

From Ears to Feet

Proverbs 4: 26 – 27.



“Ponder the path of your feet,
And let all your ways be established.
Do not turn to the right or the left;
Remove your foot from evil.”
Proverbs 4: 26 - 27. NKJV



I. Introduction



Challenges of Education

“I am a survivor of a concentration camp. My eyes saw what no person should witness: gas chambers built by learned engineers. Children poisoned by educated physicians. Infants killed by trained nurses. Women and babies shot by high school and college graduates. So, I am suspicious of education.

My request is:

Help your children become human. Your efforts must never produce learned monsters, skilled psychopaths or educated Eichmanns. Reading, writing, and arithmetic are important only if they serve to make our children more human.”

An excerpt of a letter written by a Holocaust survivor to educators, published in “Teacher and Child” by Dr. Haim Ginott, child psychologist and author.

Challenges of Education

“Education, in other words, can be a dangerous thing (...). It is time, I believe, for an educational ‘perestroika’, by which I mean a general rethinking of the process and substance of education at all levels, beginning with the admission that much of what has gone wrong with the world is the result of education that alienates us from life in the name of human domination, fragments instead of unifies, overemphasizes success and careers, separates feeling from intellect and the practical from the theoretical, and unleashes on the world minds ignorant of their own ignorance.”

Orr, D. (2004) *Earth in Mind: On education, environment and the human prospect*, Chicago, Island Press, 2nd Edition

Obviously, the Biblical Christian Education is so essential for the challenges of our world, more than ever before.

“The quest for ethical life around the globe in this historical era is very critical and families have a profound role to play in the education of individuals in their lives. Religious education in families is an essential need but a huge challenge due to global fundamental social, economic, political and cultural changes... Observation shows that there is a challenge of trying to instill ethics without religion, with no morals. From the ancient societies instilling morals in children was part of religious instruction, teaching morality, particularly instructions to children on honesty, self-respect, responsibility, resilience, respect for life, tolerance, trust, patience, kindness, gratitude, humility, generosity, integrity, forgiveness, confidence, compassion and many others. As a source of ethical formation and transformation of individual’s religious education in families today face huge challenges. Lack or negligence of religious education in families manifests in some people’s lives as they grow with no basic ethical skills which they need to be people with integrity.”

Lucy Raphael Kimaro, International Journal of Philosophy and Theology
June 2014, Vol. 2, No. 2, pp. 277-301. Published by American Research Institute for Policy
Development. Religious Education in Families: A Challenge in Quest for Global Ethics

II. Context of Proverbs 4: 26 – 27.



There are three poems
in Proverbs ch. 4,
underlining different
aspects of education



All three poems can have a common title: **THE ABUNDANT LIFE**. The reason is that in all three we see the importance of accepting the education as a prerequisite for a fulfilled life.



We can give the title to the first poem
"EDUCATION AS A
DISCIPLINE (v. 1 – 9).
The main reason is the
presence of the word
MUSAR in v. 1,
meaning discipline,
correction, stick.
The essential message
is: "Accept discipline
and hard work... Keep
my commands, and
live."

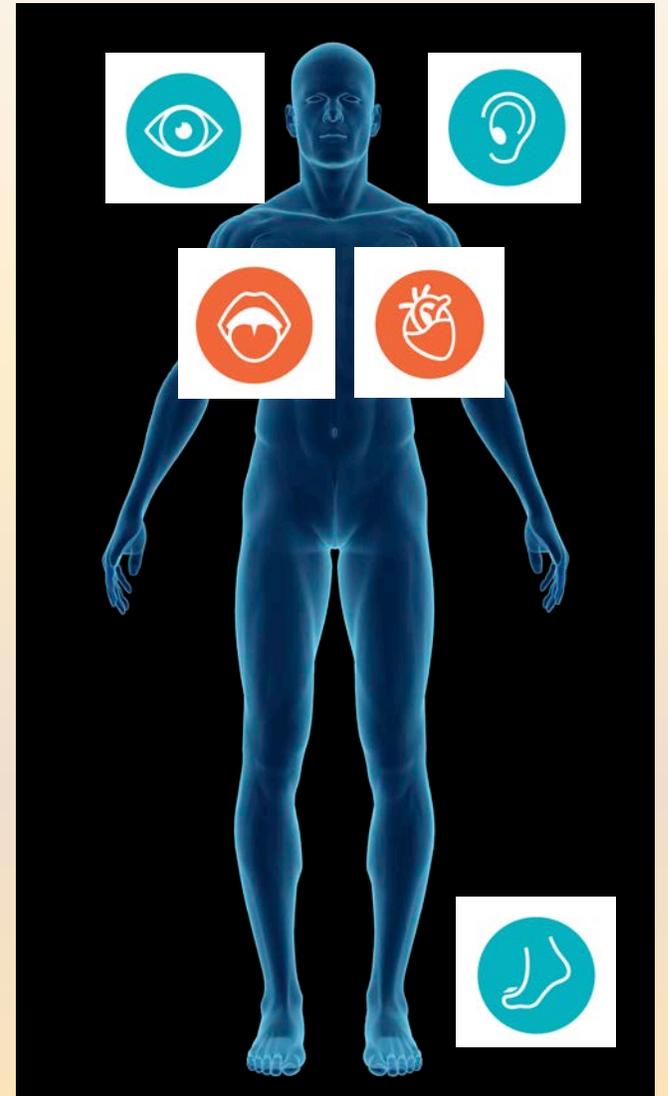


The second poem (v. 10 – 19) presents the EDUCATION AS ENLIGHTENING. Again, there is an advice: “Keep her, for she is your life.” But even more, accepting the constraints of education makes our life extraordinary: “But the path of the just is like the shining sun, That shines ever brighter unto the perfect day.” (v. 18).



Our text (4:26. 27.) is the part of the third poem with the title **HOLISTIC EDUCATION**.

In fact, all elements are important. This is why the true education is about eyes, ears, mouth, feet, and heart.



III. The Road to Excellence 4: 26 – 27.



TO PREPARE, TO WEIGH, TO EXAMINE

1. Ponder the path of your feet

Ponder (in Hebrew PALAS), means to prepare the way, to examine it in advance, to make plans.

It comes from the verb 'roll' (PAL), which is used to make the road easy, to roll a cylinder up and down.

Therefore, the message is that before taking a road it is necessary to prepare the journey.



TO PREPARE, TO WEIGH, TO EXAMINE

“... The admonition thus refers not to the careful consideration which measures the way leading to the goal which one wishes to reach, but to the preparation of the way by the removal of that which prevents unhindered progress and makes the way insecure.”
Keil and Delitzsch



TO PREPARE, TO WEIGH, TO EXAMINE

“The work of winning souls to Christ demands careful preparation. Man cannot enter the Lord’s service without the needed training, and expect the highest success.... The architect will tell you how long it took him to understand how to plan a tasteful, commodious building. And so it is in all the callings that men follow. Should the servants of Christ show less diligence in preparing for work infinitely more important? Should they be ignorant of the ways and means to be employed in winning souls? It requires a knowledge of human nature, close study, careful thought, and earnest prayer, to know how to approach men and women on the great subjects that concern their eternal welfare.

Ellen G. White, *Gospel Workers*, p. 92. (1915)

2. And let all your ways be established

The only way for our paths to be established (Kuwn in Hebrew) is that God makes them solid, stable, and secure.

It means that once we define our road with the Lord, we continue on this path with perseverance and tenacity. We don't give up easily.

Alone, we go faster. Together, we go farther. With God, all is possible. (Phil. 4: 13).

TO BE CONSISTENT



TO BE CONSISTENT

“We are all one in Christ, and should unite heartily in an effort to educate and train an army of young men and women in such a way that they will be consistent, well-balanced Christians, able to understand and explain the Scriptures. The purity, faith, zeal, and consistency of character in those who go forth to work for the Lord, should be so evident that others may see their good works, and be led to glorify our Father who is in heaven. If our profession of faith is sustained by heartfelt piety, it will be a means of good; for thereby souls will be influenced to comply with the terms of salvation. God designs that His grace should be made manifest in the believer, that through the Christlike character of individual members, the church may become the light of the world.” Ellen G. White, *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 202.

TO BE CONSISTENT

"It is a rough road that leads to the heights of greatness."
Lucius Annaeus Seneca



3. Do not turn to the right or the left

The focus is essential in order to come to the destination.

Natah in Hebrew means to turn, to incline, to pervert, to stretch out.

When God shows us the road to follow, we will do nothing to distract ourselves from the mission that He gave us to do.

TO STAY FOCUSED



TO STAY FOCUSED

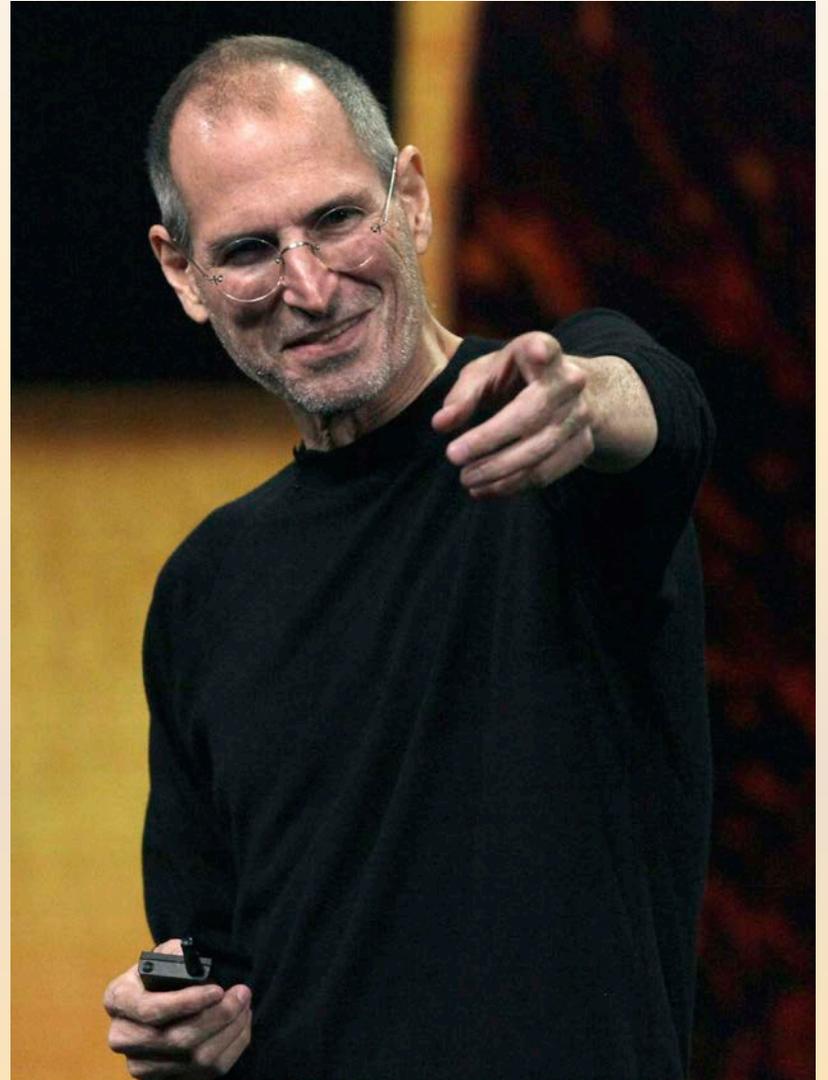
“Success in any line demands a definite aim. He who would achieve true success in life must keep steadily in view the aim worthy of his endeavor. Such an aim is set before the youth of today. The heaven-appointed purpose of giving the gospel to the world in this generation is the noblest that can appeal to any human being. It opens a field of effort to everyone whose heart Christ has touched.

God’s purpose for the children growing up beside our hearths is wider, deeper, higher, than our restricted vision has comprehended. From the humblest lot those whom He has seen faithful have in time past been called to witness for Him in the world’s highest places.”

Ellen G. White, Education, p. 262.

“Focusing is about saying No.”
Steve Jobs

“One of Job's great strengths was knowing how to focus. ” Deciding what not to do is as important as deciding what to do, ” he said. ” That's true for companies, and it's true for products.”
Walter Isaacson, *Steve Jobs*



4. Remove your foot from evil.

The word remove (Kuwr in the Bible) is to cause to depart, to take away, to turn aside, to leave undone, to retract, to abolish.

Thus, 'remove your foot from evil' confirms that it is not only sufficient to have a positive goal, a clear mission statement in order to succeed. It is also necessary to avoid pitfalls, to use God's wisdom, in order to be 'able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.'

TO AVOID PITFALLS



“Unless we are individually wide awake to discern the workings of the Holy Spirit, we shall certainly stumble and fall into Satan’s pitfalls of unbelief. I call upon our brethren to watch as faithful shepherds and guardians over the inexperienced, who are exposed to the wiles of seductive influences. Keep a continual lookout for rocks and quick sands that threaten to destroy faith in the messages that God has given for us at this time. Watch for souls as they that must give account...”

Ellen G. White, 1SM p. 169.



4 ASPECTS OF WISDOM IN PROVERBS 4: 26. 27.

1. Ponder the path of your feet

“The voice of one crying in the wilderness: “Prepare the way of the LORD; Make straight in the desert a highway for our God.”

Isaiah 40: 3; Matthew 3: 3.



BE LIKE
JOHN
THE
BAPTIST

4 ASPECTS OF WISDOM IN PROVERBS 4: 26. 27.

2. And let all your ways be established

“So David went on and became great, and the Lord God of hosts was with him... So David knew that the LORD had established him as king over Israel, and that He had exalted His kingdom for the sake of His people Israel.” 2 Samuel 5: 10 – 12.



BE LIKE
DAVID

4 ASPECTS OF WISDOM IN PROVERBS 4: 26. 27.

3. Do not turn to the right or the left

“Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go.”
Joshua 1: 7.



BE LIKE
JOSHUA

4 ASPECTS OF WISDOM IN PROVERBS 4: 26. 27.

4. Remove your foot from evil

“There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was blameless and upright, and one who feared God and shunned evil.”
Job 1: 1.



BE LIKE
JOB

HOLISTIC EDUCATION

Ears / Mouth - CONTENT

My son, give attention to my words,
Incline your ear to my sayings...
Put away from you a deceitful mouth,
And put perverse lips far from you.

Eyes - VISION

Do not let them depart from your eyes...
Let your eyes look straight ahead,
And your eyelids look right before you.

Heart - Thoughts

Do not let them depart from your eyes;
Keep them in the midst of your heart...
Keep your heart with all diligence,
For out of it *spring* the issues of life.

Foot - Direction

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

PROVERBS

4: 20 - 27

(MOUTH)

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

(EYES)

b. Do not let them depart from your eyes;

(HEART)

c. Keep them in the midst of your heart;

LIFE & HEALTH:

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

(HEART)

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

(MOUTH)

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

(EYES)

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

Holistic Education:
LIFE and HEALTH

YOUR PATH:

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

Consequence of the
Holistic Education:
ALL WAYS ESTABLISHED

If we desire 'the harmonious development of physical, mental, and spiritual powers' for our children, we need also a holistic approach of their education. The text of Proverbs 4 is an excellent reminder of the best philosophy of education.



IV. Practical applications



The Listening Brain

Education of the ears for our children

"Incline your ears"

Parents using only kind words at home

Uplifting music

Speech skills training

Wise and moderate use of technology (iPods, laptops)

Promotion of silence

Prayer practice

Memorize important Bible verses

The Beauties of the Visible World

Education of the eyes

“Do not let them depart from your eyes”

Parents' choices as inspiration in beauty and simplicity

Walking by faith and not by sight

Teaching how to focus on eternal values

Appreciating the beauty of the nature and God's love

Well chosen movies

Development of artistic and creative culture

Interpretation of media

The Mastery of the Tongue

Education of the mouth

“And put perverse lips far from you”

Jesus' philosophy: out of the abundance of the heart...

Temperance and balance in speech

Art of asking for forgiveness and forgiving

Promotion of honesty

Learning to share the good news of salvation

Harmony between words and deeds

Uplifting everyone through the words of love

The essential aspect of the New Covenant

Education of the heart

“Keep them in the midst of your heart”

Renewal of the heart

Developing the individuality of every child (Ed. 17)

Opening the doors of our heart to the Holy Spirit

Mental Hygiene

Touching the hearts of children

Righteousness and Sanctification by Faith

Worship

The Pathway of Life

Education of the
feet

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

The road leading us to the cross

Experiencing the blessings of Psalm 1

Perseverance

Acceptance of the narrow way

"The road to success is always under construction"

Longevity

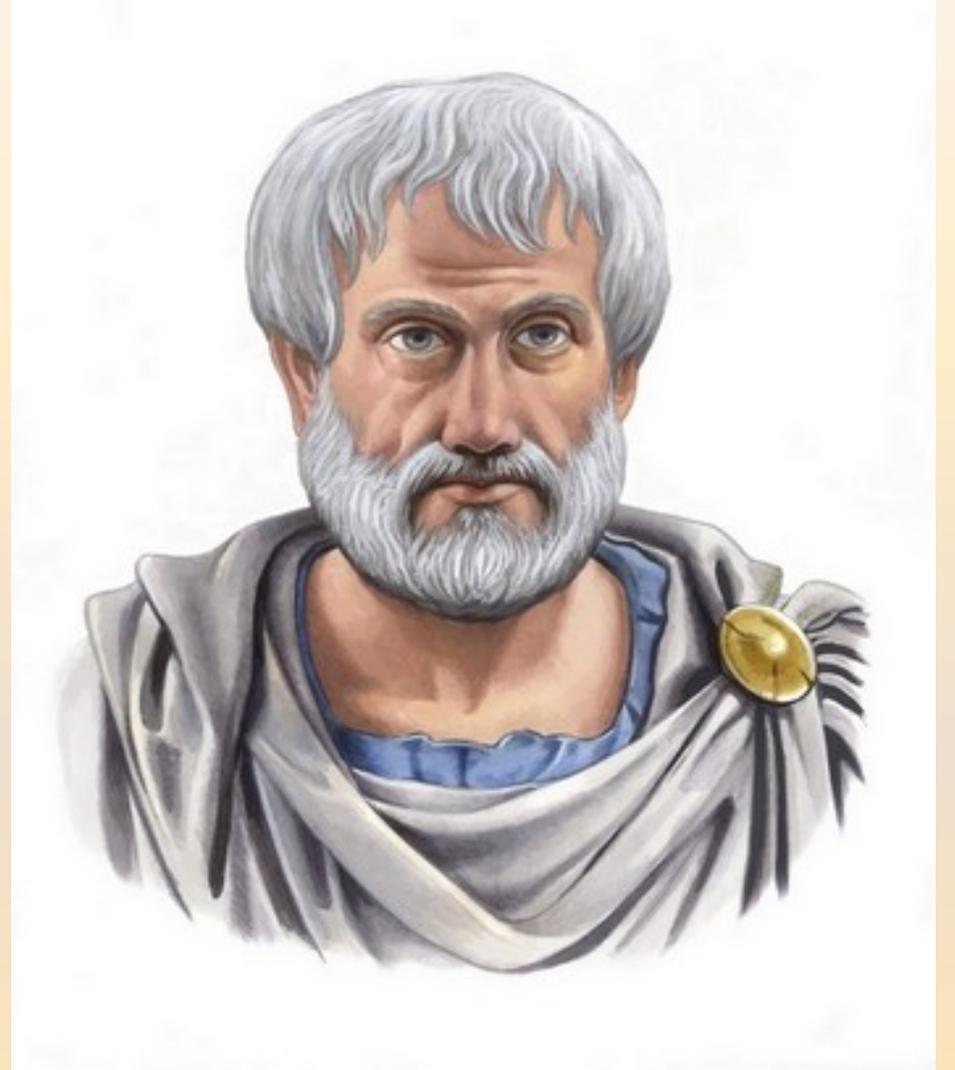
Ask for the old paths

V. Conclusion



“Educating the mind without
educating the heart is no
education at all.”

Aristotle



“In the highest sense the work of education and the work of redemption are one, for in education, as in redemption, “other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ...”

Under changed conditions, true education is still conformed to the Creator’s plan, the plan of the Eden school. Adam and Eve received instruction through direct communion with God; we behold the light of the knowledge of His glory in the face of Christ.

The great principles of education are unchanged. “They stand fast for ever and ever” (Psalm 3:8); for they are the principles of the character of God. To aid the student in comprehending these principles, and in entering into that relation with Christ which will make them a controlling power in the life, should be the teacher’s first effort and his constant aim. The teacher who accepts this aim is in truth a co-worker with Christ, a laborer together with God.”

Ellen G. White, Education, p. 30.

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