

Wisdom to our Children – *Proverbs 1*

Parenting in the Promises #7

Introduction (vv1-6) – Proverbs was given for sons to receive from their fathers. It is also for daughters and sons to receive from both parents. It teaches parents how to move into these years of instruction where we no longer simply say “don’t do this,” “don’t touch,” “no,” and the like. These are the years of implanting wisdom, layer upon layer of lessons, words, discussions, talks, rebukes, and exhortations with promises and warnings.

Presenting Your Sons and Daughters (Col 1:27-28) – Don’t forget what you have been given and what you have to give. You have “*Christ in you, the hope of glory.*” You have what they need for anything and everything they will encounter in life.

The Beginning, the End (v7) – They don’t need flashy testimonies. They need faithful obedience – that will be flashy enough in today’s culture. They cannot receive true knowledge or wisdom apart from a Spirit-wrought fear for the Lord. And it is through that fear they will come not only to know or keep the standard, but to love the standard (Phil 2:12-13).

Adorned with Instruction (vv8-9) – Teenagers regularly are not teachable, and the Word charges them to be so and to cultivate teachability into their character, seeking the right teachers and teachings. “*My son, hear the instruction...*” is not said only once in Proverbs, but multiple times from multiple angles. This should encourage you if you feel you have to repeat yourself. Good teachers, good coaches, good mentors, and good parents repeat themselves all the time. The goal is that your children would wear wisdom on their sleeves. Related to this, children should be in a rigorous pursuit of education.

Avoid Evil Companions (vv10-19) – On the flip-side, they must learn to choose their teachers and friends with wisdom; and you must have oversight in this (1 Cor 15:33). This includes people they spend time with and those they listen to, watch, and read. “*My son, if sinners entice you,*” should be understood, “*...when sinners entice you...*” and you should learn to talk about all subjects of enticement with them. Systems of thought, worldviews, presuppositions, must all be examined in the Light of the Word. It is to be addressed in the propositions (is this true, is this good, is this beautiful and edifying) as well as in the context of the greater Story (where does this lead me – closer to or further from Christ and His kingdom).

Training for Maturity (vv20-22) – Things aren’t so simple and so we must lead our sons and daughters from a naiveté. The world is becoming more and more real to them and so we have to teach them to listen to wisdom in every situation. Including –

Facts of Life (Prov 5) – Do not avoid talks about sex; leading into adolescence discuss “the facts” and before these new enticements hit begin warning them of all the allurements around them. Learn to talk openly and regularly. Teach them that sex in the covenant of marriage is honorable and wonderful (Prov 5:19, Heb 13:4) and that, in the end, it is a terrible curse outside of marriage.

Entertainment Standards – We are not to feed on that which is vile (Phil 4:8, Eph 5:3-4, 12) and now it is time for them to do a Bible study on what that means. Apply this with them to what they are reading, listening to, and watching. Do they have the courage to “walk away” when everyone else is doing it? Are you a safe place to talk about these things?

Dress Standards – The Bible doesn’t give us direction regarding cultural variations; it does however address cultural deterioration. The heart that is fearing the Lord seeks the center of faithfulness and is not interested in seeing how close he or she can come to the edge.

Wisdom Rebukes (v23) – Proverbs teaches over and over that there are consequences to our actions and the way we discipline our teenagers should do the same. Do not subsidize sin, rebellion, disrespect, or laziness, with free room and board (2 Thess 3:10). It may mean losing privileges (car keys, sleepovers, internet, tonight’s dinner), but these things should not be “groundings.” Rather, teach the connection between privilege and responsibility (to whom much is given, much is required). Instruct on restitution, making public confession for public sins, and doing so in the thankful spirit of forgiveness.

Training Sons and Daughters as Disciples (Prov 2:1-9) – You begin to see how you can go through the book of Proverbs over and over for yourself and with your children (as well as all of the Word). Teens, the brother of our Lord said that the one who hears without doing deceives himself (James 1:22). The fact that you are listening to the Word does not distinguish you from a fool. The promise of faithfully giving wisdom (parents) and receiving wisdom (children) is abundant life, “*Christ in you, the hope of glory.*”