

## The Wise Parent (Part 1)

Selected Proverbs 6/7/09 a.m. CBC

**CT:** Parenting is a 24 hour responsibility that takes God's wisdom and help. The wise parent takes seriously their responsibility to impart wisdom to their children so they heed God's advice to them and understand what effective parenting looks like.

**ENGAGE:** Parenthood can bring great joy and fulfillment as well as great sorrow and heartache. One **new mother** wrote this after the birth of her son: "When we [were] blessed with our baby boy, my nights suddenly became memorable and a lot more meaningful. Despite the fact that I need to stay awake even if it is too late; wake up in the middle of the night for several times to check on his diapers, breastfeed or bottle feed; and, dedicate all my 24 hours to my baby, I still find this very rewarding. With just one smile from my little one, all my stresses [are] gone in [the] snap of a finger... **I simply cannot explain how overwhelm[ed] I am every time I see my [husband] hugging, cradling and singing lullabies to our precious one whenever he arrives home from his office.** Our son gives us the bundle of joy that only he can.... I really thank God for letting me feel and experience the bliss, zeal and fulfillment of having a baby." [cf. <http://realitiesandrealizations.blogspot.com/2008/09/sixty-twenty-four-seven.html> accessed, June 2, 2009]

Most of us as parents can identify with the joy and fulfillment of these new parents. But **parenting can also bring great sorrow and heartache. Sleepless nights** as you worry about decisions made and the direction you see one of your children going. **Angry words** being thrown into your face. The hurt of seeing a son or daughter drift away from the Lord and get caught up in the allurements of this world. Sometimes the pain continues for years.

**FOCUS:** With the possibility of great joy and fulfillment on one hand if our children are wise, but with the realization of the great sorrow & heartache that can come if our children live foolishly, every one of us who are parents must take seriously our responsibility. **Parenting is a 24 seven responsibility that takes God's wisdom & help.** "There is no question that children are a [gift] from the Lord (Psalm 127:3)—but they are a challenge from the Lord as well. In America we have had several generations to witness the results of raising children the world's way, and the evidence could not be more clear: **We need to return to the wisdom of the Lord.**" [D. Jeremiah, *Powerful Principles from Proverbs*, p. 56.]

**SET THE STAGE biblically** [Cf. Jeremiah, 7]: Mark Twain (the pen name of Samuel Clemens) is given credit for the following remark: "**When I was a boy of 14, my father was so ignorant I could hardly stand to have the old man around. But when I got to be 21, I was astonished at how much the old man had learned in seven years.**" If that is a true record of a young man's awakening to wisdom, Mark Twain would not be the first to which it happened. Many a young man or woman has listened to advice from his father and mother and discounted it—until the day he or she needed it. Then suddenly it begins to gradually dawn on the young adult how much wiser their parents are than they ever realized.

Now one of the oldest father-son talks in history is recorded in the book of Proverbs. Solomon was known throughout the surrounding nations for possessing uncanny wisdom, discernment, & insight into all the affairs of people. **Today we begin a sermon series based on the book of Proverbs. Proverbs is the most practical, "hands on" book of the Bible.**

Proverbs provides us with the perspective of a wise man as he observes life. Over the next twelve weeks or so **we will mine wisdom from Solomon's book to apply to crucial areas of our lives. This morning and next week we will look at the wise parent.** My prayer is that today & in the weeks to come, God's Spirit will use proverbs about parenting, purity, partners, the powerful, friends, planning, & the tongue among other areas of life to continue to **transform our hearts and lives.** The principles of wisdom will work for anyone who puts them to use. But it is only those who **fear the Lord** who will want to practice them over a lifetime.

\*\*\*Now as we consider what the book of Proverbs says about various areas of our lives it is important to remember Proverbs isn't a book of promises. **The proverbs** are part of the wisdom literature of the Old Testament and **represent principles, not airtight promises.** As a wise man observes life he instructs us in how to morally and ethically deal with many aspects of life. The teachings of the book of Proverbs guide us in how to lead wise, godly lives and how to avoid the pitfalls of unwise, ungodly conduct.

**PREVIEW:** This morning as we consider the WISE PARENT we are going to see **first** that to be wise parents we must take seriously our responsibility to impart wisdom to our children. **Second,** we will see that to be wise parents we must take to heart God's advice on parenting (and we'll look at three suggestions from Proverbs on parenting. **Finally,** we'll see that while wise parents recognizes there is the possibility of guilt & despair for past failures, the wise parent remembers **God can intervene miraculously in the lives of their children & that God can forgive.** What can we, who are parents, do to be wise as parents?

## **Take seriously your responsibility to impart wisdom to your children.**

**The wise parent takes seriously their responsibility to impart wisdom to their children. Why should parents take seriously their responsibility to impart wisdom to their children?** Again and again Scripture reminds us that wise children bring blessing and joy to us as parents, while foolish children bring heartache and sorrow.

**For the SCRIPTURE READING this morning** please stand with me as I read the purpose of the book of Proverbs found in Prov 1:1-7 [p. 560]; then we'll read together several proverbs together that remind parents of the importance of taking seriously their responsibility to impart wisdom to their children.

SLIDE Men: "A wise child makes a father rejoice, Ladies: "But a foolish child is a grief to his mother" (Prov 10:1 NET). Blank SLIDE

Solomon expands on the callousness of the foolish person who causes grief to his or her mother in Prov 15:20. SLIDE (part A): Men: "A wise child brings joy to his father, Ladies: "But a foolish person despises his mother" (Prov 15:20 NET). SLIDE (part B): Men: "The father of a righteous person will rejoice greatly; whoever fathers a wise child will have joy in him" (Prov 23:24 NET). Blank SLIDE

Having wise children helps to bring affirmation to parents to those who may question their integrity as Prov 27:11 notes: SLIDE: Men: "Be wise, my son, and make my heart glad, so that I may answer anyone who taunts me" (Prov 27:11 NET). Blank SLIDE The expression *anyone who taunts me* refers to those who would reproach or treat this wise person with contempt, condemning him as a poor teacher. Teachers are often criticized for the faults and weaknesses of

their students; but any teacher criticized that way takes pleasure in **pointing to those who have learned as proof that he has not labored in vain.** [Cf. NET notes on Prov 27:11.] Take seriously your responsibility to impart wisdom to make it more likely you can one day point to your wise children as proof they have not learned in vain.

**Why should we, who are parents, take seriously our responsibility to impart wisdom to our children? The results of wise parenting are: joy, peace and honor.** Solomon instructs us that a disciplined child will both relieve our anxiety as parents, as well as bring happiness to us. SLIDE (part A): Ladies: “Discipline your child, and he will give you rest; he will bring you happiness” (Prov 29:17 NET). SLIDE (part B): ALL: “My child, if your heart is wise, then my heart also will be glad; <sup>3:16</sup> my soul will rejoice when your lips speak what is right” (Prov 23:15-16 NET). Blank SLIDE [End of Scripture reading]

**Reit:** In these verses we have read this morning we see that as parents if we are to be wise parents we must take seriously our responsibility to impart wisdom to our children. **The wise parent takes seriously their responsibility to impart wisdom to their children.** Being a parent can bring **great joy, great fulfillment**, as you see your children growing up, and then being responsible and godly adults. Parenting can also though, bring **great grief, great heartache**, when you children continually make the wrong choices, and go there own way. **Trans:** Now to be a wise parent not only must we take seriously our responsibility to impart wisdom to our children, 2<sup>nd</sup>:

## Take to heart God’s advice on parenting.

**The wise parent takes to heart God’s advice to them. I want to give you this morning three suggestions** for wise parenting from Proverbs:

**Take to heart God’s advice on parenting by understanding the generations are dependent upon each other.** Wise parents understand that the generations are dependent upon each other. Do you want to gain greater wisdom as a parent? **Value & cultivate the wisdom of your parents & grandparents.** Ideally, our parents & grandparents lay down the track that we, who are younger, with our strength, run on. Value and cultivate the wisdom of your parents & grandparents. Solomon encourages us to understand **the interdependency the generations have upon each other.** Solomon tells us: The honor of the young is their strength. The strength of the young is a reason for their glorying or boasting. On the other hand, the ornament of old age is gray hair. Solomon observes: SLIDE: “The glory of young men is their strength, and the splendor of old men is gray hair” (Prov 20:29 NET). [BLANK SLIDE] “Gray hair” here represents everything that is valuable about old age—dignity, wisdom, honor, experience, as well as worry and suffering of life. At the very least, since those who are old have survived, they must know something. At the most, **those who are old are knowledgeable, wise, and experienced, revered for their wisdom and good judgment.**

**APPL: Two of the people whose wisdom I value very highly are MY MOTHER & FATHER.** I feel very privileged to have been brought up by the parents God provided for me. I’ve asked both of my parents to share in two or three minutes advice they have for parents. **Would you join me in giving a warm welcome to my father and mother, Bruce & Shirley Osladil.** (Testimonies on parenting by my parents....)

**APPL:** Moms & Dads, value & cultivate the wisdom of your parents & grandparents. Value the input of those who are further down the road of life than you are. Seek their input, their advice.

As a parent, you are responsible for the child or children God has given you, but you do a disservice to your children when you don't draw upon the wisdom of those you have gone before you.

**Reit/Trans:** So take to heart God's advice on parenting by understanding that the generations are dependent upon each other. Secondly:

**Take to heart God's advice on parenting by understanding human nature.** Wise parents understand that our natural tendency as humans is to be foolish. Wise parents realize their children will not grow up wise by themselves. Wise parents understand human depravity. Wise parents realize we are all born sinners in need of God's revelation. Because we inherit a sin nature from our parents, the Bible teaches we are sinners from the very moment our personal existence begins at conception. David in acknowledging his sin makes this statement: SLIDE: "Look, I was guilty of sin from birth, a sinner the moment my mother conceived me" (Ps 51:5 NET). Blank Slide

Not only are our children sinners from birth, they are sinners from the moment of conception. Recognize then no matter how innocent & perfect your child may seem, no child or adult for that matter can claim all their decisions & motives are faultless. SLIDE: "Who can say, 'I have kept my heart clean; I am pure from my sin'"? (Prov 20:9 NET). Blank Slide In this rhetorical question Solomon affirms that no one's decisions and motives are faultless because no one is pure and free of sin.

Wise parents then understand the natural inclination of a child to foolishness, especially the younger child. SLIDE: "Folly is bound up in the heart of a child" (Prov 22:15a). [BLANK SLIDE]

**Reit/Trans:** Take to heart God's advice on parenting by understanding the generations are dependent upon each other; understand human nature; and third:

**Take to heart God's advice on parenting by believing that training is effective (both verbal and corporeal).** Believe that training your children both with your words and physical discipline is effective. Again & again God encourages you & me as parents to train & discipline our children.

Parents understand not only their children have a sinful nature, they also understand the place of physical chastening for direction or punishment of their child, to suppress folly and develop potential. SLIDE: "Folly is bound up in the heart of a child but the rod of discipline will drive it far from him" (Prov 22:15 NET). Blank Slide

**APPL:** Every child needs discipline. Unfortunately, the world has adopted a hands-off perspective that children should be allowed to blossom with little or no guidance. The same thing is happening to children that would happen if you suddenly ran a train off the end of the tracks with no more rails to guide it—the train wrecks. The landscape of our society is **littered with the lives** of undisciplined young people, and chronological adults who have grown in years but not in maturity or wisdom. [Cf. D. Jeremiah, 58.]

God warns us lack of discipline can lead a child to an early death. It is your duty as a parent to discipline your children. SLIDE: "Discipline your child, for there is hope, but do not set your heart on causing his death" (Prov 19:18 NET). Blank Slide Solomon instructs parents: "Discipline your children because change is possible due to their youth and the fact they are not set in their ways." It is so much easier to curb wrong behavior when your children are young and

more moldable and pliable. “The age at which to begin disciplining your children is ... when you see the seeds of willful defiance to authority begin to germinate in their hearts... Defiance must be confronted early or it will blossom into full-fledged rebellion” (cf. Jeremiah, 59).

APP: While as parents you are responsible to discipline your child or children, Solomon warns: “No parent has the right to take discipline to the extreme and destroy or kill their child.” No parent should, under any circumstances in the name of biblical discipline, do anything to emotionally or physically abuse a child. **True discipline is corrective, not abusive, in nature.** God has provided a padded area of the anatomy that can receive mildly painful corrective measures without harming a child in any way. \*\*When parents use physical or verbal correction as a means for taking out their own frustrations or anger, children can easily become embittered (as Paul warns in Ephesians 6:4). Discipline of children is not a means for parents to let off steam or retaliate or seek vengeance against their child. If you are angry at your child, wait to discipline him. The line between discipline and abuse is too thin to risk doing anything that would harden your child against you, and ultimately against God” (cf. D. Jeremiah, 61).

**Trans:** As parents, don’t be weary in well-doing. The training and discipline you provide for your children now, especially in their formative years, can help to set the direction of their lives. As Solomon observes life he exhorts and notes: SLIDE: “Train a child in the way that he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it” (**Prov 22:6 NET**). Blank Slide This proverb pictures a child who is dedicated by parents to the Lord and then morally trained to follow the Lord. The focus here in particular is on your child’s young formative years.

APPL: **How quickly children grow up!** ILL: I think of the series of commercials Nationwide Insurance have with the theme: Life comes at your fast: In one a parent is pushing their young child on the swing, suddenly the swing comes back and the child is full grown and knocks the parent down. In another a parent puts their young child in a car seat in the backseat, they get in the front seat and when they look back there is their full-grown child sitting in the back! How quickly our children grow up!

As a parent: Recognize your child as a gift from God. Morally train your child to follow the Lord. The expected consequence of such training is that it will last throughout life. While children must ultimately choose if they will follow your instruction as a parent, in general the character-forming training you provide now when your children are in their young formative years, provides a foundation for their lives. Solomon observes that you can anticipate positive results from careful child-training – **but there may be an occasional exception.** (Again remember proverbs are not providing airtight promises, but rather principles.)

**Again & again Solomon exhorts and encourages us who are parents to train our children. Wise parents take these exhortations to heart and believe that training is effective.** God wants you as a parent to understand that discipline helps your child to a full life. SLIDE: “Do not withhold discipline from a child; even if you strike him with the rod, he will not die. <sup>23:14</sup> If you strike him with the rod, you will deliver him from death” (Prov 23:13-14 NET). Blank Slide Disciplining your child can help prevent his or her premature death through their own foolishness. APPL: Solomon doesn’t say your child won’t sound like he’s dying, or try to convince you he’s dying. It just says he won’t die as a result of your discipline administered with biblical wisdom. “Some parents don’t discipline their children physically because they’re afraid they may inflict some sort of physical harm on them... ‘I don’t want to hurt them physically.’ ‘I don’t want to scar them emotionally.’ ‘I’m afraid I’ll be reported to the authorities for child

abuse.’ These are all excuses which fly directly in the face of Scripture: Corporal discipline, administered lovingly and with wisdom (skill) will not harm your child. In fact, it is what will save his life” (cf. Jeremiah, 60).

Disciplining your child for the purpose of correcting him or her helps your child learn wisdom. When you let your child be unruly and do whatever he or she wants you lay the foundation for bringing shame back upon yourself as a parent. In Prov 29:15 we read: SLIDE: “A rod and reproof impart wisdom, but a child who is unrestrained brings shame to his mother” (Prov 29:15 NET). Blank Slide Engaging in a process of discipline that is designed to correct your child can help him or her see life from God’s perspective. Children who grow up unrestrained, on the other hand, ultimately bring grief to their parents (cf. Prov 17:21).

**REIT/TRANS [TO 3<sup>RD</sup> MAJOR PT]:** The wise parent takes seriously their responsibility to impart wisdom to their children. The wise parent takes to heart God’s advice on parenting (and we gave you three suggestions for wise parenting from Proverbs: **Understand the generations are dependent upon each other.** **Understand human nature (recognizing the sin nature of your child).** **Believe that training your children both with your words and physical discipline is effective.** Finally we see that:

**While the wise parent recognizes there is the possibility of guilt and despair for past failures, the wise parent remembers God can intervene miraculously in the lives of their children and that God can forgive.**

**There is the possibility of guilt and despair for past failures.** All of us who have the privilege of being parents can look back and see times when you could have done better as parents. As we remember past failures **we can be overcome with guilt and despair.** We see how our failures could have influenced poor decisions are children made. At the same time we must remember that ultimately our children are responsible for the decisions they make. We have our children for 18 years or so and then there comes that time where they are responsible for their actions. As you may recall it was those twenty and over who were held responsible by God and not allowed to enter the promised land. God’s will is not fulfilled by your continuing to feel guilt and despair for past failures.

**TWO TRUTHS I believe can help us: First remember: God can intervene miraculously in the lives of children.** Keep on praying for your wayward children. If a solid foundation was laid for their lives, often, although not always they may return to it. Keep on praying. Trans: A second truth that can help you deal with guilt and despair for past failures is to remember: **God can forgive.** God promises, SLIDE: “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous, forgiving us our sins and cleansing us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9 NET). [BLANK SLIDE] The result of agreeing with God about our sins, is that God forgives us our sins and cleanses us from all unrighteousness. Accept God’s forgiveness for your sins and failures as a father or mother.

ILL: As I’ve shared with you before I appreciate the grace God showed in drawing me back to Himself when I had wandered from the Lord during my high school years. One of the key actions my parents took was coming to that point where they just committed me to the Lord in prayer.

We are in a spiritual battle for the lives and destiny of our children. We must be prepared ourselves as parents, committed to the Lord ourselves. Commit yourself to being a man or woman of God yourself.

**[Closing challenge...** Purpose by God's grace to be what God wants you to be, so that in turn you can have the most positive impact on your children/grandchildren and those around you.]  
(Salvation invitation as well)