

Principles from Proverbs: The Family—Part 6

Focus on the Responsibility of Sons and Daughters

The book of Proverbs contains much material aimed at directing human relationships—particularly family relationships. In addition to sound advice for married couples and for parents, Proverbs also gives God’s wisdom for the responses of children to their parents. Wise young people learn early and heed consistently the directives of the proverbs in relationship to their parents.

I. Taking Instruction from Your Parents

A. Listen to Your Parents

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

1. The Bible commands ongoing acknowledgement of one’s parents. Even though a young person has established a home of his own, he is still obligated to listen to his parents. While he is no longer under their direct authority, he must give the courtesy of sincere listening. This command is for the benefit of the adult child.
2. To “despise” means to “think little of.” Age should not diminish our respect and admiration for our parents.

→A wise son heareth his father’s instruction: but a scorner heareth not rebuke. (Proverbs 13:1)

→A fool despiseth his father’s instruction...” (Proverbs 15:5a)

1. The wisdom of a child may be measured by how well he listens to his parents. One who has developed a scornful (vocally cynical) spirit will not hear rebuke—always to his own hurt.
2. One who despises (“thinks little of”) his father’s instruction is categorized as a “fool” in Proverbs. Remember, the word “fool” carries an immoral connotation. Children who disregard their parents have a deep character flaw that will plague them in other areas of life as well

B. Get Wisdom and Instruction from Your Parents

→My son, attend unto my wisdom, and bow thine ear to my understanding. (Proverbs 5:1)

1. Wisdom is not restricted to the realm of Biblical or spiritual matters. We are to gain wisdom from our parents in all areas of life.

2. Children should humbly submit to thoughtful consideration of their parents' understanding. "Understanding" has to do with the parents' view of life or particular circumstances.

II. Gain the Blessings of Your Parent's Wisdom

A. Their Wisdom Will Keep You Safe

→My son, keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother...When thou goest, it shall keep thee; and when thou wakest, it shall talk with thee. (Proverbs 6:20, 22)

1. The instruction of parents will "keep" ("protect") a child throughout life if the child heeds the instruction. Parents are not out to harm their children; they desire to protect them. Dr. Jack Hyles said, "We're only cranky because we want to help."
2. When a child listens to his parents, their wisdom becomes his constant companion. Children hear their parents wisdom "ringing in their ears" long after the parents are gone!

B. Their Wisdom Will Make Your Life Better

→My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings....For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh. (Proverbs 4:20, 22)

1. The wisdom of parents can greatly enhance the children's quality of life both by pointing out pitfalls and by encouraging productive behavior.
2. Parents can even make a positive impact on their children's health by practicing good health habits. Since more is "caught" than "taught," parents should be conscientious to practice wise principles in relation to their health. Lifelong eating habits begin at home!

III. Respect Your Parents or Reap Severe Consequences

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

→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. (Proverbs 30:17)

A. Disrespectful children always come to an ignominious end.

B. Children must honor parents even if the parents are "undeserving."