

Parental Pleading

(Proverbs 4)

8/23/17; Wed PM Pine Grove

Introduction

As a kid, I was blessed greatly by two sets of grandparents that I spent a lot of time with..

Some of the sweetest memories of my childhood are times with my grandparents...

One of my grandfathers was quiet and spoke few words but he was a great provider for our family...

The other grandfather was also a great provider but he was more talkative...

He was always teaching me...

From a young age, he would sit me on his lap and do additions and subtraction problems with me from a very young age using apples to help me count...

And his teaching continued for my enter life..

Showing me how to shoot a gun and handle dangerous chemicals....

As I matured into a teenager, the teaching fell off as I thought I knew it all...

But his consistent teacher was to be a person who was not easily influenced by others....

He constantly repeat, "Listen to everyone but in the end, you have to make up your own mind."

It is a saying that I will never forget...

Now, he committed suicide 4 days after my high school graduation but his words are still very much alive in my mind...

What is interesting to me now that I have grown older and gotten saved is this...

After 70 plus years of living, this is what he thought was the most valuable piece of wisdom he could give me...

After experience over 7 decades of life on earth, this must have been the greatest lesson that he had learned...

So, he passed that on to me..

And it is a good piece of wisdom..

There is much value in getting counsel from multiple people, and there is value in making an independent decision...

And I cherish that teaching of my grandfather....

Yet, if it were given the opportunity to just leave one piece of advice with my children or grandchildren, it wouldn't be that..

So, I ask you tonight, what are you tacking the next generation?

What are the principles that you are passing on to your children?

Well, let's look at what Solomon, the wisest of fathers passed on to his son, and see if we can find any help in passing on wisdom to the next generation..

So, let's begin chapter 4 by first of all seeing that passing on godly wisdom is a good thing..

I. The Passing of Wisdom (1-13)

Verse 1...

*1 Hear, O sons, the instruction of a father,
And give attention that you may [a]gain under-
standing,*

2

*For I give you [b]sound teaching;
Do not abandon my [c]instruction.*

We have seen the setting for the book of Proverbs before...

A father is sitting down to teach and instruct and pass on wisdom to his son...

But this kind of teaching is not how to change a spark plug or catch a fish..

The father is offering “sound teaching” to his son...

This is good instruction in the ways and laws of God...

There is nothing better to pass on to the next generation than the ways of God...

Israel as a nation excelled at teaching the next generation of the goodness and faithfulness of God...

Though the present generation often failed to obey, they did not fail to teach the next generation...

All the festivals, -passover, festival of lights, festival of booths were all meant as instruction tools for children..

The passover meal required children to speak and ask questions and search the house for leaven...

Now, it is fashionable to let others teach our children about the Lord..

Send them to church and let the Sunday School teacher or youth leader do it, yet the best instruction comes from the parent who loves and protects and cares for their children...

Parents who know the Lord are the best ones to teach the next generation...

And that is what Solomon was doing here...

He was passing on sound teaching...

For Solomon, that meant reading and teaching the OT to his son...

The book of the law, Genesis - Deuteronomy would be part of that teaching...

How to offer sacrifices to God to cover your sin would be part of that instruction...

How to worship the Lord properly, including ceremonial washing and cleaning, would be part of that...

And certainly, Solomon would teach his son that a true Savior from sin was coming....

Now, we sit on the other side of the cross in 2017...

We also have the NT...

So has our teaching the next generation changed?

Well, yes and no...

First, we need to teach the laws of God from the OT...

We need to show the high standard that God has for righteousness and holy living...

However, we don't teach these things to put a burden on our kid's backs...

WE teach that law and then point to the truth that Christ kept it all perfectly in his lifetime..

And that when our kids repent and put their faith in Christ, they are seen as law keepers and not law breakers because they are credited with keeping the law through Christ....

We also don't need to teach and about all the ways to sacrifice to God...

We simply need to teach that Jesus was the ultimate and final sacrifice for sin and that all who trust in Him have their sins atoned for once and for all..

However, I would add that we do need to teach our kids how to live in the world (not as a way to be saved) as a way to make the most of their opportunity for the Lord while alive...

And so it is important to take our kids to the NT and teach them how to be a good husband or wife or parent or church member...

How to give to the Lord in way that pleases Him..

How to love God and how to love others...

But the majority of our sound teaching in 2017 is instructing our children in the gospel...

To teach them who Christ is...

To explain that he became a Substitute for all who believe in Him...

To explain what it means to believe in Christ...

To help them understand what repentance is and what it looks like in the world...

Though the need to teach the next generation is not new, our instruction can be a little more precise on this side of the cross...

And so Solomon is offering good instruction to the next generation, but how did he know and see a need to do this?

Well, first God instructs parents to teach their kids His ways and laws in Deuteronomy 6...

But Solomon was also influenced to do this by the actions of his own father...

Verse 3...

3

***When I was a son to my father,
Tender and the only son in the sight of my mother,***

4

***Then he taught me and said to me,
“Let your heart hold fast my words;
Keep my commandments and live;***

5

*Acquire wisdom! Acquire understanding!
Do not forget nor turn away from the words of my
mouth.*

6

*“Do not forsake her, and she will guard you;
Love her, and she will watch over you.*

7

*“The [d]beginning of wisdom is: Acquire wisdom;
And with all your acquiring, get understanding.*

8

*“Prize her, and she will exalt you;
She will honor you if you embrace her.*

9

*“She will place on your head a garland of grace;
She will present you with a crown of beauty.”*

In verses 3-9, we hear what Solomon’s father, King David, taught him...

Remember, Solomon is the son of David and Bathsheba...

And so when he was a young boy, David began to teach Solomon...

What a good reminder that if a king has the time to teach his son, we have time to teach our children...

David, though the king of Israel, was not above being a father to Solomon...

So, the content of David's instruction to Solomon is found in verses 4-9...

The first thing we see is what we have seen before...

David taught Solomon to keep the Lord's commands at the end of verse 4...

Then in verse 5, he tells Solomon to pursue and chase after wisdom...

Because wisdom will guard Solomon's life...

Wisdom will watch over Solomon...

David told Solomon that wisdom should be prized and embraced so that Solomon would be blessed in his life..

Now, this is interesting to me...

If David had taught Solomon about the value of wisdom and knowledge and understanding as a young man, it is no wonder Solomon asked God for it when he became king...

I think we find encouragement as parents and grandparents here...

The things we teach are not ignored, but rather they come to the minds of our kids when the going gets tough....

Solomon had been taught the value of wisdom by his own father and mother....

So when the trouble of becoming king arrived in his lap, he knew he needed wisdom and that is exactly what he asked God for...

Now Solomon is continuing the tradition in the life of his son...

So, he has given a reap of what his father, David taught him, and now in verse 10 he returns to teaching his son..

10

***Hear, my son, and accept my sayings
And the years of your life will be many.***

11

***I have directed you in the way of wisdom;
I have led you in upright paths.***

12

***When you walk, your steps will not be impeded;
And if you run, you will not stumble.***

13

***Take hold of instruction; do not let go.
Guard her, for she is your life.***

Verse 10 is another plea from Solomon to his son to listen to his teaching...

And let me add this here...

It is okay to beg your kids to listen to you...

Sure, you can demand but they often reply in more rebellion...

I think it is much better to plead with them to listen...

And Solomon is modeling that for us here....

Hear me son...

Listen to me please...

Demanding actions often closes ears....

Pleading with me opens hearts...

Solomon continues his plea here with reasons for his son to pursue wisdom...

One is that wisdom leads to long life...

We have this principle repeated often in the Proverbs so far, but it is still true today...

Another reason to pursue wisdom is found in verse 13...

Wisdom helps us make the best decisions...

When life gives you a fork in the road, wisdom shows you the next step to take...

And then a final reason to pursue wisdom is that wisdom is not just a guide in life but a guard over life...

Solomon tells his son to guard wisdom because wisdom will guard him....

And then before we finish this first section, notice Solomon's words in verse 11...

Son, I have given you the truth...

I have showed you the way...

I have presented the good and bad of accepting or rejecting wisdom...

I love this verse because it reflects a father with a clear conscience...

Solomon is able to sleep at night because he taught his son about the ways of the Lord and instructed him in the wisdom of God...

I pray we all have the same clean consciences...

Sure we could always have done a better job in parenting but when it is all said and done, it is a great blessing to know that you did the best you could with the job you had...

And Solomon seemed to have that piece...

So we see the need to pass on Godly wisdom to the next generation and God has made it easy on us...

Now the good part is this....

We don't need to make notes of what wisdom we want to share with our kids..

We don't need to study hard about what we teach and say to our kids....

WE don't need to write our own book to read and teach to our kids,.....

We simply need to read and explain the Bible to our children every chance we get.

Therefore, we see a need in Proverbs 4 to pass on the wisdom of God...

Next, let's see the path of wisdom...

II. The Path of Wisdom (14-19)

In verses 14-19, we are reminded to take the path of wisdom in life...

Verse 14...

14

***Do not enter the path of the wicked
And do not proceed in the way of evil men.***

15

***Avoid it, do not pass by it;
Turn away from it and pass on.***

16

***For they cannot sleep unless they do evil;
And [e]they are robbed of sleep unless they make
someone stumble.***

17

***For they eat the bread of wickedness
And drink the wine of violence.***

In Proverbs 1 and 2, we learned of the people who reject wisdom....

The Bible calls them evil and foolish men...

And we see these people once again in verse 14..

Where Solomon's son is told to not enter or proceed on the path of the wicked...

Then you see 4 actions to take when we see the path of the wicked in verse 15...

Avoid it...do not pass by it...Turn away from it... and pass on...

Once again we see a simple solution to avoiding and overcoming sin and that is stay away from people and places that are sinful...

How much sin could we avoid and overcome if we were aware of our surroundings and stayed away from sinful paths and people?

And notice what the Lord says about evil people?

Verse 16...

They live to do evil..

In fact, they can't even sleep unless they are causing other people to sin...

They dont commit crimes in order to live.

They live to commit crimes...

They sleep, eat, and drink violence...

And then in verse 18, we get the contrast to the path of wickedness...

18

***But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn,
That shines brighter and brighter until the full day.***

The truth is clear...

More and more wisdom and knowledge and understanding leads to a clearer road in life...

For people who seek and acquire wisdom, their life is not filled with doubt and uncertainty but truth and clarity...

I cannot tell you how much more sense I can make out of the world's events than I could 20 years ago or 10 years or 5 years ago...

And there reason for that is not that I am getting smarter but rather I am understanding the word of God better...

The path of wisdom is well lit and it is a path that gets brighter and brighter until full wisdom is found in heaven...

And then the contrast in verse 19...

19

***The way of the wicked is like darkness;
They do not know over what they [f]stumble.***

The path of the wicked is darkness and confusion and ignorance...

I can't tell you how many evil people sound foolish in their speech...

They don't even know what they are saying at times...

They simply spout off in their ignorance to defend their sinfulness..

God is not a God of confusion but of order and clarity...

Wicked people walk dark paths and they they think they know where they are going...

They are utterly lost and headed to destruction with their eyes wide open...

So, we have seen the passing on of wisdom and the paths of wisdom...

Let's end with what I call the place of wisdom...

III. The Place of Wisdom (20-27)

As we consider the pursuit and acquisition of wisdom, we must consider where to put all this wisdom...

And verses 20-27 are going to give us an answer to that question...

Verse 20...

20

*My son, give attention to my words;
Incline your ear to my sayings.*

21

*Do not let them depart from your sight;
Keep them in the midst of your heart.*

22

*For they are life to those who find them
And health to all [g]their body.*

23

*Watch over your heart with all diligence,
For from it flow the springs of life.*

24

*Put away from you a deceitful mouth
And put devious [h]speech far from you.*

25

*Let your eyes look directly ahead
And let your [i]gaze be fixed straight in front of
you.*

26

***Watch the path of your feet
And all your ways will be established.***

27

***Do not turn to the right nor to the left;
Turn your foot from evil.***

The place of wisdom...

The storehouse of knowledge and undemanding is
in the heart...

Now, a quick reminder...

The heart of the Bible is not a reference to the organ
that pumps blood...

The heart is also not the place of emotions...

The heart is really the control center of a person...

It is the the will of a person...

And it is more mental than physical or emotional...

The heart is more what we think than what we
feel...

When I preach, I aim for the heart...

Which doesn't mean that I aim to make people happy
or sad or produce tears or smiles...

I aim to make people think deeply about God and themselves...

The heart is the control center of a person's life...

And godly wisdom must find its way to the heart..

In verse 21, Solomon reminds his son to keep his words in the midst of his heart...

And then in verse 23, we get a great principle of life...

The heart is the wellspring of life...

Think of a spring in the wild...

Water rises up out of the ground in a spring which then turns into a creek or a river or lake and then empties into the ocean...

The Mississippi River is the 2nd largest drainage system in North America...

It is 2,320 miles long and stretched from Minnesota to Louisiana...

Surprisingly, the start of the mighty Mississippi is a small lake in Minnesota called Lake Itasca...

And the source of Lake Itasca is the Nicollet Creek which is filled with water from a nearby spring...

In other words, the source of the Mississippi River is a small spring in the woods in Minnesota....

The same can be said for all the aspects of your life...

Everything that you think and do and value springs from your heart...

That is why our hearts must be filled with Godly wisdom and guarded from contamination by the world...

The place that wisdom must be stored is in the heart...

In other words, the knowledge, understanding and wisdom that God has made available in his word must be kept in our hearts...

That is why we are told to hide God's word in our hearts so that we wont sin against him...

That is why I would rather you think in a sermon than cry or say amen....

God's wisdom needs to change the way you think before it has any hope of changing how you live...

And that is why a father speaks wisdom to his son rather than simply modeling it for him...

Now, verses 24-27 show us why the heart must be filled with wisdom...

Because the heart affects everything...

Verse 24...

The heart affects our speech....

Verse 25...

The heart affects what our eyes look at...

Verse 26 and 27...

The heart affects the steps we take...

In short, the heart controls the mouth, eyes and steps of a person every day...

Why does your mouth continue to speak evil?

Why do your eyes continue to look at evil?

Why does your life continue to go toward evil?

Simply, you are not storing Godly wisdom in your heart....

And if you aren't putting the Bible in your heart, the world will gladly fill it up with evil...

And when that happens you speak like the world, you look at worldly things, and you walk into worldly trouble....

That is the importance of putting God's wisdom in your heart and pouring God's wisdom in the hearts of your kids...

Conclusion

Wisdom must be passed on...

Wisdom must be the path you choose..

And wisdom must be placed in the heart...

Henry Ford was the founder of Ford Motor Company...

He came up with the idea for the assembly line and turned that idea into a fortune building cars..

One day, the generators in Ford's factory came to a halt...

So Ford called his all his electrical staff to repair the generators...

But they couldn't do it...

With the assembly line sitting still, Ford was forced to call the man who built the generators..

He came over at once and go the generators going again in a matter of hours...

Ford was pleased and amazed at his work until he got the bill, which was for \$10,000...

Ford called up the man named Charlie Steinmetz and was angered by such a high bill since he had only been there a few minutes...

Steinmetz agreed to send a new bill with an explanation of the costs...

It came a week later...

IT read...

\$10 for labor to repair the generators...

\$9,990 for the having more knowledge than all your repairmen....

Ford paid the bill...

But what a great illustration of the value of wisdom..

Knowing God's ways and laws have value in this world...

And though it may not put money in our pocket, it will lead us to being with Him forever which makes it worth every penny...

Let us pray.