

Proverbs Week #37 (4:1-2)

Hear, O sons, a father's instruction, and be attentive, that you may gain insight, for I give you good precepts; do not forsake my teaching. Proverbs 4:1-2

If you are a child and still living at home with your parents, how do you respond when your parents come to you and try to teach you something? Do you stop what you are doing or try to multi-task and “listen” while you are playing a game, watching TV, or engaging in some other activity. Today’s verses serve as a STOP SIGN for your thoughts and command you to “be attentive” to the teaching that your parents provide. The Hebrew phrase literally states ‘obey my sons – a father’s discipline’ and commands the child to listen and intentionally gain insight and understanding.

Our meeting together every week on the Sabbath is also a STOP SIGN. We attempt to stop our normal weekly work. On the Sabbath we pray to God thanking Him for giving us the day, seeking His wisdom to know how to keep it according to His design, and then pray “may you be pleased with our rest” confessing our hope and expectation that He will be pleased with how we keep the Sabbath. I want to reinforce the importance of our community studying, praying, and worshiping together. The lessons we learn during the children’s teaching time, our Torah study, discussions in the library, and through various classes are all focused on growing in wisdom and maturity in our walk with the Messiah Yeshua. Our ability to hear what God is saying in the midst of all the distractions within us and around us is part of our asking God for wisdom.

As we begin the next chapter in our study of the book of Proverbs we are again reminded of the importance of a father/son (parent to child) relationship in learning God’s Torah. The parent tells his child “do not forsake my teaching.” I am reminded of the words of our prayers, “I have given you good teaching, do not forsake my Torah.” These words in our prayer book are based upon the text from our lesson today. The authority that a parent has to command their children is delegated by God and is best exemplified when the parents themselves have matured in God’s ways and wisdom. A grown child may wrestle with this idea differently than a child who is still living at home. Most small children won’t challenge a parent’s authority (at least not without suffering disciplinary action) or question whether a parent ultimately should be obeyed. As we grow older our questioning of authorities increases and so do our attempts at challenging their legitimacy. All of this is to say that parents are not perfect. Together we seek to listen to what God is teaching and obey it by taking it to heart and putting His desires into action. We are to live lives that both in word and deed reflect our teacher.

Yeshua taught, “A pupil is not above his teacher; but everyone, after he has been fully trained, will be like his teacher.” (Luke 6:40) The Messiah taught us that as His disciples if we call Him Lord we are expected to do what He teaches. He compares people based upon the foundations they have prepared for their lives. (Luke 6:46-49) Some people will choose a solid foundation built upon rock. These people will listen and do what the Messiah teaches. Others may appear to listen to what the Messiah teaches but they will fail to do what He teaches. These people are compared to those who build their houses on the sand. When temptation, trials, and the demands of life come upon us our foundations will either sustain us or be the source our collapse.

I encourage you this week (maybe even later today around lunch or in the library) to discuss Psalm 1 together. Especially consider the part of the Psalm where the phrase “Torah of HaShem” and “His Torah” are mentioned. There is an aspect to this song that warrants further investigation. Here is the question to consider, “Who is the ‘His’ in the phrase ‘His Torah’? Is it God, man, or both?”