

## **Father Knows Best**

(Proverbs 27:11-27)

8/1/18; Wed PM Pine Grove

### **Introduction**

This past Sunday in Oklahoma a father was arrested for shooting his 15 year old son in the leg.

Not only did he shoot his own son in the leg as an act of abuse, he then took the son to a barn where he was deprived of medical care and food..

When authorities arrived on the property, the teenager weighed only 80 pounds and had survived for some time on leaves and other vegetation..

Though he is now in hospital and improving, doctors sad that he was at the point of death from his injuries and lack of nutrition...

The father has been charged with child abuse.

His wife and the boys step mother has been charged with child abuse.

The boys two brothers age 20 and 24 were also arrested and charged with child neglect as well...

The local prosecutor said that the state hopes to get life in prison for the father due to the aggravated nature of the crimes..

Now the sad thing about that story is that no one of you had probably even heard about it..

I only discovered it on Monday as I ran across it in preparation for this message in Proverbs 27..

And the reason we dont hear about it is that these crimes have become so common place in our culture...

Moms hurt sons.

Fathers abuse daughters.

Moms hit kids and dads torture sons..

This is sadly the world around us in 2018, and unfortunately, the culture has become numb to it...

It was only 24 years ago when Susan Smith drowned her two sons in Union County, and that made headlines for weeks...

Today, cases of parent on child abuse rarely even make the national headlines..

Yet, the outrage when we do hear about these crimes is still quite high because parents were not made to hurt their children..

In fact, God made parents as their children's first line of defense...

So when those given the job of protector become the abuser, everyone is outraged..

You see, God not only made parents protectors of their children, God also made parents the instructors of their children...

A biblical view of parenting is that parents protect and provide for their children..

And part of a parents responsibility to provide would include the provision of an education..

Now this doesn't mean that parents have to teach their kids reading, writing and arithmetic..

But it does mean that parents should teach their children about the world around them..

And that is exactly what we often find in the book of Proverbs..

In the very first chapter of this book, we find this in Proverbs 1:8-9....

8

*Hear, my son, your father's instruction  
And do not forsake your mother's teaching;*

9

*Indeed, they are a graceful wreath to your head  
And [b]ornaments about your neck.*

In large part, the setting of God's wisdom in the proverbs is the picture of a father or mother teaching a son or daughter...

This is God's pattern of parental education..

In fact, to teach your children about God's truth is the heart of what it means to educate your children..

Reading and writing and arithmetic and other areas of study are important in the education of a child..

But there is no greater truth that a parent can teach a child than to teach them who God is and how they are responsible to Him...

The A's on the report card as secondary to what they know about God and how they respond to it..

And the second half of Proverbs 27 is simply a picture of a father teaching his son about the world in terms of what God wants and expects..

In other words, a parent is responsible to teach their children how to live in the world in a manner that is pleasing to God..

And that is exactly what we find in these verses before us tonight...

For the most part, each verse stands alone in its instruction but there will be a few verses that are related and seem to teach one truth...

So, let's simply begin in verse 11..

## **I. Best Defense (11)**

Verse 11..

*11*

***Be wise, my son, and make my heart glad,  
That I may reply to him who reproaches me.***

Over the years, you speak to people with rebellious children in the church, and you often hear..

“Well, they weren’t raised that way.”

And the reason this phrase is used is to defend their parenting..

In other words, the parent wants everyone to know that they did all they could to raise their children in the right way..

Now, let’s face it..

No parent is responsible for foolish decisions of their children..

No parent will be held accountable for the sins of the children..

But we also remember that children often reflect what happens in the home..

Now I am sure that there are kids raised right who live wrong...

But I am also sure that not every parent who defends their parenting with “we did all we could” is also completely free of responsibility either..

So how are we to feel about the relationship between the behavior of children and the reputation of the parents..

Well, verse 11 gives us insight as we see a dad pleading with his son to act wisely and live rightly so that the father is able to answer anyone who tries to assault his character...

In other word, a son’s behavior becomes a great defense when someone questions their father’s character..

Though parents don’t teach their children to do right in order to give us a good reputation in the community, children often act as proof of their parents character..

How many of yall have said or thought in response to a young person’s sin that they must have learned that at home?

We all have..

It is a natural tendency to do that..

In fact, the behavior of children can disqualify someone from being a leader...

1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 lay out qualifications for church leaders and each deal with how well a man raises his children...

So let's be clear..

We can't say that every child is a result of how they were raised, but we also can't say that no child is a result of how they were raised..

We must teach our children about the Lord because it often serves to teach the community about our character..

A second piece of instruction that seems to come from a father to a son or a parent to a child is found in verses 12-13...

## **II. Bad Business (12-13)**

Verses 12-13..

**12**

*A prudent man sees evil and hides himself,  
The [g]naive proceed and pay the penalty.*

**13**

*Take his garment when he becomes surety for a  
stranger;  
And for an [h]adulterous woman hold him in  
pledge.*

In life, experience is often a great teacher...

The saying goes like this..

Fool me once shame on you...

Fool me twice shame on me..

Well, young people lack the wisdom of their parents..

They simply haven't lived long enough to encounter every situation in life...

Therefore, part of parental instruction is passing on experiences where you as a parent may have made mistakes...

Yet, there are some decisions that are so foolish and so damaging that we simply tell our kids to avoid them at all costs..

Well, one of those life situations is found in verse 13...

This is a case where someone asks you to co-sign for a loan..

First and foremost, being surety or a guarantor is not a good idea even if you know them...

But it is much worse if it is a stranger..

And it is absolutely the worst if it is a known sinner like the adulterous woman here...

So the instruction of the father is simply this in verse 12..

Wise people see trouble coming and stay away while foolish people go out and shake trouble's hand..

In other words a the father offers his son a second piece of wisdom here, it is simply to spot danger ahead and be prepared for it...

In this case, it is the unwise financial decision of putting his name and reputation on the line for someone he doesn't know..

Or worse yet, putting his name on the line for a woman who has proven her unfaithfulness...

In either case, this is a bad financial decision and so the point is simple...

Stay alert to approaching issues and be prepared to walk away..

If not, you will pay the penalty for hanging around and being foolish..

From there, let find a 3rd bit of fatherly wisdom in verse 14..

WE can call this...

### **III. Boisterous Flattery(14)**

Verse 14..

**14**

***He who blesses his friend with a loud voice early  
in the morning,  
It will be reckoned a curse to him.***

Some people are great encouragers to us..

They always offer a kind word or a pat on the back  
and their encouragement is a blessing to the Lord..

Yet, there are also people who sing our praises not  
to bless but to curse us..

In other words, excessive flattery is a warning sign  
that their encouragement is meant to serve their  
needs and not our own..

We learned in Jude that false teachers use flattering  
words to gain the confidence of others so that they  
will blindly follow them...

The same is true for people who are overly con-  
cerned with singing our praises...

Often times, they don't have our best interests at  
heart but rather their own...

And this father wanted his son to know that tongue that is too sweet may actually be serving as poison in his life...

We a goo many more bits of fatherly wisdom so let's keep moving to verses 15-16..

We can call this..

#### **IV. Bridal Restrictions (15-16)**

In the context of a father teaching his son, it would be very common for that counsel to include wisdom about women..

Though we can't be certain that verses 15-16 are marked out as instruction from a father to a son, this verses would make sense in the context..

And so let's see what a father knows about women in terms of a potential bride for his son..

Verse 15..

**15**

***A constant dripping on a day of steady rain  
And a contentious woman are alike;***

**16**

***He who would [i]restrain her [j]restrains the wind,  
And [k]grasps oil with his right hand.***

We have met the contentious woman multiple times in the book of Proverbs...

She is simply a woman looking for a fight..

She often complains and seeks out drama instead of peace.

And the father's simply bit of wisdom about her is that she is uncontainable..

She is out of control..

The son would have a better chance of controlling the wind over a woman like this...

He would have a better chance of gripping oil in his hand that trying to keep the peace around her..

In other words, a father's wisdom here is to avoid that woman whether she is a friend, a family member, or a potential wife..

Let's move to verse 17 which gives us fatherly wisdom #5 in this passage...

We will call this..

## **V. Beneficial Relationships (17)**

*17*

*Iron sharpens iron,  
So one man sharpens another.*

Simply put, there is value in helpful relationships.

Now the point here is simple.

We grow in wisdom as we live and interact with other wise people around us..

Now two notes to make that are very important..

Number 1..

The people that sharpen you in godly wisdom must be believers...

There is no value in being sharpened spiritually by people who do not have the spirit of God in them..

Number 2..

Sharpening happens when we interact with our spiritual equals or those who are more spiritually mature..

You see, the reason a knife sharpener works is that it is equally or more durable than the knife it is sharpening...

Simply put, we get the most benefit out of relationships with people that push us spiritually to serve more, obey more, and love the Lord more..

Therefore, a wise father tells his son to find friends that will sharpen him spiritually..

Let's move to verse 18, where the father mixes the wisdom of business with the wisdom of relationships..

We can simply call this...

## **VI. Best Employees (18)**

Verse 18..

**18**

***He who tends the fig tree will eat its fruit,  
And he who cares for his master will be honored.***

Sadly, so many in our culture no longer value hard work..

And as a result, a growing number of people in our culture value their workplaces and even less their bosses..

The wisdom of verse 18 is to do your work well and treat your boss with respect...

And the blessing of doing those things is evident..

Number 1, you will be able to eat..

Number 2, you will be honored for your respect of your superiors..

This is godly wisdom...

And this wisdom is repeated in the NT as well..

Colossians 3:22-25..

***22 Slaves, in all things obey those who are your masters [u]on earth, not with [v]external service, as those who merely please men, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord. 23 Whatever you do, do your work [w]heartily, as for the Lord [x]rather than for men, 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward [y]of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve. 25 For he who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done, and [z]that without partiality.***

Unfortunately, the wisdom of excellent work and respect for the boss is quickly fading in our country...

Yet, if you are a father or a grandfather, be sure to teach your children and grandchildren the wisdom of doing both...

Verse 19 gives us another lesson from father to son...

WE will call this...

## **VII. Be Discerning (19-22)**

Verse 19...

**19**

*As in water face reflects face,  
So the heart of man reflects man.*

**20**

*[l]Sheol and [m]Abaddon are never satisfied,  
Nor are the eyes of man ever satisfied.*

**21**

*The crucible is for silver and the furnace for gold,  
And each is tested by the praise accorded him.*

**22**

*Though you pound a fool in a mortar with a pestle  
along with crushed grain,  
Yet his foolishness will not depart from him.*

Though there is evidence of people using rocks long ago to see their reflections, the first wall mirror was not invented until 1800...

Before, historians and archaeologists have noted that the best mirrors and the most used mirrors were often tiny pools of water in the home..

And the reason for that is simple...

Water reflects the images around it...

In the same way, a man's heart reflects who the man really is..

In life, we must make decisions about folks...

And the best way to tell what kind of people they really are is to listen to what proceeds out of their hearts...

Jesus even said that a man's words reveal what is in his heart..

Long story short, wisdom tells us that what we see in a person is what we normally get...

In other words, if you look in a mirror and see a cut on your face in the reflection, it is a sure sign that your real face is cut too..

Now verses 20, 21,22 offer us some reflections of people that may help us determine who they are..

In verse 20, the simple test is that greedy people are never satisfied..

Sheol and Abaddon are the places of the dead and the reality is that they are always being filled with more people...

In the same way, a greedy man always wants more..

If you find someone who shows greed and covetousness, don't be shocked when you see their greed directed at you...

In verse 21, we get a good measure of a person that test is how do they react to praise..

They are really two ways to respond to someone's praise of you...

The first is to receive it and then kindly pass it on to the Lord...

The second is to receive it and keep it all for yourself...

Wise people send the praise on.

Fools keep it and that is why their heads swell...

They have to make room for more praise..

Verse 22 is a final word on how to make decisions about people..

The picture is of someone taking crushing something with a pestle and mortar...

A mortar is a little dish and a pestle is the grinding tool...

When I was a kid, I couldn't swallow a tylenol, so my grandma would crush it up and give it to me..

Now, did her crushing of the tablet change the contents of it?

No. It simply made the tablet smaller...

In the same way, a foolish man is always going to be a fool..

It is similar to the old saying that you a pig with lipstick is still a pig...

And the point is simple...

The father is warning the son that foolish people will always do foolish things no matter how hard we hope they won't...

So be discerning of the people around you..

A final bit of fatherly wisdom is found in verses 23-27..

And for this last lesson, the father takes the son back to the business world...

## **VII. Be Attentive (23-27)**

Verse 23...

**23**

***Know well the [n]condition of your flocks,  
And pay attention to your herds;***

**24**

***For riches are not forever,  
Nor does a crown endure to all generations.***

**25**

***When the grass disappears, the new growth is  
seen,***

***And the herbs of the mountains are gathered in,***

**26**

***The lambs will be for your clothing,  
And the goats will bring the price of a field,***

**27**

***And there will be goats' milk enough for your  
food,***

***For the food of your household,  
And sustenance for your maidens.***

This world is broken and the people that live in it are broken, and because of that, life can change in an instant...

Therefore, it is important to be paying attention to the things around you..

And clearly in the forefront of man's mind is how he provides for his family..

God designed man as the bread winner, the crop grower, the hunter and gatherer in the family..

The man is responsible to care for and provide for his wife and children..

As a result, he must give much attention to his work..

The work of these verses is that of a shepherd and farmer...

And that occupation requires much of the man's attention...

This is not to say that he ignores his family to do his job, but it is also to say that if he ignores his job, his family will suffer as well...

As a result, he must be diligent in his work..

If he fails at it, he fails at the job that God has given him to take care of those around him..

So the simple bit of wisdom here is a father telling his son to make sure his business affairs are in order as well as other plans should the need arise..

Look, this is where fathers and grandfathers are needed most in the lives of their children and grandchildren...

And the reason is simple..

Young people see no need to plan since they foolishly think that they have plenty of time and that nothing will ever go wrong...

I had a good friend of mine sit me down before I got married and made sure that I had life insurance..

His simple words were this..

You are no longer just responsible for just you...

You are now responsible for your wife..

If you die, she is in trouble financially..

Buy life insurance and make sure it is the most important bill you pay each year..

And he was right, and we still have that life insurance policy today, and it is still the most important money I spend each year...

I know the condition of my flock and I need to make sure that the four of them are financially secure if the Lord takes me home..

## **Conclusion**

In a real sense, these are great and appropriate topics for fathers to teach their sons about..

Economics, business, work ethic, choices for a wife, choices for friends, how to make wise decisions about people..

That is not to say that these things wouldn't be appropriate for a father to teach a daughter or a mom to teach either one as well...

The reality is that Israel was never going to become the nation it needed to be if godly wisdom didn't make it to the next generation..

And the reality is that God intended for parents to be wise and teach their children to do the same...

We should be just as diligent today...

The world says that times are changing and kids need to figure it out on their own..

The Bible says that a father ought to be actively teaching their children God's wisdom...

But you can't pass on what you don't have...

So let's all get busy being filled with God's wisdom ourselves, and by God's grace, let us make sure we teach and leave that wisdom to the next generation..

Let us pray.