children,** **7** That they may set their hope in God, And not forget the works of God, But keep His commandments; **8** **And may not be like their fathers, A stubborn and rebellious generation, A generation *that* did not set its heart aright, And whose spirit was not faithful to God.**

- Paul to the Church
  - **1 Th 2:11** as you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father *does* his own children, **12** that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.
  - **1 Th 2:7** But we were gentle among you, just as a nursing *mother* cherishes her own children. **8** So, affectionately longing for you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us.
  
- God the Perfect Father
  - **Mt 5:48** Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.
  - **Jas 1:17** Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.
  - **1 Co 1:3** Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
  - **Heb 12:9** Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected *us*, and we paid *them* respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? **10** For they indeed for a few days chastened *us* as seemed *best* to them, but He for *our* profit, that *we* may be partakers of His holiness. **11** Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

**Table Talk:** In what ways has God been a Father to you?

- Jesus the Perfect Son
  - **Mt 3:17** And suddenly a voice *came* from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."
  - **Mt 11:27** All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and *the one* to whom the Son wills to reveal *Him*.
  - **Jn 5:30** I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.

- **Jn 14:9** Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"
- **Heb 5:8** though He was a Son, *yet* He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.

**Table Talk:** In what ways has Christ's obedience challenged you to live?

- David to Solomon: Key Teachings "He Taught Me"
  - **Taught:** frequently, repeatedly
    - **Retain "my words":** embrace and never let go, cling wholeheartedly
    - **Keep "my commands" (command):** guard, protect, watch over, observe, fulfill your obligation
    - **Live (command & purpose clause):** "so that you may live," not just physical life, but implies "everlasting life."

## II. Intergeneration Faith, Part 2 (Proverbs 4:5-9)

**Pr 4:5** **Get** wisdom! **Get** understanding! Do not forget, nor turn away from the words of my mouth. **6** Do not forsake her, and she will preserve you; **Love** her, and she will keep you. **7** Wisdom *is* the principal thing; *Therefore* **get** wisdom. And in all your getting, **get** understanding. **8 Exalt** her, and she will promote you; She will bring you honor, when you embrace her. **9** She will place on your head an ornament of grace; A crown of glory she will deliver to you."

Verb Progression

Get...Get...

Love her.

Get...Get...

Exalt her.

1. The Passionate Pursuit (Get)
  - a. Get wisdom (hakma) (Command)
    - i. This is knowledge from God. He is the source of all wisdom. It is an attribute of God.
  - b. Get understanding (bina) (Command)

- i. This can be translated as understanding, but it focuses on insight, perceiving meaning.
- c. **Get:** buy, acquire
  - i. **Is 55:1** "Ho! Everyone who thirsts, Come to the waters; And you who have no money, Come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk Without money and without price. **2** Why do you spend money for *what is* not bread, And your wages for *what* does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat *what is* good, And let your soul delight itself in abundance. **3** Incline your ear, and come to Me. Hear, and your soul shall live; And I will make an everlasting covenant with you— The sure mercies of David.
  - ii. **Mt 13:44** "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. **45** "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, **46** who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it.
  - iii. **Pr 23:23** Buy the truth, and do not sell *it*, *Also* wisdom and instruction and understanding.
  - iv. **NOTE:** Possible connection with a dowry for a bride

**Question:** As David exhorts Solomon, and Solomon encourages his kids, is the appeal just Bible knowledge or something more?

- o **Ga 3:22** But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. **23** But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. **24** Therefore the law was our tutor *to bring us* to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. **25** But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.

**Answer:** It's more than knowledge, it is to know the creator and redeemer!

- o **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? **15** And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "*How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!*" **16** But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "LORD, who has believed our report?" **17** **So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.**

2. The Pleading Parents (David → Solomon, Solomon → children) "Do not"
  - a. Do not forget (my words) – Fall into oblivion
    - i. **Ho 4:6** My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being priest for Me; Because you have **forgotten** the law of your God, I also will forget your children.
    - ii. Consider the depths of the Mariana trench
  - b. Do not turn away from (my words) – "bend to the left or to the right"
    - i. **Dt 5:32** "Therefore you shall be careful to do as the LORD your God has commanded you; you shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left.
    - ii. **Pr 4:27** Do not turn to the right or the left; Remove your foot from evil.
    - iii. Consider Far Side Comic
  - c. God's First Plea:
    - i. **Ge 2:16** And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; **17** but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."
    - ii. Consider Far Side Comic

**Table Talk:** Who has significantly pleaded with you for the Gospel?