

Proverbs on Parenting

Aiming Our Children in the Right Direction

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Aims:

- To motivate participants to consider the importance of godly parenting
- To discuss the three major roles of parents, as taught in Proverbs
- To make participants aware of six significant topics of parental instruction, as found in Proverbs

Introduction:

[Ask the participants to answer the following questions with a Yes or No.]

1. My spouse and I want our children to grow up to be responsible citizens.
2. My spouse and I want our children to acquire a personal faith in and commitment to Christ.
3. My spouse and I want to be the most significant influence in our children's lives.
4. My spouse and I want our children to choose us as their friends once they leave home.
5. My spouse and I understand what God expects of us as parents and are working to follow his will.

[Questions 1 through 4 will likely be answered in the affirmative by everyone. There may be, however, some uncertainty about how to answer question 5. These expected responses make this lesson necessary.]

Given that we agree on the desire to raise our children in certain God-honoring ways, it is fitting that we examine the book of Proverbs--a treasure trove of ancient wisdom--to discover biblical principles for parenting. Today we will focus on three major roles of parents, as prescribed by Proverbs. If children reflect our influence much as arrows reveal the skill of the archer (Ps 127:4-5), we should be very interested in learning how to make a godly impact.

Body:

The book of Proverbs outlines three major areas of parental responsibility. We will examine each one in some detail. Representative texts from Proverbs are cited under each heading.

I. 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.

II. Moral & Spiritual Instruction

- 1:8 ⁸ My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother:
- 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.
- 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.
- 23:26 ²⁶ My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways.

It is significant to note that the six major topics of parental instruction found in Proverbs are remarkably up-to-date. They are positive spiritual influences (e.g., 1:10, 15); the knowledge of God (e.g., 2:1-5); sexual purity (e.g., 7:24-25); financial integrity (e.g., 6:1-3); abstinence from alcohol (e.g., 23:19-21); and respect for authority (e.g., 24:21).

III. Moral Correction

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

Conclusion:

The impact of parents on their children--for better or for worse--is astounding. Obviously, the quality of parents' interaction with their children will play a large part in determining what

kinds of people they become. It seems somewhat less obvious that the outcome of our parenting will have an enduring effect on us--for better or for worse. If our children choose wisdom our joy will no few limits. However, if they choose foolish ways we will experience great grief. The following texts from Proverbs illustrate the impact of parenting on parents themselves.

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