

Deut 5:16 **"Honor your father and your mother, as the LORD your God has commanded you, so that you may live long and that it may go well with you in the land the LORD your God is giving you.**

For our young man to grow up as our Lord did "in stature and wisdom" there is a spiritual/moral law as operational as the law of gravity. He must honor his father and mother. This principle threads its way throughout the fabric of any home. If the children do not honor their parents - then the whole tapestry of that home becomes a tattered, ragged cloth - lives are ruined, parents are heartbroken.¹

Word study of "honor" in Deut 5:16. The original for this word [*heb = kabad*] is one of the most diverse of meanings of any word used in the Old Testament text. Literally, this word means "of great weight."

Genesis 13:2 **And Abram was very *rich* in cattle, in silver, and in gold. (KJV)**

For example, when God's word described Abram's wealth *kabad* was used. Literally, it meant that Abram was "heavy." This was not a statement about Abram's physical condition but rather that he was prosperous in cattle, silver and gold. To treat one's parents with "great weight" means that they have a very important place in one's life - that what they say, for example, is very important. This has little to do with an outward show of respect and more to do with the status parents have in a young man's life. We are to give our parents the status of great "weight" or honor - they should have great influence in our lives. As we begin Proverbs four we see this undertone throughout. This is how a young man receives honor and prosperity - for his attitude toward his parents overflows over into his relationship with his God, who is the one who ultimately brings blessing into his life. Let's see what Solomon has to say to all of us, especially our children.

Perk up Your Ears - Prov 4:1, 20

Prov 4:1 ***Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father, and attend to know understanding.*** ²⁰ ***My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings.***

Many times what a parent says in an off-hand way carries great importance. It should not be necessary for a parent to "lecture" our young man for him to take notice. Some parents are not good communicators - the sense of these two verses (particularly the words "hear" and "attend") is for the young man to "prick up his ears" and give special attention to what his parents say. Many times, parents can be like the Lord - instruction can be subtle - listening to a parent with "perked up ears" is good training for the young man who wants to do the Lord's will.

Receive in Your Heart What They Say - 4:10

¹ Prov 10:1; 15:20; 17:21, 25

Prov 4:10 **Hear, O my son, and receive my sayings; and the years of thy life shall be many.**

The one action that can lead to the downfall of any young man is to neglect conversation with his parents. Solomon is pleading with his son to *receive* or pick up, as valuable, conversation with him. The original for "receive" means to snatch up - a grasping away.² Solomon's sons had stopped even caring what he was saying to them in ordinary father / son conversation. This rejection eventually led the downfall of the united kingdom of Israel.³ Many a father's heart has ached because his son has gone his own way - rejected his father's values - way of life. Solomon is pleading with his son to **receive** his father **and his conversation**.

The Heart of the Matter

It's the heart that matters. No, I'm not talking about that pump that keeps the body supplied with life-giving blood. Deep within every man and woman is the soul - the center of all that makes you and me a person. We are given that precious life at conception - God's word says that **he** is directly involved with our creation. True, we are sinful and beyond help aside from the gracious provision that God has provided in his plan of redemption - but the fact remains - God says that we belong to him at birth and that we are wonderful creations of his hands.⁴

Maintaining Your Grip.

Prov 4:4 **He taught me also, and said unto me, Let thine heart retain my words: keep my commandments, and live.**

All our young lives we are taught by our parents in example and in word, values and (hopefully) biblical concepts that will set us in the right direction in life. What Solomon is saying here is - there are a lot of harmful distractions in the world that a young man can fall prey to. The key is to fasten a solid grip onto what our parents have taught us. The meaning of these words, **retain** and **keep**, in combination is to grasp firmly and do not let go. The temptation is to, by distraction or fatigue, become tired and let all that we have learned from our parents go. Solomon's pleading to his sons (and to us) is keep a firm grip on all these values so that we might live.

² The word for **receive** *laqach* [law-kakh'] is varied in meaning depending on the context. In Gen 3:6 Eve "snatched" the forbidden fruit and ate it. In Gen 5:24 Enoch was "taken," "snatched" away to heaven into God's presence. In Deut 4:20, 34 God "took" Israel from among the nations. God "snatched" Israel out with wonders and miracles from the "iron smelting furnace," Egypt. To receive conversation from one's dad means to seize the moment, to listen intently and to interact positively in conversation and action.

³ 2 Chron 10

⁴ Psalm 139:13-16, especially the NIV.

The Son Who Honors Guarding Your Heart.

Page -3-

Prov 4:13 **Take fast hold of instruction; let her not go: keep her; for she is thy life.**

I said before that God was directly involved with our creation. The soul of believing man is a wonderful creation. In vitro, the soul of man is "wired" by God to be regenerated. Though sinful, the Holy Spirit woos a young man to Christ. During his childhood, our young man was protected by his parents from what the Bible calls a reprobate mind.⁵ To guard against this condition Solomon urges his son to "take fast hold..." - a strong grasping and holding on to so as not to lose. The phrase "let her not go..." means to not become tired of grasping "instruction" so as to drop her. This is the key to keeping a young man's mind protected so that he can respond to the Lord.

The Heart Is the Wellspring of Life.

Prov 4:23 **Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life. (NIV)**

It is from the heart (read that the soul) of a man that vitality comes - the capacity to worship God, to love parents, to love a wife and children. The heart is the spring of life.⁶ This is worth saving - this is what our young man should guard - as the night watchman - at all cost. The heart that is filled with the treasure of memories of dad, mom - their godly lives - their testimony of Christ's redemptive work in *their* lives should reinforce a young man's desire to fill his heart with instruction from the Lord. The heart is, indeed, the wellspring of life.

The Heart of Honor

Luke 6:45a **"A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; ..." (KJV)**

The heart of our young man is like a bank account (a treasure chest if-you-please). As a young man he is urged by Solomon to guard his heart. Jesus brings this picture home. We are to spend a life of honoring our parents and the Lord. This "banks" good treasure. This will "bring forth that which is good..." a heart that has a never-ending wellspring of Christ-honoring life. **Young man, do you want honor and prosperity - the blessing of the Lord? Then invest in a life of honoring your father and mother. You will receive, in interest, a life that is blessed by the Lord.**

⁵ Romans 1:28 - *reprobate mind* in the original, suggests a worthless or castaway mind. I think this is a mind that has been so degraded by sinful lusts and believing the devil's lie that it is beyond the redemptive calling of the Holy Spirit.

⁶ Other passages using this word or its root; **Gen 2:10** - A river went out from Eden to water the Garden. **Deut 8:7** "For the LORD thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks of water, **of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills;**"