

Principles from Proverbs: The Family—Part I

Introduction: The book of Proverbs has much to say about success in family life. Topically examined, Proverbs presents general principles for family success as well as specific injunctions for each family member. Combined together, these principles from Proverbs form a pathway to happiness in the home. This lesson will consider general principles for the success of the home. Subsequent lessons will concentrate on the specific roles of each family member.

I. The Framework of a Successful Home

A. Careful Planning

→**Prepare thy work without, and make it fit for thyself in the field; and afterwards build thine house. (Proverbs 24:27)**

1. The “field” was that which would support the home financially. It is roughly analogous to one’s occupation today.
2. Before a man establishes a home of his own (marriage, children, etc.), he should be certain that he can adequately support the home from a financial standpoint.
 - a. This *may* mean completing education before marriage.
 - b. This *may* mean being established in a career or at least having promising career prospects before establishing a home.
3. While one’s occupation should not come before his family, his occupation should be adequate for the establishing of a family. This proverb emphasizes the responsibility incumbent upon the husband as the provider.

B. Knowledgeable Domestic Management

→**Through wisdom is an house builded; and by understanding it is established: And by knowledge shall the chambers be filled with all precious and pleasant riches. (Proverbs 24:3, 4)**

1. Wisdom is the correct application of knowledge. A successful home requires knowledge—the right facts—and wisdom—the ability to apply the facts to a given situation.
2. Husbands and wives should continually expand their domestic knowledge. Examples of such knowledge include cooking skills, efficient time management, financial skills, parenting skills, etc.
3. Knowledge may be gained through reading, research on the internet, seeking godly counsel from experienced/successful homemakers, etc.

4. Wisdom and knowledge result in measurable prosperity. While you may not become rich, you will have more than adequate provision if you increase in knowledge and apply it correctly.

C. A Commitment to Making the Home a Haven

→**Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith. (Proverbs 15:17)**

→**Better is a dry morsel, and quietness therewith, than a house full of sacrifices with strife. (Proverbs 17:1)**

1. Extravagant living is no substitute for love. God engineered mankind to thrive in an environment of love. Hatred always stifles the success of the home, even if the home has been financially prosperous.
2. In a similar vein, extravagant living is no substitute for peace. Proverbs teaches that it is preferable to be poor and peaceful than wealthy and contentious.
3. Note that these proverbs do not present a necessary dichotomy. One can have love and prosperity too. These proverbs emphasize that where one must make a choice, love and peace are always preferable to material prosperity. Love and peace are what really matter.

D. Avoiding Hurtful Attitudes and Actions

→**He that troubleth his own house shall inherit the wind: and the fool shall be servant to the wise of heart. (Proverbs 11:29)**

→**He that is greedy of gain troubleth his own house; but he that hateth gifts shall live. (Proverbs 15:27)**

1. Doing anything purposely injurious to one's home may result in the demise of the home. Such actions would include picking fights, a critical spirit, unkind speech, any form of abuse, marital unfaithfulness, etc.
2. Overemphasis on materialism is a specific way one may trouble his house. Greedy gain refers both to ill-gotten gain and an underlying philosophy of greed. "Hating gifts" means that one is unwilling to "sell out" his principles for financial gain.

→**He that rewardeth evil for good, evil shall not depart from his house. (Proverbs 17:13)**

3. An unappreciative, critical attitude will taint a home with evil. Praise should always be offered for a job well done.
4. Parents should especially praise the good behavior and successes of their children without nit-picking their shortcomings. Don't mix praise with criticism.