

The Wise Parent (Part 2)

Selected Proverbs (6/14/09 a.m. CBC)

Topic: What does effective parenting look like?

Assertion: Solomon in the book of Proverbs gives us at least four ways we can be more effective in training our children.

Central Truth: Wise parents understand the nature of effective training. You can be more effective in your parenting by consistently practicing these four actions: 1) Be united with your spouse in your training; 2) Set a good example for your children; 3) Do not be overly protective of your children; and 4) Pray regularly for your children.

ENGAGE: Parenting has its challenges. One stressed mother wrote: **Things I've Learned From My Children:** (Honest and No Kidding)—an anonymous mother [Cf. 10,000 Sermon Illustrations: Parenting]. Of her list of 27+ lessons learned I've chosen the top ten:

1. There is no such thing as child-proofing your house.
2. A 4-year-old's voice is louder than 200 adults in a crowded restaurant.
3. If you hook a dog leash over a ceiling fan, the motor is not strong enough to rotate a 42-pound boy wearing pound puppy underwear and a superman cape.
4. It **is** strong enough, however, to spread paint on all four walls of a 20 by 20 foot room.
5. Baseballs make marks on ceilings.
6. You should not throw baseballs up when the ceiling fan is on.
7. When using the ceiling fan as a bat you have to throw the ball up a few times before you get a hit.
8. A ceiling fan can hit a baseball a long way.
9. The glass in windows (even double pane) doesn't stop a baseball hit by a ceiling fan. And finally number ten, of the top ten things a mother learned from her children:
10. When you hear the toilet flush and the words "uh-oh," it's already too late.

Yes, parenting has it's challenges. Besides the normal stresses of parenting, there's **the pressure of a society that tends to ignore God.** In an article on parenting entitled, "Whoa! What a Concept! An unknown author writes: (Cf. 10,000 Sermon Illustrations: parenting.)

Whoa! What in the world is happening with our kids today? Let's see...I think it started when Madelyn Murray O'Hair complained that she didn't want any prayer in our schools, and we said OK.

Then someone said you had better not read the Bible in school-the Bible that says thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not steal, and love your neighbor as yourself. And we said, OK.

Remember Dr. Benjamin Spock, who said we shouldn't spank our children when they misbehave, because their little personalities would be warped and we might damage their self-esteem? And we said, OK, we won't spank them.

Then someone said that teachers and principals better not discipline our children when they misbehave. And our administrators said whoa, no one in this school better touch a student when they misbehave because we don't want any bad publicity, and we surely don't want to be sued.

Then someone said, let's let our daughters have abortions if they want, and we won't even have to tell their parents. And we said, that's a grand idea.

Then someone else said, let's give our sons all the condoms they want, so they can have all the "fun" they desire, and we won't have to tell their parents. And we said, that's another great idea.

And then some of our top officials said that it doesn't matter what we do in private as long as we do our jobs. And we said, that's okay as long as I have a job and the economy is good. It doesn't matter to me what anyone does in private.

So now we're asking ourselves why our children have no conscience, why they don't know right from wrong, and why it doesn't bother them to kill.

Probably, if we think about it long and hard enough, we can figure it out. I think it has a great deal to do with "we reap what we sow." Whoa! What a concept!

FOCUS: How can we, as parents be more effective in training our children? How can we be more effective in passing on to the next generation God's wisdom and truth?

SET THE STAGE biblically: This morning we continue our study of the book of Proverbs by looking at **four keys to effective parenting**. Last week we noted that to be wise parents we must take seriously our responsibility to impart wisdom to our children. **Second**, we saw that to be wise parents we must take to heart God's advice on parenting (and we looked at three suggestions from Proverbs on parenting. [We said wise parents understand the generations are dependent upon each other. Wise parents understand human nature (recognizing the sin nature of their child). Wise parents believe that training their children both with their words and physical discipline is effective.] **Finally**, we noted that while wise parents recognize 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**.

Preview: Now this morning we will see that **wise parents understand the nature of effective training**. Wise parents not only believe that training is effective (both verbal and corporeal training), wise parents understand the nature of effective training. **What does effective parenting look like?** How can we become better as parents in effectively training our children? I believe Solomon in the book of Proverbs gives us at least **four keys to help us be more effective in parenting**.

Scripture Reading: Underlying all we do as parents is the importance that we keep God's Word before us to guide what we do, and that we impart God's wisdom and truth to our children. Moses sums up God's command to the nation of Israel in Deut 6. For the Scripture reading this morning turn with me to **Deut 6:6-9 [p. 165]**

How can you, as a parent be more effective in training your children? How can you be more effective in passing on to the next generation God's wisdom and truth? As a parent:

You will be more effective in your parenting by being united with your spouse in your training.

It is important for you as a mother and father to be on the same page when it comes to your parenting. You will be more effective in training your children by being united with your spouse in your training. Turn with me in your Bibles to Prov 1:8. [Read from NKJV; as well as NET] “Listen, my child, to the instruction from your father, and do not forsake the teaching from your mother” (Prov 1:8 NET).

APPL: It is important for you & your spouse to be united in the training of your children. Work together as a team. Don’t undermine the authority of your spouse. If you have disagreements work those out apart from the children. Be united in the training of your children.

[APPL for children:] Now for you that are children, when God commands you to “listen” to the instruction from your father and not forsake your mother’s teaching, God’s command “listen” שָׁמַע (*shéma*, “Listen!”) means: “**Immediately obey your parents’ instruction.**” It is important that you learn to **instantly obey** what your parents tell you to do.

ILL: One day a boy, whose parents were missionaries in South America was told by his father: “Johnny, stop! Don’t move!” Johnny stopped. Then his father said, “Johnny I want you to slowly come toward me.” The father had seen a poisonous snake there in front of his son. If his son had not learned to instantly obey his parents, he may have been bitten and may have died.

ILL: I recall the time Janel and I were with our children in Chicago, crossing a very busy street to go to a park across the street. We had parked the car, and were going to the park directly across the street from the car. The street was divided with a small strip of cement separating the traffic coming in either direction. I started out across the street with some of the children, intending to only go half way. One of our daughters who was perhaps 5 or 6 at the time, got to the middle but instead of stopping for oncoming traffic started to step out in front of cars that were coming. I yelled her name, and said, “Stop.” Fortunately, she stopped immediately. If she had gone another few steps she very likely might have been hit by an oncoming vehicle.

APPL: Children, God is pleased as you instantly obey what your parents tell you to do. So when your parents tell you to empty the trash, or put the dishes in the dishwasher, or clean your room, do what your parents tell you right away. Don’t argue with them. Instantly obey your parents, and obey with a good attitude. (Don’t obey with a complaining spirit....why do I always have to do ALL the work....) **Listening and obeying your parents’ instruction will help you to become a gracious and charming person,** Solomon tells us (cf. **Prov 1:9**). God will honor you for your obedience. Look at Prov 1:8-9 [Read from NKJV and NET] “Listen, my child, to the instruction from your father, and do not forsake the teaching from your mother. ^{1:9} For they will be like an elegant garland on your head, and like pendants around your neck” (Prov 1:8-9 NET).

Children, by learning to instantly obey your parents’ instruction, you become a person who is pleasant and agreeable. You will be a person who is a delight to be around.

APPL to Parents: Now for us, who are parents, let’s be careful not to send our children mixed messages. Be agreed as a couple on the best course of action with your children.

Remember one of the best ways you give security to your children is by keeping your relationship with your spouse a priority in your life. **One of the best ways to give security to**

your children is by you and your spouse being united together, having a solid relationship with one another.

ILL: Phillip Yancey in his book, *What's So Amazing About Grace* writes: I have a friend whose marriage has gone through tumultuous times. **One night George passed a breaking point.** He pounded the table and the floor. "I hate you!" **he screamed at his wife.** "I won't take it anymore! I've had enough! I won't go on! I won't let it happen! No! No! No!" Several months later this friend woke up in the middle of the night and **heard strange sounds** coming from the room where his two-year-old son slept. He padded down the hall, stood for a moment outside his son's door, and shivers ran through his flesh. He could not draw a breath. **In a soft voice, the two-year-old was repeating word for word with precise inflection the argument between his mother and father.** "I hate you. I won't take it anymore! No! No! No!" [Yancey, 120.]

Do you want to give security to your children? Make sure you make your spouse a priority above your children.

APPL: Many of us as parents sacrifice time and money to help our children excel in music, sports, and social activities. Involvement in these activities can teach children personal discipline and other positive qualities. However, it's even more important that as parents we are concerned that our children excel in **knowing and obeying the Word of God.**

Dads, how important that we urge our children to listen to Wisdom and obey what they hear! **Both dads and moms are to be involved in teaching their children to be wise.** In the passage of Scripture we read for our Scripture reading this morning (Deut 6:6-9) we were reminded of the importance that as parents, moms and dads, we drill God's Word into our children (cf. Deut 6:6-9).

God says to us as Dads and Moms: "Keep Christ's commands in mind yourself. Then pass Christ's commands on to your children." **Help your children clearly understand what God expects from us.** Teach your children to obey Christ's commands. **Make use of teachable opportunities that life brings to us.** Be faithful in training your children.

ILL: I appreciate what one person has written: We had the meanest parents in the whole world! While other kids ate candy for breakfast, we had to have cereal, eggs, and toast. When others had a Pepsi and a Twinkie for lunch, we had to eat sandwiches. And you can guess our parents fixed us a dinner that was different than other kids had too.

Our parents insisted on knowing where we were at all times. You'd think we were convicts in a prison. They had to know who our friends were, and what we were doing with them. They insisted that if we said we would be gone for an hour, we would be gone for an hour or less.

We were ashamed to admit it, but they had the nerve to break the "Child Labor Laws" by making us work. We had to wash the dishes, make the beds, learn to cook, vacuum the floor, do laundry, and all sorts of cruel jobs. I think they would lay awake at night thinking of more things for us to do.

They always insisted on us telling the truth the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. By the time we were teenagers, they could read our minds, and life was really tough.

They wouldn't let our friends just honk the horn when they drove up. They had to come up to the door so they could meet them. While everyone else could date when they were 12 or 13, we had to wait until we were 18.

Because of our parents we missed out on lots of things other kids experienced. None of us have ever been caught shoplifting, vandalizing other's property, or ever arrested for any crime. It was all their fault. We never got drunk, took up smoking, stayed out all night, or a million other things other kids did.

Sundays were reserved for church, and we never missed once. We knew better than to ask to spend the night with a friend on Saturdays.

Now that we have left home, we are all God-fearing, educated, honest adults. We are doing our best to be mean parents just like our parents were. The world just doesn't have enough mean parents anymore. (Cf. 10,000 Sermon III: Parenting)

Trans: How can you, as a parent, be more effective in training your children? How can you be more effective in passing on to the next generation God's wisdom and truth? As a parent you will be more effective in training your children by being united with your spouse in your training. Be united in seeking God and His Word, and pass that on to your children. A second way to be more effective as a parent is this:

You will be more effective in your parenting by setting a good example for your children (Prov 4).

Set a good example for your children. Live such a good and admirable life that your children see God's wisdom and grace through your life. Wise parents recognize that in the end, our children pay more attention to what we do, than what we say. **The best way to prepare your children to know God is to know Him yourself and act like Him as consistently as possible.** If we want our children to pursue godliness, we need to be pursuing godliness ourselves.

APPL to non-parents: This key to effective parenting is also true for us as we seek to disciple others. You will be more effective in training those you disciple by setting a positive example for those you disciple to follow. Note how a wise father instructs his children. **Turn with me in your Bibles to Prov 4 (read vv. 1-11)** then note in v. 11: *"I have taught you in the way of wisdom; I have led you in right paths"* (Prov 4:11 NKJV). The father tells his son: "I will guide you in the way of wisdom and I will lead you in upright paths" (Prov 4:11 NET). **The implication is, "I am going to set a good example for you to follow.**

I appreciate what Warren Wiersbe [Be Skillful, Prov 4:1] says here: "Some children don't like to hear Dad say, 'Now, back when I was a boy . . . ' but they might learn a lot if they paid attention and listened." Children, you father learned wisdom from his father and now he's passing it on to you. You represent the next generation. One day you will have a responsibility to pass on God's wisdom to your children. Parent's passing on God's wisdom to the next generation is the primary way God has ordained for His truth to be preserved and invested from generation to generation (cf. Deut. 6:3-9; Eph. 6:1-4; 2 Tim. 1:3-5; 2:2; 3:14-17). **If you have godly parents and grandparents give thanks to the Lord for your rich heritage.**

APPL & ILL: Do you want to be more effective in training your children? Set a good example for your children. Seek to consistently practice what you teach. **We want to teach our children to learn to be patient. Then we go to a restaurant with our family.** We are hungry and we are in a hurry. We watch as the waitress takes the orders for two other tables of people **who came in after us!** We finally get someone's attention and we're able to place our order. But meanwhile we are expressing to one another how upset we are over the poor service. "She's not going to get

much of a tip,” we murmur. Meanwhile, our children observe our poor behavior. **Part of setting a good example for our children is having the humility to admit to our children when we have been wrong.** Our children are helped when they see that Dad and Mom are not perfect, but when they do something wrong, they admit it and ask forgiveness of those they wrong. **You will be more effective in training your children by setting a good example for your children.**

When you sin against your children through anger or perhaps through an unjust punishment, repent, tell your child you were wrong. Ask forgiveness. Show your child in the Bible why you were wrong. Parents, by you repenting and telling your child you were wrong you help to teach your children at an early age to learn how to take responsibility for their behavior, admit when they are wrong. You teach them to ask forgiveness, and forgive others by saying, “I forgive you.”

In setting a good example for your children you reinforce to your children that following God’s way is the best route to take through life. **You teach your children that following God’s way helps us avoid many of the potholes, detours, and dangers of life.** God’s commands are similar to the yellow lane lanes on roads. They help us as travelers stay on the proper part of the road so we don’t have accidents and hurt ourselves and other people. (cf. Constable). **Note the warning & exhortation the father gives to his son in Prov 4:12-27 (Read)....** While all of us we face trials and testings, life tends to go much better as we embrace God’s wisdom!

Trans/Reit: You will be more effective in training your children by being united in your training. You will be more effective in training your children by setting a good example for your children. A third key to understand about the nature of effective parenting is this:

You will be more effective in your parenting by not being overly protective.

As parents one of our basic desires is to protect our children. This is a natural tendency for us and it is needed. Children are not born with an awareness of many of the dangers in life. As parents, we like a mother bear, want to protect our children. We naturally help our children learn about the various dangers they need to avoid.

APPL: The danger comes though, when we become overly protective and don’t make our children aware of dangers. I think **one of the blessings of reading through the Bible with your children can be that the Bible deals openly with the sin and its consequences.** As we would read through the Bible with our family and we came across passages such as the sin at Sodom recorded in Gen 19, we sought to discuss these sins on an age appropriate level.

Here in the book of Proverbs **we see the father dealing aggressively with the subject of temptation.** Solomon deals with two areas in particular: temptation of sexual immorality, and the temptation of strong drink. The father explains the dangers of the adulteress to his son. The father does not want his son to encounter her, being naïve to her ways. Solomon describes looking out of his house (v. 7) and seeing one of the naïve young men intentionally making his way to go to the adulterous woman. The wise father goes on to describe how the adulteress woman flatters and entices the inexperienced young man to partake of her charms and the consequences (**Read Prov 7:21-27**).

The wise father in Proverbs also warns his children about strong drink. **See Prov 23:19-21 NKJV**: Hear, my son, and be wise; And guide your heart in the way. 20 Do not mix with winebibbers, *Or* with gluttonous eaters of meat; 21 For the drunkard and the glutton will come to poverty, And drowsiness will clothe *a man* with rags.” In other words the wise father warns his children don’t associate with or hang around drunkards (those drinking too much); don’t associate with those who overeat. Drunkenness and gluttony brings poverty brought on by overindulging in physical pleasures to one’s own hurt.

In our desire to protect our children, we need to recognize that part of protecting our children is making them aware (at an age appropriate time) of dangers. We see a good example of what this looks like in Prov 7. We also see an example of this in Prov 1 as a wise father warns his son of not getting involved with the wrong crowd. **Turn with me in your Bibles to Prov 1 (read vv. 10-19).** The wise father warns his son that getting involved with the wrong crowd leads to destruction. The greed of those described leads to their destruction. They don’t intend to destroy themselves, but this is what happens.

Trans: What does effective parenting look like? You will be more effective in your parenting by being united in your training. You will be more effective in your parenting by setting a good example for your children. You will be more effective in your parenting by not being overly protective. Fourth:

Your will be more effective in your parenting by consistently praying for your children.

The Lord wants each of us, whether we are parents or not, to roll **all** our burdens on Him. God wants you and me to depend completely on Him for all we do, including our parenting. Turn with me in your Bibles to Prov 16:3 (NKJV): “Commit your works to the Lord, And your thoughts [i.e., your plans] will be established.” [NET note: The verb “to commit (לָאָסַף) is from a Hebrew root word (לָלַף that means “to roll.” We need to depend on the Lord for all we do, including our parenting. The figure of rolling, as in rolling one’s burdens on the Lord, portrays our complete dependence on the Lord. We accomplish this as we come with a spirit of humility **and diligently pray about our situation.** We hold the plans we make with an open hand before the Lord, seeking God’s direction in what we do.

APPL: God tells you and me: **“Humbly commit yourself and your situation to me by means of diligent prayer. Be diligent in your prayers for your children.”** Prayer does not come naturally to any of us. It takes effort for us to be disciplined to consistently go to God in prayer. Yet how much we need God!

Could it be that one reason we have great problems is that God wants to show us great solutions? God longs to show us the riches of His grace and the poverty of our own resources. Through prayer God demonstrates the riches of His grace to us and also how much we need him (cf. Jeremiah, *Prayer*, 12).

Nothing is impossible with God. **Keep looking up to God for the strength and grace you need as a parent, and keep praying for your children.**

As we see our children desire to imitate us, whether consciously or unconsciously we are reminded of our need to pray. ILL: A father wrote: *Make Me What He Thinks I Am*

A teardrop crept into my eye as I knelt on bended knee;
Next to a gold haired tiny lad whose age was just past three.

He prayed with such simplicity “Please make me big and strong,
Just like Daddy, don’t you see? Watch o’er me all night long.”

“Jesus, make me tall and brave, like my Daddy next to me.”
This simple prayer he prayed tonight filled my heart with humility.

As I heard his voice so wee and small offer his prayer to God,
I thought these little footsteps someday my path may trod!

Oh, Lord, as I turn my eyes above and guidance ask from Thee;
Keep my walk ever so straight for the little feet that follow me.
[Sustain] me when I stumble, and lift me when I fail,
Guard this tiny bit of boy as he travels down life’s trail.

Make me what he thinks I am is my humble gracious plea
Help me ever be the man this small lad sees in me! (Cf. 10,000 Sermon Illustrations: Parenting)

May that be the desire of each of us as parents! May our desire for our children be for them to
find God’s path and walk it with us forever. **Video clip** (in place of closing song): **In his steps:**

Cf: <http://www.worshiphousemedia.com/mini-movies/13948/In-His-Shoes>