

INTRODUCTION

We are all someone's child, and the majority of us are parents. If there is a lack of wisdom in these roles, with a few notable exceptions; ***that lack of wisdom will haunt every other area of your life.*** Even a quick look at the sociological and psychological studies of our day proves this is very true.

Let's start with the parent. Even before Dr. Spock, there have been all kinds of fads and trends in parenting. But what are the timeless principles of ***wisdom in the parent?***

1. FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE PARENTS

Proverbs 1

8. My son, hear the ***instruction of your father***, and do not forsake the ***law of your mother***;

9. for they will be graceful ornaments on your head, and chains about your neck.

Prov 6

20. My son, keep your ***father's command***, and do not forsake the ***law of your mother***.

Even though these verses speak to the child, they carry some ***heavy implications for the parent.***

For the father, ***it takes for granted he will give instruction and commands.*** To give legitimate instruction and commands, the verse assumes something else: The father is in a position of ***authority and leadership.*** *Where he is leading is a good direction for his family to follow.*

As fathers we need to ask ourselves something: ***Do we want our kids to end up where we are going?***

The mother is even more interesting in the challenge. Two different words are used for the father, but the same phrase is used over and over for the mom, "***the law of your mother.***" What does that mean? *When mom gets angry and lays down the law?*

The word used here (***toraw***) ***actually means custom.*** It is the routine, the manner of your life. Proverbs is built on the assumption; if your child follows the day-to-day nature of your life mom; it will lead them into a positive experience in life. *Mothers, if your child lives your habits, how will their lives turn out?*

According to Proverbs, what are the wise qualities that should be passed on?

When Ancient Israel finally started to get their relationship with God right and they finally entered into their Promised Land. This is what was said to them by God:

Deut 4

9. "Only take heed to yourself, and diligently keep yourself, lest you forget the things your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. And teach them to your children and your grandchildren,

Deut 6

6. "And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart;

7. "you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.

8. "You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.

These verses say, ***if we are wise, we will communicate God***. That communication will be ***genuine because it will come from our hearts, not simply our mouths***. Kids have a way of sensing what is fake in their parent's. As parents, we really don't have a choice. Knowing there is a better path than the one you're on is not enough. You have to go and show them.

In these verses, the real deal comes through at three levels:

Level 1: The experience level

Teach them what? ***What you have seen***. It's pretty simple; you cannot teach your children what you don't know yourself. You cannot illustrate a relationship to God if you don't have one yourself. You must have the experience.

Level 2: The intellectual

Experience is essential. But ***if experience is not anchored to some reference of knowledge, it can be horribly misinterpreted***. The world is filled with people who have a genuine hunger for God; they have even sensed His calling. Yet somehow, they end up in the most twisted forms of religion.

I was looking ***through a list of the top ten cults*** and they all two things in common: 1. They manipulated the desire to find God. The followers were manipulated and abused emotionally, financially, physically and ultimately, spiritually. 2. There was a leader with enough charisma to turn their spiritual hunger to his twisted agenda. I feel bad for these people trapped by their own lack of understanding. But what is really hard to fathom is the children born into such tragedy.

Eph 4

14. that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness by which they lie in wait to deceive.

Our level of discernment is the heritage of our children. It might not be as dramatic as a cult, ***but we are all teaching our children to sail with discernment or become victims of the treacherous wind and waves***.

Level 3: Lifestyle

DISCUSSION

GIVE SOME PRACTICAL EXAMPLES OF COMMUNICATING GOD AT THE 1. EXPERIENCE 2. INTELLECTUAL 3. LIFESTYLE LEVELS

We all live by principles and patterns, even if we're not aware of them. How we are doing with our finances, our habits, our health, and our souls are the direct consequence of them. Children may not keep detailed journals of their parents, but they get the gist of it. They don't miss those unguarded moments or what you do at the same time every day. They see if we live our own words. It is eternally vital to "say Christ", but that is eternally damaging if we do not "live Christ."

From the very beginning of the Old Testament we are ***mandated to teach*** our children of God. But considering the stakes, maybe it would be ***better not to take the chance.***

That is something we see in our day. In some cases, there are open minded parents who say, they'll just give their kids ***leeway to decide what's right for themselves.*** After all, you want them to learn to think for themselves.

Let me ask you: ***Would you take your seven year-old, or even your sixteen year-old to downtown New York,*** give them some travel money and say, we want you to think for yourself, so you find the best way home that seems right to you? Of course not! You know you'd be leaving them in physical danger. And yet, people abandon their children to the same scenario in the spiritual landscape where the stakes aren't simply their mortal welfare but their eternity! And the spiritual landscape of our culture is even more dangerous than the physical one.

Dads, is Sunday morning sports more important than your child's soul? Is even the food on the table more important than their eternity? Is leaving the spiritual destiny of your children simply women's work so you leave it to the wife?

Mother or father, seek wise council, but don't leave the spiritual welfare of your children to anyone else; not even *the "professionals."* ***You must become what you want them to learn.***

That may sound severe, but ***consider the alternative.*** If we do not step up to the challenge of wise parenting; ***what will be the outcome?*** Here it is according to Proverbs:

Prov 29

15. The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child left to himself brings shame to his mother.

The literal meaning of the ***word "shame" (baz) means "plunder."*** That son or daughter's behavior, actions, course in life will ***plunder the life of that parent.*** It will suck them dry, emotionally, perhaps financially and health-wise. It all starts with this: ***The child was "sent off", left to him or herself.***

~And then, how does Proverbs speak to the child?

DISCUSSION

WHAT DOES THE PROVERB MEAN BY “ROD AND REPROOF”?

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BECOME WHAT YOUR CHILDREN SHOULD LEARN, IN PRACTICAL EVERYDAY WAYS?

2. FROM THE CHILD’S PERSPECTIVE

What actions are unwise for the child according to Proverbs?

Prov 19

26. He who mistreats his father and chases away his mother is a son who causes shame and brings reproach.

27. Cease listening to instruction, my son, and you will stray from the words of knowledge.

What does “mistreat” mean? In the original word (*shadad*), *it means to bully, oppress, or ravage*. It’s to pull a **power play for authority** over the one who should have authority. It is to set the natural order of things on its ear. You can watch even little kids try this; manipulation of emotions, tantrums, trying to find something scary enough that your parents will give in. ***If a child actually succeeds at this, it will be the worst failure in their life.***

They will stray from any sense of wisdom. ***The result will be “reproach.”*** Another loaded word in the original Hebrew (chapter). It means it will *bring shame, disappointment, and confusion to that family.*

It will “**chase away**” **one’s mother**. What does it mean to chase away? It means that person doesn’t want to leave. They may desperately want to stay, but your continued choice to be unwise is so intense that they can do nothing but back off. What will the results be in the life of a child like that?

Prov 20

20. Whoever curses his father or his mother, his lamp will be put out in deep darkness.

Another little language lesson “**curse**” (*galal*) *means to bring contempt, despise, make light of, afflict, to put them down.*

In cursing, you have become a curse. Think about this for a moment. If you start out life as a curse to the very first people in your life; how would we expect things to turn out. - According to God’s Word, your “*lamp will be put out.*” Your life will fall into **deep darkness**. What does that mean?

It was actually legal to put a child to death in ancient Israel if they cursed their parents. (Lev 20:9) It was seldom carried out. -But there are other meanings as well; ones which always happened. One commentary phrases it in a great way; there will be a “**failure of outward happiness.**” Life is destined never to see any real happiness.

The worst thing about lack of wisdom; as a parent or child is this: ***it is contagious.*** It can become a movement in a culture. It can become the **expected norm.**

Prov 30

11. There is a **generation that curses its father,** and does not bless its mother.

12. There is a **generation that is pure in its own eyes,** yet is not washed from its filthiness.

13. There is a generation oh, how lofty are their eyes! And their eyelids are lifted up.

14. There is a **generation whose teeth are like swords,** and whose fangs are like knives, to devour the poor from off the earth, and the needy from among men.

We live in a culture of “gay pride.” We live in a culture where it is routine to become a single mom at sixteen and consider it cool. We live in a generation where teeth like swords are so common place that we turn them into entertainment like “Mean Girls”, “Gossip Girls” and “Pretty Little Liars.”

It’s all par for the course to the point we don’t think about it much anymore. But if we have any wisdom at all we should be asking ourselves; ***what are the consequences when a whole generation goes this way? Is that really where we want to go?***

It may seem overwhelming. What can we possibly do in a generation like that? Here’s a simple four-word answer, “***Swim against the stream.***”

Prov 22

17. **Incline your ear and hear the words of the wise, and apply your heart to my knowledge;**

“Incline” and “apply”, do you know what those are? ***They are choices.*** They are not a one-time choice, but choices made over and over in all areas of your living. They are actions that take you towards something. They bring you into ***solid contact with wisdom.***

I love the meaning of “apply” (naga`); it means to ***lay your hand upon something with purpose; to rub something in.*** You lather your heart on wisdom.

- ***As a parent, become what you want your child to be.***
- ***As a child, go beyond lip service, seek out the good stuff and rub it in, make it part of you. Make it real. Start by asking yourselves right now...***

Parent or child; ***what characteristics best describe you? Which ones do you want to describe you? Where do you want to go?***

Wisdom says: To end with God, start with God; continue with God. Start at the cross.

DISCUSSION

DO YOU THINK THE LACK OF WISDOM IS CONTAGIOUS? HOW?

WHAT DO YOU THINK IT MEANS TO HAVE A CHILD'S LAMP PUT OUT?

IN WHAT WAYS DO YOU THINK WE MAY LIVE IN A "PROVERBS 30" GENERATION?

WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT IT?