

II. Group discussion *Each number below includes a set of questions that relate to the scripture text. I offer a few answers, but your perspective may be better. The point is to discuss, not to get 100% agreement. Rule of thumb: the fewer questions you ask, the better. Save time for "the big question."*

Read Proverbs 4:10-27 aloud.

1. Which verses mention walking or a path?
11, 12, 14, 15, 18, 19, 25, 26, 27

What are some of the paths described?

2. How is wisdom described in verses 10-13?
Trail guide, path, handrail/staff/walking stick

What are some benefits that wisdom promises in these verses?

3. Verses 14-19 suggest a different path. What is it & what does it offer?
Path of evil. Offers sleepless nights filled with evil, meals filled with wickedness & violence (sounds like indigestion!), stumbling around in deep darkness.

At first glance, how does the path of evil look?
It must look like fun, since so many people choose it!

4. How is the path of righteousness described in verse 18?
The path of the righteous gets brighter & brighter.

How have you experienced this promise?
Everyone has experienced positive life changes since they started following Christ.

If the path of righteousness grows brighter & brighter, why do some people become bitter with age? What are they missing?

5. What is wisdom compared to in verses 20-22?
Like a medicine that gives you life and health.

How does wisdom improve your health?

6. Have everyone memorize verse 23.

How could having this verse in mind help you?
Whenever your heart is distracted from the right path, quote this to yourself. Put it on your mirror & start each day with it.

In what ways is this verse true? Why is your heart so important?

7. What are the instructions in verses 25-27?

How much control do you have over your path? In what ways do other people affect your path? In what ways is God leading your path? In what sense can you choose your path even when some aspects of your life are beyond your control?

8. Jesus promised in Matthew 5 that the pure of heart will see God. Besides seeing God after we die, what are some ways this promise is true?

How does Proverbs 4 help us with developing a pure heart?

† **The big question** *If you ask only one question, let this be it. Allow at least 20 minutes. Go around the circle and give each person an opportunity to answer. It's okay if they pass, but at least they get a chance to respond.*

What are some factors that influence our hearts? How can we guard our hearts?

III. Other resources

The point – Above all else guard your heart, because the pure in heart are blessed and will see God.

Prayer ideas

Pray for a pure heart.

Thank God for the ways he has led us in the right paths.

Pray for opportunities to lead others in the path of wisdom & righteousness.

Kid-friendly activity. An activity designed to help kids and adults grow in faith together. Do this first, then dismiss the kids so the adults can talk.

Memorize Proverb 4:23 as a group.

When have you gotten water from a well or spring?

Get a clear glass of water – what can you do with pure water?

Contaminate the water (Add dirt or bugs or vinegar --be creative!). Now who would drink this water?

How is this like our hearts?

How do you guard your heart? Each person give one idea.

LIFE Group Guide

Proverbs 4 – Pure heart

By John Grant (jgrant@collegehills.org)

The theme: **Purity of Heart.**

Jim Woodroof is continuing his sermon series on Matthew 5, and this week's lesson describes the blessings of a pure heart. One of my favorite verses about purity of heart is Proverb 4:23. It is a verse I have etched into my heart because it helps me remember what matters whenever I get discouraged or distracted.

This study guide encourages you to memorize Prov. 4:23, and that may be the most helpful item on the page. Think of a creative way to help group members remember it – ask everyone to write it on a card, put it to music, no snacks until you can quote it standing on one foot with your eyes closed, etc.

While you're hanging out in Proverbs, you might recommend members read through Proverbs over the next few weeks. Read the chapter that matches the date (ch. 11 on the 11th, etc.). This is a beautiful treasury of practical wisdom.

Leadership tip: Recognize the important contributions of women to the group. Affirm their spiritual gifts & encourage them to participate in discussion. Often, women are more sensitive to relationships and more in tune with God than men, but they hesitate to speak. Listen to them.

I. Relate Use a few to introduce the theme, check everyone's spiritual pulse, and "break the ice." No right or wrong answers – maybe goofy but not wrong! Look for opportunities to affirm and encourage through these questions.

- ❖ When have you drunk from a well or a spring?
- ❖ Would you rather have brains or beauty? In what ways does wisdom make a person more attractive? Prov. 11:22
- ❖ Sing the song "Purer in Heart." (Included with this guide.)
- ❖ What is the most beautiful sunrise you have ever seen?

Purer in Heart, O God 671

G/B *Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself. – 1 John 3:3*



1. Pur-er in heart, O God, Help me to be; May I de-vote my life
 2. Pur-er in heart, O God, Help me to be; Teach me to do Thy will
 3. Pur-er in heart, O God, Help me to be; That I Thy ho-ly face

Whol-ly to Thee; Watch Thou my way-ward feet, Guide me with
 Most lov-ing-ly; Be Thou my Friend and Guide, Let me with
 One day may see; Keep me from se-cret sin, Reign Thou my

coun-sel sweet; Pur-er in heart, Help me to be.
 Thee a-bide; Pur-er in heart, Help me to be.
 soul with-in; Pur-er in heart, Help me to be. A-men.

WORDS: Fannie C. Davison (w. 1877)
 MUSIC: J.H. Fillmore (w. 1877)

GRATITUDE
 Irregular