**Book Of Proverbs – Parental Wisdom**

As we continue in Proverbs, the topic we are about to discuss would be easy to tune out. The reason is because we are going to talk about parenting, family, etc. Nobody really likes to talk about this or have someone give them advice if they are a parent. Yet, parenting is a challenge, and at times people who have gone through the parenting “wars” have insights that can be helpful.

At the same time, and please listen to this, to those of us who are grandparents. We raised our kids to release them. That does not mean they are not our children any longer, but things change. Some parents will not let go of their adult children and want to control their every move. Some adult children still feel the need to appease their parents, even if their parents have passed on. They are so controlled with this need to make mom and dad happy that it is overwhelming at times.

And if your kids are raised, keep in mind what they are facing as they bring their children up in this world in which we live.

Proverbs has much to say about children and their parents. It even has some things to say about family, and grandparenting. As we begin, let’s be honest. The family, your children, your role as a parent, is under attack. Much of it is coming from government, as they promote gender confusion, Critical Race Theory, Wokism, evolution and other things to your children. And often they attempt to do so without your knowledge. That is simply the truth.

Families are being torn apart as schools and government officials try to pass laws taking away your decision making as a parent. They will try to get your child drug treatments if they want to change their sex (in their thinking) without your consent. There is a war against the family as we know it. In fact, let me read you something that should send chills down our spine,

**"Washington state has “passed a bill allowing children to legally be taken away from their parents for not consenting to gender transition procedures on their child.”"**

What we desire as a Bible-believing, teaching church, is for families, whether the family has two parents or one, to be a strong family. There are great benefits to building strong families. Think about these:

**1) We find fulfillment when our families are running strong.** Less stress, more fun in life. I think most of us would like that.

**2) We do not have to live a life full of guilt.** People sometimes struggle with guilt over family situations, some of those being outside of their control.

**3) We raise strong kids.** Our goal is to see our kids grow up and make a positive difference.

**4) We can live our lives with fewer excuses.** People often blame others and pass the buck when things do not go well. When we build strong families, this area of life takes care of itself.

God wants our relationships strong. He wants, to the best possible, our families strong. From the very first chapter of the Bible, parenting and relationships are seen as a by-product of God working in the world. He calls us, to the best we can, to have healthy families and healthy relationships.

It is interesting, I think, and some would find this to be true, that Solomon, who wrote most of the Proverbs, himself, for a good part of his life, drifted from God. He shares that journey in the Book of Ecclesiastes, which we have looked at here at Oakridge.

**Point:** When Solomon wrote the Proverbs, he did so at a time in his life that he was living for God and what he says about families comes from the Lord. Now, if you are sitting here or listening online and are single, or have no kids, a teen, or a child, you may think nothing we are going to say applies to you. But that is not necessarily true. You might have a friend going through some times that could use some good advice, sound Biblical advice. So, keep that in mind.

With that in mind, let us get to it. Some here today have raised your kids, and you are now grandparents. Those of us who fit that category can have a positive influence on our grandkids, but always remember that we are not the parents. Aunts and uncles can be a positive influence.

Obviously, we cannot cover every area of parenting that Proverbs discusses, nor is that our intent. We need to spend time in the Word of God learning what we are to do. We also know that the practical application of a passage is at times the hardest thing to do. And sometimes our applications vary.

Let us begin with an interesting verse – **Pro. 11:29**. It says that the person who **“troubles” (stir up, disturb bring evil upon)** their family will **“inherit the wind.”** It was used to describe the disturbing of water. It then goes on to say that the fool will be servant to those who are wise.

Does this verse have any meaning for us today? **The Life Application Bible** helps us to see the meaning behind this verse. We read there,

**“One of the greatest resources God gives us is the family. Families provide acceptance, encouragement, guidance, and counsel. Bringing trouble on your family—whether through anger or through an exaggerated desire for independence—is foolish because you cut yourself off from all they provide. In your family, strive for healing, communication, and understanding.”**

What follows addresses both kids and parents:

**1) Parents have a responsibility to influence their kids in a Godly way.** I am speaking specifically to Christians, but the principle of influence applies to all. Are we teaching our children values that are God honoring? Are we teaching them right from wrong, not based on what society thinks but what Scripture says? Are we teaching them about forgiveness, and how to forgive? Are we teaching them decision-making skills?

Our goal should be to help them learn these things before adulthood. They must decide what they will do with what we teach but we must do our part as well to give them guidance and direction.

Look with me at **Pro. 6:20-23**, in a chapter dealing with practical warnings against sinful behavior, wanting to keep our children from making bad choices, we come to these specific verses. The writer encourages children to **“keep” (guard, observe, carefully watching)** their father’s commandment and not **“forsake” (leave, abandon, reject)** mom’s teachings. Obviously, this has to do with whether the teaching lines up with Scripture.

If mom and dad tell us to do something or try to guide us into destructive behavior or choices that will be detrimental to people, we must speak up as kids and refuse to do something that goes against God’s Word. Sorry, parents, but if we are leading our kids down a wrong path, they need to not be expected to follow it. We would be wrong to do so and to pressure them to do what we ask.

Along with keeping and not abandoning what parents teach, children are to **“bind”** them on their hearts, and **“tie”** them around their neck **(Pro. 6:21)**. The instructions of the parents, if good wisdom, can keep us from stumbling. If from God’s Word, they will give us direction and protect us from bad choices **(vs. 22).**

Also, show some grace. Teach kids that a mistake does not have to define their life. Tell them that and love them through the mistake. Yes, we can give words of advice to help them not make the same mistake, but they still might. They choose. Our control has a limit to a point as they grow. We must have guidelines and expectations, but when they fail in those, love them unconditionally and show some grace.

**Practical:** Parents are to encourage their kids. Show them the reasons behind the decisions we make. Help them work through issues. Show them how to handle a bully, a tough situation that they may be facing at work as young adults. Make sure that we are helping them be grounded in God’s Word and show them how it directs our lives.

**Practical:** Are we teaching them about God? His love for them, the salvation He offers. Are we helping them to discover the faith for themselves, giving direction? As we will note in our next point, our involvement in their life means admonishing them, correcting them, loving them, teaching them by what we say and do. Is Christ honored in our work with our children?

Before moving on, let me say that we raise our kids to release them, so that they have their families **(Gen. 2:24)** and hopefully we can be a positive influence on them enough so that as they begin their journey of having a family and raising kids, they will remember the good things we taught them.

**Point:** We must model the Christian life to our kids. That helps them to learn values. For example, be people of truth. Do not lie **(Eph. 4:25)**. Control our anger **(Eph. 4:26)**. Work hard, don’t be lazy **(Eph. 4:28)**. Speak encouraging words, not abusive or foul language **(Eph. 4:29)**. Be gentle and patient with people **(Col. 3:12)**. Show them the Christian life that we value and want them to know.

**2) Being a parent means involvement in your kid’s life, and that covers many areas.** Look first if you would at **Pro. 19:18**. I have read stuff that teenagers have said and one of the things they noted was they had wished (and this does not apply to all teens obviously) that their parents had given them boundaries and guidelines.

Believe it or not, one survey done revealed that teenagers felt that their parents showed their care for them when mom and dad were involved in their lives, asking questions, setting boundaries. It gave them protection and knowledge that their parents really do have an interest in their lives.

This verse, **Pro. 19:18**, is a command. The word **“discipline” means to “correct by words.”** Some think this has to do with, for example, spanking, but the idea of correction is more in line here. More on discipline in a moment. This verse is a strong warning against being a passive parent, of being lazy, of allowing our kids to run the show.

There is a balance between teaching them independence and them ruling the house. That is on the parents to be the leaders of the home, not the kids. We want to teach them to make decisions, yes, to grow up and be independent, but God has put the parents in charge. We cannot put our head in the sand as some parents do while their kids make bad choice after bad choice.

The idea of **“hope”** here means our kids are not a lost cause. The idea of setting our heart on putting them to death means if we ignore the teaching and correcting that we are to provide, they may make decisions that ruin their life. They may anyway, but we need to at least do our part to be involved in correcting them.

This leads to the issue of discipline. Now, let me say something here and I want to refer to **Eph. 6:1-4**. Here we are given some good advice on parenting worth noting. First, for kids, they are to **“obey” (be obedient, submit)** their parents. This does not, of course, give the parents the right to expect their kids to do anything immoral or wrong.

I knew growing up that my parents had certain rules and I had to obey them. I grew up when the Beatles haircuts were in fashion, and though I ended up at a Christian school where our hair was shorter, before then my parents refused to let me grow my hair long. That was their rule, I lived with it. Even Jesus obeyed His parents **(Lk. 2:51)**.

We must model Christ in raising our kids. The word **“children”** in **Eph. 6:1** is not age specific though I believe you treat a 20-year-old differently than a 9-year-old, for example. And as parents, be an example of obedience to God. Hard to tell our kids to obey when we do not.

We have mentioned honoring parents already and keep in mind that even if we had lousy parents, we could honor them by thanking them for bringing us into the world. That set you on the way to where you are now. Help them when they need it. Just something to note. This is not always easy to do.

**Point:** Let us talk for a moment about honoring parents, and I am speaking to adults here. Honoring does not mean that we allow our parents to control or manipulate us through guilt or allow them to abuse our family. Remember the “leave and cleave” principle.

**Point:** At times we must forgive our parents for what they have done or did not do when we were under their care as kids. We can honor them by helping them at times, even though they are hard to be around. But as adult children, we must make family decisions that are best for us as we “leave and cleave” to our new family.

Note **vs. 4**. Here in **Ephesians 6** where Paul tells us not to provoke our children to anger. Some parents poke and prod and do things that they know may make their kids angry. They belittle them. They push their kids until the children do not know what else to do but get angry and frustrated and then the parents correct them. That is wrong.

We are to help them mature in the Lord through **“discipline” (the whole training and education of children, cultivating their mind and morals, admonishing, correcting and when needed, disciplining).** The word **“instruction”** has to with teaching by words. It is giving wise counsel, though they may not always want it or like it.

Now back to Proverbs. We cannot be passive parents. In this area of being involved includes discipline, correction. Some parents do not believe in spanking. Others do. I am not here to tell you how to discipline or correct your kids. To do nothing is wrong. When your kid constantly disobeys, you need to have a plan to deal with that.

There must be consequences for wrong actions. And, like it or not, Proverbs does say that spanking, done right, is not wrong **(Pro. 13:24; Pro. 22:15; Pro. 23:13-14)**. We never discipline in anger. We never belittle them. We teach them even when we have to discipline. How hard is it to explain why they are being punished? It’s not.

And we do not correct and discipline way after the fact. **Pro. 13:24** says we are to be diligent, meaning we care enough to help our kids immediately. I am not saying it is wrong, but my mom never said, “Wait until your dad gets home.” Mom corrected me and she was also my biggest fan and advocate.

**Key:** Also, they did not wait until I was ten to teach and correct me. A child’s age, level of understanding, etc., come into play in how we manage each child. And our kids are all different. We need to remember that. So, we must handle them differently. In fact, I would argue that to not discipline your kids shows that we are either lazy, uneducated, and not learning about child raising, or do not really love them. Note again **Pro. 13:24**.

**3) Help your child to discover their gifts, talents, and how God has wired them.** We have looked at this verse before in another series but turn again with me to **Pro. 22:6**. This verse has often been used to tell us that if we raise our kids right, in the Lord, and they go astray, that they will eventually come back to what we taught them. That does happen at times, but not always. It also has various interpretations and thoughts to it.

Remember, Proverbs are not ironclad promises. They are observations about life, given to us by God. So, when we follow the Proverbs, what they say often does come true. But they are not a guarantee. And parents live with guilt, broken hearts, sleepless nights, because they feel they did their best, followed this verse, and yet, their children have drifted.

As we have noted before, this verse may or may not mean what we often use it for. So let me again make note of what is, I believe, being taught here. **Let us begin with the word translated as “train up.”** It can mean to **“dedicate, perceive, understand.”** It means **“to instruct”** or as **Gesenius has it here, “train up a child according to his way, as to his manners and habits.”**

The **“way they should go”** deals with their **“way of acting or living.”** The word for **“way”** has the idea of **“path, road” or “journey, manner.”** But the word itself here is hard to translate and understand and that is why there are various meanings to this verse. Does it mean the way they ought to go vocationally or morally? **(BKC)**. Or does it deal with their personality, or stage of life, or wise, godly living, or as we have noted, their abilities, talents, how God has wired them.

We are to dedicate our children to God and teach them. This phrase here, though, I believe, means more than just spiritual training. It includes helping our kids to understand the way God has made them with certain abilities, personality, talents. They are a “divine design” of God.

Again, there is spiritual instruction here, but it has more to do with also helping them discover their interests, their gifts, their talents. We are to help them find out how they are wired. What do they enjoy and seem to have an aptitude for - electronics, sports, writing, reading, cooking, teaching. Help them become the person God has made them to be. It does, again, include starting them in the right direction in life.

**Key:** But this does not guarantee that they will not go off the path, mess up, sin, leave God. And it does not guarantee that they will return. This Proverb does not teach that. We must help them learn about the Lord and discover their “bent,” how they are created by God.

Our kids are not the same. They are individuals and we need to realize that. God has made our kids certain ways and we need to help them find who they are. There are several possible meanings and interpretations of this verse. The point I am making is that parents have a responsibility to help their children learn the gifts and talents, and how God has wired them.

But, as a rule, when it comes to the spiritual training of children, the influence we have as parents on our children will more often than not, be something they lean on or come back to. But this verse does not just mean what some take it to mean, a guaranteed return. And please do not guilt yourself out about it if you have done your best and they still are not walking with God.

This passage also implies us knowing our kids, being involved in their lives, what they enjoy, what they like doing. Are they painters, outdoors kids? Each child is different. And support them. But let me give a word of advice. If your kid’s activities begin to take the place of church, then may I suggest that you curtail those days.

My daughter could have played on a traveling fastpitch softball team. But one, it was too expensive and two, the games were on Sundays. So that really was a no-go for us and that would have been true even if I was not a pastor. It is about finding balance.