

Proverbs 7:1-5

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/prov/prov-7/proverbs-71-5/>

Using familiar phrasing and powerful illustrations, Solomon encourages us to be intimately connected to wisdom.

Solomon uses the greeting *my son* 26 times in The Book of Proverbs. Interestingly, *my son* begins a new section in the first verse of most of the chapters up to this point (Proverbs 1:8 in Chapter one starts a new section; *my son* is the first phrase in verse one of chapter 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7). It is often used in the middle of these chapters (3:11, 4:10, 5:7, etc.) and toward the end (3:21, 4:20, 5:20, and 6:20; 7:24). For more on Solomon's use of *my son*, [see notes on Proverbs 2:1-5](#).

This is noteworthy in Chapter 7 because it is the last chapter that follows this pattern. Verse 24 uses *my son* (in the plural—sons) in a sort of conclusion to this way of addressing and thus, presumably, the first portion of the book of Proverbs. The familiar refrain is picked up again in Chapter 19 and continues through the end.

As he has done in previous sections, Solomon implores his audience to *keep my words* (Proverbs 4:4) and *treasure my commandments within you* (vs 1) (Proverbs 2:1, 3:1, 4:4). The call here is to preserve and internalize what Solomon is teaching. To make it a part of who you are, value the teachings richly, and protect them dearly.

Don't let the words come in one ear and out the other, but *keep* them. Don't hear them as detached and impersonal rules, but *treasure* them as precious, and bury them deep *within* the recesses of your soul.

The effect is this: *keep my commandments and live* (vs 2) (or “stay alive”). The teachings of wisdom are the source of thriving, the life that is truly life. By accepting and living them out, we allow ourselves to live in the fullness of life.

Solomon has used a lot of familiar phrases in these first couple of verses of Chapter 7. But then Solomon turns to a new phrase for The Book of Proverbs: *and keep my teaching as the apple of your eye* (vs 2). The phrase *apple of your eye* is clearly a metaphorical saying. The word in the phrase for *apple* is the Hebrew “*iyshown*,” which has a variety of meanings. At the core, it means “pupil” or “middle.” It is used in phrases like “middle of the night” in Scripture. It alludes to the center of a thing; the heart, as it were.

When we say of an offspring that they are “the apple of my eye,” we mean they are the center of our affection. The application here is for Solomon's *teaching* to be the core (*pupil, middle*) of who we are and the reflection people see when they look closely at us. We ought to reflect God, the creator and designer of our very being and our best self-interest.

Solomon turns next to some more familiar phrases: *Bind them on your fingers* (vs 3) is close to Proverbs 3:3 and 6:21. In those verses, they are being bound around one's neck (3:3) and heart (6:21). Here the instruction is *to bind them on your fingers*, yet another body part for Solomon's teachings to adorn. *Fingers* are an allusion to practicality. We do things with our *fingers*—gesture, carry, build, etc. Solomon is suggesting we make these teachings of his the guiding force of our actions.

The phrase *write them on the tablet of your heart* is found here exactly as it is in Proverbs 3:3. The *heart* being the center of a person, the wellspring from which life flows. The *tablet* is a reference to the laws Moses brings down from Mount Sinai that are written on tablets of stone. The idea is to inscribe as governing law the teachings of wisdom into the very source of who we are.

Solomon has used the phrase *my son* as a way to talk about familial intimacy between him and his audience. He has also used “mother” and “father” to describe how we pass wisdom down through the generations. Building on that intimate allegory, he writes: *say to wisdom, “You are my sister,” and call understanding your intimate friend* (vs 4).

We are powerfully impacted by the company we keep. We need to surround ourselves with *wisdom* in order to get the most transformational effects out of it. The previous verses are about letting wisdom inside (*heart*) and putting it into practice (*fingers*). These references to *sister* and *intimate friend* are about surrounding ourselves with wisdom—wise teachers, wise friends, a wise spouse, etc.

Good company may *keep you from an adulteress, from the foreigner who flatters with her words* (vs 5). The *adulteress* is the consistent antithesis to Lady Wisdom throughout The Book of Proverbs. It is the personification of the lust of the flesh and all that is in the world (1 John 2:15-16).

Taking on a lifestyle of wisdom, internalizing it (*heart*), acting upon it (*fingers*) and surrounding ourselves with it (*sister* and *intimate friend*), protects us from the alluring words of the *adulteress*. Her words are tempting and flattering. But her intent is to exploit, and the result of engaging with her is our own destruction.

In opposition to Solomon's *words* from verse 1, the *adulteress* promises everything but delivers nothing. Her words sound good but do not align with what we truly want from life. They deceive us, alluring us toward the wicked path. Staying true, familiar, and *intimate* with *wisdom* will protect us from the temptation of the flesh by reminding us of the truth.

Biblical Text

My son, keep my words

And treasure my commandments within you.

² **Keep my commandments and live,**

And my teaching as the apple of your eye.

³ **Bind them on your fingers;**

Write them on the tablet of your heart.

⁴ Say to wisdom, “You are my sister,”

And call understanding your intimate friend;

**⁵ That they may keep you from an adulteress,
From the foreigner who flatters with her words.**