

SIMPLE WISDOM FROM PROVERBS

Proverbs 1:8-9

Do you know what Sunday is? With all of us living in the midst of home-confinement, it is somewhat hard for us to keep our days straight, but if you said “Mother’s Day, you are correct. The goal for Sunday’s video broadcast is to honor moms, but as we prepare for it, I wanted to share a few thoughts from Proverbs.

In truth, every “Hallmark Holiday” is difficult to address because someone will be left out. For example, If we focus on young mothers, or moms with teens, the grandmothers may come away feeling like there was nothing them. Yet, if we speak to the grandmas, the young mothers aren’t entirely helped either. Thus, holidays can be a no-win situation because someone is going to be left out.

My goal for this article, however, is to speak to everyone in general with an emphasis on mom. In short, I would have us all hear the Word of God and grow in it. So, with that in mind, let’s turn our attention to the book of Proverbs.

Proverbs is a great book! It’s jammed packed with little pithy sayings that are inspired—directly given to us by God. In most cases, chapters are unconnected and verses often stand alone. However, there are places where sets of verses come together to give context for spiritual wisdom and help. Such is the case with Proverbs 1:1-9

As we get into the passage, we should first notice that Solomon is the author. Verse 1 says, “*The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel.*” That is important because next to our Lord Jesus, Solomon was the wisest man who ever lived. First Kings 3 and Second Chronicles 1 both relay the story of God granting Solomon great wisdom to rule his kingdom fairly and uprightly. Ecclesiastes tells us that Solomon tried to use that wisdom to find meaning in life from everything under the sun, yet what he found was that life without God is empty. So, when we turn to Proverbs, what we have is a collection of unusual wisdom! Words from the wisest man who was inspired by the infinitely more wise Holy Spirit. God is using Solomon to speak wisdom to us.

The second thing we will note is that Solomon’s Purpose in Proverbs is to teach us about God. Verse 7 says, “*The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom & instruction.*” Teaching us the fear of the Lord *is* Solomon’s purpose! Verse 4 says that these words are for young people who need to learn wisdom. Verse 5 says that mature and learned people need wisdom, too.

In truth, Proverbs gives wisdom in four main areas:

1. There is practical wisdom that is simple common sense
2. There is intellectual wisdom which includes understanding and knowledge
3. There is moral wisdom that involves self-control
4. Then there is wisdom that addresses the “mysteries of life.”

All of it, however, goes back to learning about God and living in a way that honors Him. *Solomon’s purpose is to teach us about God!*

The third thing we note is that Parents are a major contributor to our learning to be like the Lord. In verse 8-9 we read, “*My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother: ⁹For they shall be an ornament of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck.*” Those are not lofty, abstract words; they are simple and straightforward instruction. They could be summarized this way: “Young man” (we could insert ‘young people’), listen to your parents!”

It is no accident that Solomon’s very first words of wisdom are centered on the family! The family is God’s ordained entity for teaching the next generation about Him. That is interesting because even though society never puts it in these terms, study after study has produced these findings: *when the family breaks down, generations turn to a lifestyle that moves further and further away from God.* As a consequence, the further we get from God, the more chaos and trouble disrupts the world. In short, when the vertical is neglected, the horizontal suffers. Solomon’s wisdom tells us that knowing God starts in the home.

Finally, since this is the week where we celebrate Mother's, let me offer some applications for moms...

1. Spend your days learning to Love God! Life is one big classroom, and in that classroom, He is going to allow events to enter into your life which will bring joy and gladness, laughter and delight, heartache and pain, even tragedy and loss. However, it will all be about pointing you back to Him!

One of the main tools He will use to bring that about is your children. They really are complex, emotional, independent personalities that God uses to mold us, shape us, and craft us into the image of Himself. If you will give yourself to God's Word so that you can direct the paths of your little ones, you will spend your life learning to love and know God better. Spend your life learning to be like the Lord.

2. Don't Neglect Your Responsibility to Teach Your Children About God. Really, you will teach them about God whether you intend to or not! Your example—what you model—will be one of the greatest aspects of molding both their character and their thinking. If you like gardening and being outside planting flowers, the chances are high that, your children will grow up having a love for the same. If you like cooking, chances are your children will be interested in the kitchen. If you are always down, and discouraged (a "glass half empty" kind of mom), chances are your children will be given to pessimism. If all you do is nag, it won't be a surprise when your children do the same.

Again, your example—the life that you model—is one of the greatest tools you have that will mold the character and thinking of your children. That is true for your interests and hobbies. It is certainly true for their interest in God. So, when they see mom neglecting her Bible...when they see mom regularly skipping out on church (even for "good reasons")...when they see mom living life without any intentional thought toward God...it will be no mystery as to why they become like Israel and move out into a secular culture with no real interest in spiritual things! If your children are going to fear the Lord and gain knowledge of Him, moms and dads are going to need to teach them.

3. You are never too old to give instruction. Your relationship will change as your children will grow older, move out, marry, and start their own family. However, you are still a mom, and the Bible's words for you are this: The "aged women" are to *teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.* (Tit 2:4-5)

Isn't it interesting that the younger women need to learn how to keep the home? Isn't it interesting that the younger women need to learn how to love their husbands and their children? *Why is that?* There are many answers, but here are a three:

- 1 Because those things don't come naturally!
2. Because by nature we are all selfish!
3. Because by nature we will all want to be lazy.

We all to be "captains of our own ship." Every one of us wants to do that which is right in our own eyes. However, that way always leads to trouble. So, you older, more experience women, teach the younger generation what it means to keep the home, love their husbands, and to love their children. In short, teach them what it means to sacrificially give. **Grandma, we need you!** In His mercy, God has equipped you with experiences in life that others need to know. We need you to teach the younger women how to serve God in a world that is so much against Him.

In the end, there is no greater service...no greater calling...no greater thing in life...than being a mom who models the things of God. There is a way to know wisdom and there is a way to put wisdom on display. Moms (and dads), make it your goal in life to wisely instruct your family to know, life for, and learn to be like the Lord!