

Proverbs on Parenting

Biblical Wisdom on the Parent-Child Relationship

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Introduction

The following pages summarize in outline form the teaching of the book of Proverbs on the subject of parent-child relationships. The entire book was scanned for references of any kind to parents and children. These references were then classified according to the scheme listed below. In cases where multiple references reiterated the same principle, a representative number of references were included.

It should be noted that only overt references to the parent-child relationship were included in this study. Therefore, while the book of Proverbs contains much advice from Solomon to his sons, only those passages that specifically mention parents or children were considered.

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I. The Duties of Parents

A. Material Provision

13:22 ²² A good [man] leaveth an inheritance to his children's children: and the wealth of the sinner [is] laid up for the just.

19:14 ¹⁴ House and riches [are] the inheritance of fathers: and a prudent wife [is] from the LORD.

31:10, 15, 21, 27 ¹⁰ Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price [is] far above rubies. . . .
¹⁵ She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens. . . .²¹ She is not afraid of the snow for her household: for all her household [are] clothed with scarlet. . . .²⁷ She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness.

B. Moral & Spiritual Instruction

1:8 ⁸ My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother:

3:1 ¹ My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments:

4:1-4 ¹ Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father, and attend to know understanding. ² For I give you good doctrine, forsake ye not my law. ³ For I was my father's son, tender and only [beloved] in the sight of my mother. ⁴ He taught me also, and said unto me, Let thine heart retain my words: keep my commandments, and live.

4:10 ¹⁰ Hear, O my son, and receive my sayings; and the years of thy life shall be many.

8:32 ³² Now therefore hearken unto me, O ye children: for blessed [are they that] keep my ways.

20:7 ⁷ The just [man] walketh in his integrity: his children [are] blessed after him.

22:6 ⁶ Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

23:19 ¹⁹ Hear thou, my son, and be wise, and guide thine heart in the way.

23:26 ²⁶ My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways.

1. Positive Spiritual Influences

1:10, 15 ¹⁰ My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not. . . .¹⁵ My son, walk not thou in the way with them; refrain thy foot from their path:

19:27 ²⁷ Cease, my son, to hear the instruction [that causeth] to err from the words of knowledge.

24:21-22 ²¹ My son, fear thou the LORD and the king: [and] meddle not with them that are given to change: ²² For their calamity shall rise suddenly; and who knoweth the ruin of them both?

2. The Knowledge of God

2:1-5 ¹ My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; ² So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, [and] apply thine heart to understanding; ³ Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, [and] liftest up thy voice for understanding; ⁴ If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as [for] hid treasures; ⁵ Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God.

3:11-12 ¹¹ My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; neither be weary of his correction: ¹² For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son [in whom] he delighteth.

24:21 ²¹ My son, fear thou the LORD and the king: [and] meddle not with them that are given to change:

3. Sexual Purity

5:7-8 ⁷ Hear me now therefore, O ye children, and depart not from the words of my mouth. ⁸ Remove thy way far from her, and come not nigh the door of her house:

5:20 ²⁰ And why wilt thou, my son, be ravished with a strange woman, and embrace the bosom of a stranger?

7:24-25 ²⁴ Hearken unto me now therefore, O ye children, and attend to the words of my mouth. ²⁵ Let not thine heart decline to her ways, go not astray in her paths.

23:26-27 ²⁶ My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways. ²⁷ For a whore [is] a deep ditch; and a strange woman [is] a narrow pit.

31:1-3 ¹ The words of king Lemuel, the prophecy that his mother taught him. ² What, my son? and what, the son of my womb? and what, the son of my vows? ³ Give not thy strength unto women, nor thy ways to that which destroyeth kings.

4. Financial Integrity

6:1-3 ¹ My son, if thou be surety for thy friend, [if] thou hast stricken thy hand with a stranger, ² Thou art snared with the words of thy mouth, thou art taken with the words of thy mouth. ³ Do this now, my son, and deliver thyself, when thou art come into the hand of thy friend; go, humble thyself, and make sure thy friend.

5. Abstinence from Alcohol

23:19-21 ¹⁹ Hear thou, my son, and be wise, and guide thine heart in the way. ²⁰ Be not among winebibbers; among riotous eaters of flesh: ²¹ For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty: and drowsiness shall clothe [a man] with rags.

31:4-5 ⁴ [It is] not for kings, O Lemuel, [it is] not for kings to drink wine; nor for princes strong drink: ⁵ Lest they drink, and forget the law, and pervert the judgment of any of the afflicted.

6. Respect for Authority

24:21 ²¹ My son, fear thou the LORD and the king: [and] meddle not with them that are given to change:

C. Moral Correction

1. Correction in General

3:11-12 ¹¹ My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; neither be weary of his correction: ¹² For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son [in whom] he delighteth.

13:1 ¹ A wise son [heareth] his father's instruction: but a scorner heareth not rebuke.

15:5 ⁵ A fool despiseth his father's instruction: but he that regardeth reproof is prudent.

19:18 ¹⁸ Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying.

2. Physical Correction

13:24 ²⁴ He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.

22:15 ¹⁵ Foolishness [is] bound in the heart of a child; [but] the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.

23:13-14 ¹³ Withhold not correction from the child: for [if] thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. ¹⁴ Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell.

29:15,17 ¹⁵ The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left [to himself] bringeth his mother to shame. . . . ¹⁷ Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul.

II. The Duties of Children

A. Attention

1:8 ⁸ My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother:

2:1 ¹ My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee;

4:1 ¹ Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father, and attend to know understanding.

4:20-21 ²⁰ My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings. ²¹ Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart.

5:1-2, 7 ¹ My son, attend unto my wisdom, [and] bow thine ear to my understanding: ² That thou mayest regard discretion, and [that] thy lips may keep knowledge. . . . ⁷ Hear me now therefore, O ye children, and depart not from the words of my mouth.

7:24 ²⁴ Hearken unto me now therefore, O ye children, and attend to the words of my mouth.

8:32 ³² Now therefore hearken unto me, O ye children: for blessed [are they that] keep my ways.

13:1 ¹ A wise son [heareth] his father's instruction: but a scorner heareth not rebuke.

23:26 ²⁶ My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways.

B. Obedience

3:1 ¹ My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments:

3:21 ²¹ My son, let not them depart from thine eyes: keep sound wisdom and discretion:

6:20-21 ²⁰ My son, keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother: ²¹ Bind them continually upon thine heart, [and] tie them about thy neck.

7:1-3 ¹ My son, keep my words, and lay up my commandments with thee. ² Keep my commandments, and live; and my law as the apple of thine eye. ³ Bind them upon thy fingers, write them upon the table of thine heart.

20:11 ¹¹ Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work [be] pure, and whether [it be] right.

28:7 ⁷ Whoso keepeth the law [is] a wise son: but he that is a companion of riotous [men] shameth his father.

C. Respect

15:5 ⁵ A fool despiseth his father's instruction: but he that regardeth reproof is prudent.

15:20 ²⁰ A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish man despiseth his mother.

19:26 ²⁶ He that wasteth [his] father, [and] chaseth away [his] mother, [is] a son that causeth shame, and bringeth reproach.

20:20 ²⁰ Whoso curseth his father or his mother, his lamp shall be put out in obscure darkness.

23:22 ²² Hearken unto thy father that begat thee, and despise not thy mother when she is old.

28:24 ²⁴ Whoso robbeth his father or his mother, and saith, [It is] no transgression; the same [is] the companion of a destroyer.

30:11 ¹¹ [There is] a generation [that] curseth their father, and doth not bless their mother.

30:17 ¹⁷ The eye [that] mocketh at [his] father, and despiseth to obey [his] mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it.

III. The Impact of the Relationship

A. On Parents

10:5 ⁵ He that gathereth in summer [is] a wise son: [but] he that sleepeth in harvest [is] a son that causeth shame.

17:2 ² A wise servant shall have rule over a son that causeth shame, and shall have part of the inheritance among the brethren.

19:26 ²⁶ He that wasteth [his] father, [and] chaseth away [his] mother, [is] a son that causeth shame, and bringeth reproach.

1. On Fathers

10:1 ¹ The proverbs of Solomon. A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish son [is] the heaviness of his mother.

15:20 ²⁰ A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish man despiseth his mother.

17:6 ⁶ Children's children [are] the crown of old men; and the glory of children [are] their fathers.

17:21, 25 ²¹ He that begetteth a fool [doeth it] to his sorrow: and the father of a fool hath no joy. . . . ²⁵ A foolish son [is] a grief to his father, and bitterness to her that bare him.

19:13 ¹³ A foolish son [is] the calamity of his father: and the contentions of a wife [are] a continual dropping.

23:15 ¹⁵ My son, if thine heart be wise, my heart shall rejoice, even mine.

23:24-25 ²⁴ The father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice: and he that begetteth a wise [child] shall have joy of him. ²⁵ Thy father and thy mother shall be glad, and she that bare thee shall rejoice.

27:11 ¹¹ My son, be wise, and make my heart glad, that I may answer him that reproacheth me.

28:7 ⁷ Whoso keepeth the law [is] a wise son: but he that is a companion of riotous [men] shameth his father.

29:3 ³ Whoso loveth wisdom rejoiceth his father: but he that keepeth company with harlots spendeth [his] substance.

29:17 ¹⁷ Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul.

2. On Mothers

10:1 ¹ The proverbs of Solomon. A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish son [is] the heaviness of his mother.

15:20 ²⁰ A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish man despiseth his mother.

17:25 ²⁵ A foolish son [is] a grief to his father, and bitterness to her that bare him.

23:24-25 ²⁴ The father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice: and he that begetteth a wise [child] shall have joy of him. ²⁵ Thy father and thy mother shall be glad, and she that bare thee shall rejoice.

29:15 ¹⁵ The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left [to himself] bringeth his mother to shame.

31:10, 27-28 ¹⁰ Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price [is] far above rubies. . . .
²⁷ She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness. ²⁸ Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband [also], and he praiseth her.

B. On Children

1:8-9 ⁸ My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother: ⁹ For they [shall be] an ornament of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck.

2:1-5 ¹ My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; ² So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, [and] apply thine heart to understanding; ³ Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, [and] liftest up thy voice for understanding; ⁴ If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as [for] hid treasures; ⁵ Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God.

3:1-2 ¹ My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments: ² For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee.

3:21-22 ²¹ My son, let not them depart from thine eyes: keep sound wisdom and discretion: ²² So shall they be life unto thy soul, and grace to thy neck.

4:3-4 ³ For I was my father's son, tender and only [beloved] in the sight of my mother. ⁴ He taught me also, and said unto me, Let thine heart retain my words: keep my commandments, and live.

4:10 ¹⁰ Hear, O my son, and receive my sayings; and the years of thy life shall be many.

4:20-22 ²⁰ My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings. ²¹ Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart. ²² For they [are] life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh.

6:20-22 ²⁰ My son, keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother: ²¹ Bind them continually upon thine heart, [and] tie them about thy neck. ²² When thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; and [when] thou awakest, it shall talk with thee.

8:32 ³² Now therefore hearken unto me, O ye children: for blessed [are they that] keep my ways.

17:6 ⁶ Children's children [are] the crown of old men; and the glory of children [are] their fathers.

20:11 ¹¹ Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work [be] pure, and whether [it be] right.

20:20 ²⁰ Whoso curseth his father or his mother, his lamp shall be put out in obscure darkness.

24:13-14 ¹³ My son, eat thou honey, because [it is] good; and the honeycomb, [which is] sweet to thy taste: ¹⁴ So [shall] the knowledge of wisdom [be] unto thy soul: when thou hast found [it], then there shall be a reward, and thy expectation shall not be cut off.

30:17 ¹⁷ The eye [that] mocketh at [his] father, and despiseth to obey [his] mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it.