Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Crucial Lessons for a Wise Father
Scripture: Proverbs
Code: 80-71

This is Father's Day and a fitting time to speak to that father that is here in our fellowship in our congregation this morning. As a father myself of four children, these are lessons that I will share with you out of the Word of God that have been very precious to my own heart as well. I don't get an opportunity very often, nor do I take it, to focus direction on fathers and so I want to do that this morning.

One little boy's definition of Father's Day went like this, "Well, it's just like Mother's Day only you don't spend so much." Well we fathers can concede that. Someone said, "A father is someone who carries pictures where his money used to be." And the phone company tells us that calls on Father's Day are not as high in number as calls on Mother's Day and most of them are collect.

Well Father's Day is, for those of us who are fathers and who have the privilege of having loving children, a very special time. I know on this particular Father's Day I'm missing three of mine for the first time that I can recall, they're all gone but one. It's still nonetheless a special joy to see what God has wrought in the life of your children and to enjoy some of the sweet fruit of His grace in their lives. Being a father has always been a high priority for me...not only because it was for my father and his father but because of what the Word of God has to say. Unfortunately that high priority role of the father is being systematically attacked and destroyed in our culture.

This particular society in which we live has attacked the male role with such devastating force that I really do believe we have sentenced the next three or four generations to tragic experiences of disastrous proportions because if one thing is clear in Scripture it is this...the sins of the fathers are visited upon the third and the fourth generations. What that means is, where you have wicked men in leadership, where you have a decline in the father's role, it takes three or four generations to root out the evil that they produce. We are not looking at a situation where because of a sinning father three or four generations of son...of sons will pay the penalty. Not at all. Ezekiel 18 forbids that in advocating individual responsibility. But what we are seeing is that because fathers lead a nation, a wicked generations of fathers will so impact that nation for three or four generations that it takes that long to root out their wicked effect. I believe that the legacy of this generation of fathers is tragedy upon tragedy upon tragedy in the following generations.

In the plan of God, however, that's not the way it's supposed to be and certainly in the church we should be following that plan. Whatever may be happening in the society around us, we should be

ensuring a righteous generation in the church. We have a responsibility as fathers to our sons particularly...sons who tend to be for the most part more rebellious than daughters because they are the ones given by God leadership roles and capacities. If we will faithfully teach our sons, they will by example and precept lead the women as well. Where you have a plurality in the nation of godly fathers, they will impact the mothers. And where you have godly sons, they will impact the daughters of the next generation. And so the high priority of Scripture then is that fathers teach their sons...and thus raise up a generation of godly leaders.

Because God has ordained this and because God wanted us to be sure that it was followed carefully, God by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit gave a manual for fathers to use on their sons. A basic resource book, that book is the book of Proverbs and I want to invite you to turn to it if you will right now and we're going to be looking at the first ten chapters of Proverbs in a very general sense.

This book is the lesson book on living from which fathers teach their sons. In fact, that is very apparent. If you look at chapter 1 verse 8, "Hear, my son, your father's instruction. And while at the same time not forsaking your mother's teaching." You find again chapter 2 verse 1, "My son, if you will receive my sayings..." Chapter 3 verse 1, "My son, do not forget my teaching." Chapter 4 verse 1, "Hear, O sons, the instruction of a father..." verse 10, "hear, my son, and accept my sayings." Verse 20, "My son, give attention to my words." Chapter 5 verse 1, "My son, give attention to my wisdom." Chapter 6 verse 1, "My son," chapter 6 verse 20, "My son, observe the commandment of your father." Chapter 7 verse 1, "My son, keep my words."

And so it goes that this entire passage is designed for a father to teach his son. As fathers go, so go nations...so go generations...so goes history. And so God took the principles, the basic principles of spiritual living and packaged them in the 31 chapters that we call Proverbs.

Now a proverb is very simple. It is a principle stated in concise terms. We could say a proverb is wise in content, and concise in form. It is a brief to the point pithy statement for the purpose of instruction...brief to the point that they might be remembered.

What you have in Proverbs then is a compilation of these concise wise statements. This then becomes the basic book of truth that fathers use to teach their children, a book of wisdom. And frankly, if fathers are to raise a generation of godly men who will lead the women to godliness, they must teach the truths that are mandated in this father's manual.

Frankly, just to depart from that a moment, there's a lot of instruction available today for fathers to teach their sons, much of it even in a Christian context, that is pretty much trivial. Much of today's instruction is...to be a friend, listen to your son, go places with your son, take him to a ball game, have fun, follow his interests...etc., etc. What Proverbs has to say is much deeper than that. Teach your son trivial things, you'll raise a trivial father who will teach his son trivial things. Teach your son deep

things, you'll raise a son who becomes a father who teaches his son deep things.

So the primary duty of a father is not what one little boy said..."The primary duty of my dad is to take out the trash." The primary duty of a father is not even to bring home the bacon. The primary duty of a father is not to fix what's broken. The primary of a duty of a father is to teach holy living to his sons...and, of course, to his children as well including the daughters...but primarily the sons.

Now in this process of teaching there is one compelling overarching consummate summary lesson and that is that we are to teach them wisdom. The word which dominates the Proverbs is the word "wisdom." Sometimes the word instruction appears, sometimes the word understanding appears, sometimes the word discretion appears. But all of those words are simply elements of wisdom...to know, to understand, to be instructed, to have discretion means to act in wisdom. Wisdom means not simply thought but conduct. It means to live righteously. We are to teach our sons spiritual wisdom is the noblest and greatest and purest pursuit of their life.

In chapter 1 verse 20 wisdom is shouting in the streets, wisdom is personified here. Wisdom is lifting up her voice in the square. She is crying out in verse 22 for people to turn away from being naive, scoffers who are fools and to turn to wisdom.

The call of the whole book of Proverbs is that call, a call to wisdom. In fact, in chapter 2, would you please notice, the call by wisdom comes at the end of chapter 1 as wisdom personified cries out and cries out for men to come to her. In chapter 2 then we find the father encouraging his son to seek wisdom. Verse 4, "If you seek her as silver and search for her as for hidden treasure, then you will discern the fear of the Lord and discover the knowledge of God, for the Lord gives wisdom, from His mouth come knowledge and understanding." The father is saying pursue wisdom...pursue wisdom...pursue wisdom.

In chapter 8 the whole chapter is about pursuing wisdom, going after wisdom. Verse 11 says wisdom is better than jewels and all desirable things cannot compare with her. Again the pursuit of wisdom. And so, the overarching lesson that a father teaches his son is to pursue wisdom. And chapter 10 verse 1 says a wise son will make a father glad...a foolish son will be a grief to his mother.

We are then, fathers, responsible on this Father's Day to rethink this priority of teaching our sons wisdom. And I would like us to look at these first ten chapters and just pick and choose the elements that are here that I think make up ten crucial lessons a faithful father must teach his sons. And I want to tell you from my own life that these are the things that I have endeavored as a father to teach my two sons. If a son learns these ten things, he will be a blessing to you and he will be blessed by God. If you want your son to be a blessing to you, to be blessed by God, to bless the culture in which he lives, these are the ten lessons that you must teach your son. The sum of them is spiritual wisdom. This is a listing of the component parts of spiritual wisdom.

Lesson number one, teach your son to fear your God...fear your God. In chapter 1 and verse 7, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge," and chapter 9 verse 10 says, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." But everything starts with fearing God. Teach your son..."Son, fear your God."

What do you mean fear? Well it has on the one hand a positive aspect, a reverential respect, a reverential awe. That means that I have to teach my son about God. I have to teach my son what God is like. I have to teach my son the attributes of God. I have to teach my son that God is powerful, that God is holy, that God is omniscient, omnipresent. I have to teach my son that God is immutable, his nature does not change, that He is just, that He is merciful, that He is kind, that He is loving, that He is gracious, that He is merciful, that He orders providentially all the circumstance of human history and the universe for His good, that He is a sovereign, in a word. I must teach my son to reverence the greatness of God.

And then the other side of it is I must teach my son to fear God's displeasure...to fear God's right to punish, God's right to chasten, God's right to judge. And in that awe of reverencing God's holy character there is a healthy sense of apprehension because I know as a holy God He has a right to punish sin, including mine. If you want to do your son the greatest favor any father could ever do, teach him the character of God. Teach him what God is like. On the positive side, all of His attributes.

I remember when our children were little we took them through a book, Leading Little Ones To God which taught the attributes of God. We've always emphasized the attributes of God. They must know who their God is and they must learn to worship their God...that's part of fearing Him. Teach your sons to worship. And you teach not only by what you say but by what you do. Do you worship faithfully on the Lord's day? Are you consistent and faithful in worshiping the Lord? Are you here at the opening of the day in the morning and the closing in the evening service? Are you faithful to worship God in the Word yourself personally? Does your son look at you and see a true worshiper? Because whatever patterns of worship you have established for yourself, you have established for your son and he will likely establish for his son. What kind of legacy are you leaving?

And what about living in a healthy fear of God's holy right to punish sin? Do you have that healthy fear? Do you understand that God has the right to punish you? Do you so live to avoid that?

Notice chapter 3 of Proverbs verse 5, this is really a description of a worshiping heart. "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him and He will make your paths straight." The point being that if I am completely focused on God, He's going to guard my life, He's going to straighten my path. I want to teach my son how to trust the Lord with all his heart. The word trust in the Hebrew originally meant to lie helplessly face down. And

there's a sense of humility there, but there's also a sense of submission there to the total sovereign control of God in which the worshiper says I not only am humbled in Your presence but I bow in Your presence submissively to anything that You would choose to do, that's how much I trust You. Teach your son to trust that way. Teach him not to lean on his own understanding. The Hebrew word does not mean to incline, it means to support yourself. Teach him not to support himself by his own wisdom but to support himself by God's wisdom. In all your ways acknowledge Him. The word there means to be aware of, to know, to have fellowship with. In everything in life teach him to do it in union communion with the living God. Teach him how to trust God for everything. How to lean on God for support totally and how to be aware of God's consistent presence in his life. And if he so lives with that kind of trust and that kind of leaning and that kind of acknowledging, God's going to direct his path. Teach him to fear his God.

And I believe that when God is feared, so is sin...so is sin. Proverbs says fearing the Lord prolongs life. You want to give your son that kind of rich full life? Proverbs says fearing the Lord is more profitable than wealth, it brings about life. It keeps one from evil. It results in riches and honor and it breeds humility. Proverbs says that those who fear God sleep satisfied and are untouched by evil. They have confidence, they will be praised and they have their prayers answered. Would you like that for your son? Would you like to know that your son will have his life prolonged to its fullness? Would you like to know that he will be kept from evil, that he will be brought honor and riches? That he would be humble, untouched by evil? Satisfied, confident, praised and have his prayers answered? Then teach him to fear God. This is the most crucial lesson a father could ever teach a son.

Lesson number two. Son, not only fear your God but guard your mind...guard your mind. Chapter 3 verse 3, among many, introduces the heart here. And the writer mentions kindness, chesed(?), that beautiful word that means love, loyalty, faithfulness, fidelity, kindness. And then the word met(?) which means truth or accuracy, reliability or dependability. Take that, those two marvelous things, loyalty, faithfulness, fidelity and all of that, along with reliable, dependable, accurate truth and bind them around your neck and write them on the tablet of your heart, chisel, as it would be in the stone of your mind. Heart has reference to mind, the seat of thought and emotion and will.

In other words, teach your son to guard his mind. You are responsible as a father for the mind of your child. Boy, what a tremendous responsibility today. When the assault on the human mind is at such a level as it is today through the media, the job of guarding the mind of your young person and teaching him how to guard it is indeed a formidable task. Chapter 4, would you notice verse 23? "Watch over your heart with all diligence," the father says to his son, "for from it flow the springs of life." Guard your mind diligently because everything in life comes out of it. Out of it comes your conduct. It's not what goes into a man, Jesus said in Matthew, it's what comes out of a man that defiles him. And so what goes in is not the issue. What starts in and comes out is. And so the heart must be right. The father then has the task of assuring the son's mind is programmed with truth with

virtue, with faithfulness, with honesty, with integrity, with loyalty, with love, with all that those two words in chapter 3 can sum up. Father, you have a responsibility to teach your son to guard his mind.

All the way through this passage and I wish we had time to just kind of wander through the ten chapters, you see this. Back in verse 9 of chapter 1 he talks about the fact that good instruction is a graceful wreath to your head, and ornaments around your neck. They...when a son wears the truth in his heart, it graces him. In chapter 2 and verse 10 He wants wisdom to enter your heart and knowledge be pleasant to your soul so that discretion will guard you and understanding will watch over you to deliver you from the way of evil. In chapter 3 verse 1, "Let your heart keep My commandments." Chapter 4 verse 4, "Let your heart hold fast My words, keep My commandments and live." And that is the issue that the mind, or the heart as it's called, be guarded carefully. Father, you are the guardian of your child's mind. You must keep the right stuff going in and the wrong stuff out, that is your duty before God to guard your son's mind, your children as well. What a tremendous responsibility we have. That means we have to protect our children from what they are exposed to. That's the negative. The positive, we must make sure that they exposed to what we want to fill their mind, therein lies the benefit of a godly education, of Christian training, of exposure to the teaching of the Word of God. That is the duty of the father. Teach your son...fear your God, son, and guard your mind for out of it comes your conduct.

Third great lesson, a father must teach his son...obey your parents...obey your parents. All through this entire section these statements about "hear, my son, your father's instruction," are repeated...chapter 1 verse 8, chapter 2 verse 1, 3 verse 1, 4 verse 1 and then again in chapter 4 it's repeated again and again. Look at verse 10, "Hear, my son, accept my sayings." Verse 11, "I have directed you in the way of wisdom, I have led you in upright paths." Do what I say, is what he's saying. Verse 20, "My son, give attention to my words, incline your ear to my sayings, do not let them depart from your sight, keep them in the midst of your heart, or your mind." We're reinforcing here the first commandment with promise which is, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord." That's the first commandment with promise. Teach your sons to obey what you say.

Now that means discipline. Go back to chapter 3 verse 11. "My son, do not reject the discipline of the Lord, nor loathe His reproof, for whom the Lord loves He reproves, even as a father the son in whom he delights." If you love your son you discipline him, you reprove him, you rebuke him. Here is discipline. And if we are to have dutiful faithful sons who carry on a righteous pattern, they must learn to obey their parents and discipline is part of that. Chapter 10 verse 13, "A rod is for the back of him who lacks understanding." When your son doesn't do what you want him to do, you use a rod. Later on in Proverbs it says he has rebellion in his heart, drive it far from him with a rod. This is discipline not done in anger but done in love. Whom the Father loves He disciplines. And this discipline is done for the purpose of conforming your son to wisdom, for the purpose of breaking selfwill, for the purpose of removing foolishness, for the purpose of delivering the child from spiritual death and for the

purpose of making him a delight to his parents. All of those things are taught in Proverbs. Teach your children to obey and use a rod to reinforce because God says physical punishment done in love is a strong corrective. That way your children learn to obey their parents. And if they learn to obey their parents and their parents are advocating the law of God, they will learn to obey the law of God. And if they learn to obey their parents, they will learn to submit to the parents' authority and later on when they're living in society they will learn to submit to societal authority in any form. A disobedient child, you see, makes not only a spiritual disaster but an antisocial personality and very often a criminal adult.

You have a task, father, to say to your son you must learn to fear your God, guard your mind and obey your parents. You must learn how to submit to authority and since we represent the authority of God and are teaching you the wisdom of God, you must obey...you must obey. I do not believe there's any excuse for a rebellious child. I believe that children can be under control if they're properly taught by their fathers to obey.

There's a fourth principle and this must be taught as well...and very very important. A father must teach his son...select your companions...select your companions. You get on the offensive. A father has the responsibility to teach his children how to choose their friends. What did the Apostle Paul say? Bad company corrupts...what?...good morals. Bad company corrupts good morals. Your children, believe me, cannot rise above their acquaintances. Rarely does a child have the capability to elevate himself beyond the constituent group in which he functions. You have to select and help him learn to select companions and not let them select him.

Go back to chapter 1 for a moment, I'll give you an illustration of it. Verse 10, a father would say to his son, "My son, if sinners entice you, do not consent." In other words, don't get sucked in to the gang. If they say, and they appeal on the basis of excitement and adventure and a thrill, if they say, "Come with us, let us lie in wait for blood, let us ambush the innocence without cause, let us swallow them alive like Sheol, even whole as those who go down to the pit." Let's kill somebody and we'll find all kinds of precious wealth and fill our houses with gold, throw in your lot with us and we'll all have one purse. Here's the gang appealing to the kid. And the gang comes along and sucks up one other person for their own wicked purposes.

It's amazing, isn't it, this kind of action, for one fleeting moment of pleasure wicked men are willing to take a life or inflict lifelong trauma on someone pointless, senseless, gangviolence, like those members of that gang that shot Stacy Limb last week with a 357 Magnum because they wanted to take the wheels off her car. It's an unthinkable thing that people will do for a thrill. And they want to suck the innocent and the naive and the unwitting in to that. Think about that little boy a week ago in the news who wouldn't take dope with his friends in New York City, so they set him on fire. The enticements can be pretty strong. Fathers, we have a tremendous task. You may not live in an inner city ghetto like New York, or East Los Angeles, but I'll tell you what, there is tremendous peer

pressure coming upon your sons to conform to a standard of conduct that is the standard of conduct of the people around them. You must teach them to select their companions and not be selected and then intimidated into that kind of alliance.

The whole appeal here is to the father to fulfill his responsibility. In chapter 2 verse 11 the father has to teach his son how to be delivered from the way of evil, from the man who speaks perverse things. You don't want to be around those kinds of people. From those who leave the paths of uprightness to walk in the ways of darkness, you want to make sure your children aren't around those kinds of people who delight in doing evil and rejoice in the perversity of evil, whose paths are crooked and who are devious in their ways. Don't let your sons around those kinds of people. You instruct them how to choose their companions, those who lift them up.

Proverbs 18:24 is kind of an interesting verse just jumping outside of our ten chapter fence a little bit. Proverbs 18:24 at first reading looks a little hard to understand in English, "A man of many friends comes to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother." It's kind of an interesting verse in the Hebrew. It says a man of many rea comes to ruin, but there is a aheb who sticks closer than a brother. It's two different words for friend. A man who just wants a lot of acquaintances, who wants to be everybody's buddy is going to be in trouble. Better you should have a deep friend, an aheb, a loving friend who is loyal and honest and uplifting and holds you accountable, who lifts you up. Better a few of the right kind of friendships than a lot of the wrong kind. Fathers, you have the responsibility to God for the process of your children learning how to choose their companions. This is a father's duty...son, fear your God, guard your mind, obey your parents, select your companions.

Fifth, control your body. Any witting father who has any sense at all realizes that young men are going to develop passions that can lead them in to tragedy upon tragedy unless they learn how to control their body, their bodily desires. And as you get in to this section, this is THE dominant theme throughout these first few chapters of Proverbs. Go to chapter 2 for a moment, verse 16, this is repeated and we don't have time to go in to all of it but I'll give you a little sense of what the writer says...2:16, he's talking about wisdom and wisdom alone, that is the wisdom of God, spiritual wisdom that a father is supposed to teach his son, is able to deliver you from the strange woman. Well what does the word strange mean? Foreign. Why do you have to worry about a foreign woman? Because she's away from home. Well what does that mean? Well she's away from her husband, she's away from her family, she's away from her friends, she's away from accountability and so being...she's the outoftown woman, if you will. And it's real easy for her to act any way she wants because the constraints are off. You beware of that roaming woman who is away from the point of her responsibility. Beware of the adulteress who flatters with her words, that leaves the companion of her youth...that's her husband...and forgets the covenant of her God...that's her marriage vow. Beware of her because her house sinks down to death and her tracks lead to the dead. Why? Because adultery by biblical prescription required the death penalty. She'll bring you to death.

Some think that this is a reference also to a venereal disease or even to the divine intervention of God in an act of punishment. But I think the primary issue here is way back to Deuteronomy chapter 22 where God says people who commit adultery are to be executed. Passion is as strong as it is, however, as evidenced by the fact that men who would know they would have perhaps to lose their life would still follow their passion. At the moment in time lust for sex outweighs the desire to live. Stay away, teach your son sexual selfcontrol, Father, so he doesn't destroy his life, destroy his family.

Chapter 5 follows it up. Verse 1, "My son, give attention to my wisdom, incline your ear to my understanding that you may observe discretion, that your lips may reserve knowledge." Here's a very important lesson for the son, "The lips of an adulteress drip honey and smoother than oil is her speech, her kisses are sweet and she's going to sweet talk you but in the end she is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a twoedged sword, her feet go down to death, her steps lay hold of Sheol, she doesn't ponder the path of life, her ways are unstable, she doesn't know it. And now then, my sons, listen to me and do not depart from the words of my mouth, keep your way far from her and don't go near the door of her house and don't give your vigor to others." That is, don't procreate through others. Don't give your years to the cruel one and let strangers be filled with your strength and your hard earned goods go the house of an alien. Don't have to support the children of some woman that isn't even in your home. Don't give away your seed to someone else. Don't create children through someone else. Don't give your strength to another family and have to spend the rest of your life paying some kind of alimony or whatever. In the end your flesh and body are consumed. You'll say, "How I have hated instruction and my heart spurned reproof and I haven't listened to the voice of my teachers, nor inclined my ear to my instructor." Some day you're going to say I wish I would have done what my dad told me. Teach your son sexual purity.

Chapter 6 takes it further, verse 20 and all the way down to the end, pick it up in verse 24, "Wisdom is given to you to keep you from the evil woman, the smooth tongue of the adulteress, don't desire her beauty in your heart, don't let her catch you with her eyelids, for on account of a harlot one is reduced to a loaf of bread." She'll turn you into nothing quick. An adulteress hunts for the precious life. There you are, this precious life, she just wants to hunt you. Can you take fire in your bosom and your clothes not be burned? Can you walk on hot coals and your feet not be scorched? So is the one who goes in to his neighbor's wife, whoever touches her will not go unpunished. It's going to cost you and it's going to cost you dearly. Verse 32, "Anyone who commits adultery with a woman is lacking sense. He who would destroy himself does it." Why do people do that? "Wounds and disgrace he will find. And his reproach will not be blotted out." Let me tell you, an adulterer has a reproach not blotted out. You know, that's a good thing to keep in mind when you remember that it says in 1 Timothy 3 that one who is an elder must be above reproach. And if an elder or a pastor falls in to sexual sin and adultery, this text says that approach will not be blotted out. And once you bear that reproach and that stigma, it appears to be a permanent one, a permanent disqualification. That's a heavy price to pay.

Chapter 7, the whole chapter is devoted to a fascinating scenario. We can pick it up in verse 6, here's the victim, this hairbrained, featherheaded, naive guy wanders in to temptation. He's in the part of town he shouldn't be in. She's at the window of the house looking out through the lattice. I saw among the naive, I discerned among the youths a young man lacking sense...just the kind she likes. Who was passing through the street near her corner and he takes the way to her house. He knows what he's doing, he's down in a part of the city he has no business being in, he's roaming around in his stupidity, not knowing what he's going to get in to. That's the victim.

The hunt starts in verse 10. There he is in the twilight in the evening in the middle of the night and she comes, verse 10, she comes to meet him dressed as a harlot, cunning of heart, boisterous, rebellious, her feet do not remain at home, she is now in the streets, now in the squares and lurks by every corner. That's the hunt. The tactics...look at how she goes after this guy. Verse 13, this is what's known as the direct approach, she seizes him and kisses him. Whoa! I remember walking through Iponema(?) one time in Brazil and having a harlot grab me and a harlot pull on my coat and literally...I kept walking and she kept yanking on my coat insisting that I go with her. That was the direct approach. And I kept whacking at her hand to get off my coat. Nothing new, they've done it that way before, I guess. Verse 14, she gives him this business...I was due to offer peace offerings, today I paid my vows. In other words, help me celebrate, this is a big religious day for me so will you come and help me with my religious celebration? And then comes flattery in verse 15, "O therefore I have come out to meet you to seek your presence earnestly and I...you're just the guy I was looking for." Sure. Just the one I sought.

Then the sensual seduction, "I spread my couch with coverings, with colored linen of Egypt, sprinkled my bed with myrrh, aloes and cinnamon, come let us drink our fill of love until morning, let us delight ourselves with caresses." This is sensual seduction. And then she gives him the safety pitch, verse 19, "The man is not at home, he's on a long journey, he's taken a bag of money with him, at full moon he'll come home." In other words, he's got so much money because he's got so much business to do and he's going to be there a while, you've got nothing to worry about.

And after all of those attempts she finally tries to kill him with words, verse 21, "With her many persuasions she entices him with her flattering lips she seduces him." She talks him to death, just talk, talk, talk, keep the seduction going. Then comes the kill. Suddenly he follows her...stupid featherbrained naive guy...as an ox to slaughter and one in chains to the discipline of a fool until an arrow pierces through his liver as a bird hastens to the snare, so he doesn't know that it will cost him his life. The end of verse 27 says he goes into the chambers of death.

Teach your son that. Teach your son sexual purity. Teach your son to control his body. Chapter 9 verses 13 to 18 go further through that scenario...a woman of folly who wants to lead you to the grave. Sure stolen water is sweet and bread eaten in secret is pleasant but it will kill you...it will kill

you. Teach your son, keep mentally away. Don't go to certain places in town. Don't get caught in certain comprising situations. Keep your hands to yourself. Stay away from women like that. Guard your feet. Guard your eyes. Guard your ears. Teach your son that. Control his body for purity and he'll be a delight to you and blessed by God.

There's a flip side of that. You say, "Well if you teach him that too strong and then when he gets married he won't appreciate the joys of marital sex, so you have to balance it." Point number six, teach him, "Son, enjoy your wife." While it is forbidden prior to marriage, it is exalted afterwards. Go back to chapter 5. This is so beautiful the way it is articulated. Verse 15 says, "Drink water from your own cistern," and this is following on the passage about the harlot. "Drink water from your own cistern and fresh water from your own well." When you're thirsty, find your satisfaction with your own wife, that's what it means. When you're physically thirsty, find your satisfaction from your own wife. Drink water from your own cistern and your own well. Should your springs be dispersed abroad, streams of water in the streets?

You know, one of the things that people wouldn't want to see in that particular part of the world in ancient times was just water flowing through the street. Nobody in their right mind would just take buckets of water and throw them across the street, just throw them down the pavement or the dirt. Why? Because water was very precious. And not only that there wasn't much of it, it was hard to get at to get. And nobody was going to be just wasting water and he uses that as an analogy as people would be considered foolish who just threw water in the streets, you are considered an absolute fool if you just go out in the street and spread your stream everywhere and produce babies by other people. Don't do that. A fool would do that...foolish and wasteful is a man who fathers children all over town, all over the street. Let them be yours alone, he says, and not for strangers with you. "Let your fountain...your procreative capacity...be blessed, and here it is, and rejoice in the wife of your youth as a longing hind and a graceful doe. Let her breasts satisfy you at all times, be exhilarated always with her love. For why should you, my son, be exhilarated with an adulteress and embrace the bosom of a foreigner?" And he reminds him in verse 21 that God is watching and sees everything. Enjoy your wife, be exhilarated with her love, let her breasts satisfy you at all times, rejoice in her...teach your son that.

Teach your son by the way you treat your wife and by the things you say to be totally fulfilled in his own marriage. Teach him what Proverbs says that a wife is a gift from God, more precious than jewels. Teach him that a wife is given to be his best friend and companion, that a wife is to serve his needs and that of the children and she is to be rewarded for her efforts and praised, as Proverbs 31 says. Teach him the beauty and the wonder and the blessedness of a gift of a wife and teach him to enjoy his wife. And you will teach him best if you enjoy yours.

The wise father, what is he doing? He's saying to his son...fear your God, guard your mind, obey your parents, select your companions, control you body, enjoy your wife...those are the key lessons.

Let me give you just a few more. Number seven, watch your words...watch your words. Teach your son to be careful how he speaks. Chapter 4 verse 24, "My son," he says in verse 20, down in verse 24 he adds, "Put away from you a deceitful mouth, put devious lips far from you, make sure you don't speak lies, make sure you don't speak hypocritically, make sure you don't speak perversely, make sure you don't speak deceitfully, speak pure true words."

Certainly one of the things that I grew up with was that lesson. I am about as far away from using any curse word, or one remotely related to a curse word as any human being in the earth because I had my mouth washed out numerous times for words I didn't even understand or pronounce correctly. My mother used to wash out my mouth with Fel's Naptha Soap if I come home and said, "Daddy, what does (blank) mean?" In went the soap. That's what's called aversion therapy. We have passed that on to our children so that what comes out of their mouth is the word hopefully of the righteous. Proverbs says, "The lips of the righteous speak wisely...the lips of the righteous are a fountain of life and a tree of life...the lips of the righteous are like choice silver, they're satisfying, they feed others, they bring healing and deliverance. They are patient, kind, wise, truthful, honest, pure, soft, gentle, slow to anger and are mouth pieces for the Lord." Teach your son to watch his words.

Chapter 5 verse 2, your lips may reserve knowledge. Chapter 6 verse 12, stay away from the one who walks with a false mouth. Chapter 10 is magnificent, look at verse 11, "The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life." What a great statement. Verse 13, "On the lips of the discerning wisdom is found." Verse 14, "The mouth of the foolish, ruin is at hand." Quite a contrast. Verse 18, it says, "He who conceals hatred has lying lips. He who spreads slander is a fool." Don't do that. Don't lie. Don't slander. That's another thing we taught our children was never to lie. Our children, and I am sure this is correct and Patricia and I have talked about this in recollection, never lied in their life that we know of more than once because the first time we caught them in a lie there was a major unforgetable event that took place...which event lasted long in their memory. And it told them, in effect, that is a very bad thing to do and attached to it is immense pain. They seemed to get the message. Teach your children to speak the truth.

Verse 19, "When there are many words, transgression is unavoidable." "Teach them not to always talk. He who restrains his lips is wise. The tongue of the righteous is as choice silver," it just goes on like this. Teach them to watch their words...to watch their words. That's a major matter of wisdom. The mouths of fools pour out endless speech, crooked speech, foolish speech, violent speech, hateful speech, malicious speech, strife, ruin, slander, belittlement, gossip, disgrace, scorching fire, mischief, perversity, on and on it says in Proverbs. Fathers, teach your children to watch their words.

Number eight. Teach your sons..."Son, pursue your work...pursue your work." Teach your boys how to work, father, by word and example. Look at the ant, he says in chapter 6, he's giving this lesson to his son...Son, go to the ant, in verse 6 in chapter 6, and look at this ant, observe her ways and be wise, which having no chief officer or ruler. The first thing you want to do is teach your children how

to work without a boss around, even an ant does that. Now your children will work if you stand there with a whip. But the issue is...will they if you won't? Because they're going to have to in life. And they also need to be taught how to plan ahead. The ant even knows to prepare her food in the summer anticipating the coming winter. She gathers her provision in the harvest. Teach them to work. How long will you lie down, O lazy son? When will you arise from your sleep? Get your children up. And they'll say...a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest. Sure. And your poverty will come in like a vagabond and your need like an armed man.

You're going to make yourself poor if you don't learn how to work. Teach them to pursue work. A sluggard is a lazy man. He's just an ordinary man really, with too many excuses, too many refusals, too many postponements. According to Proverbs the lazy man will suffer hunger, poverty, failure. Why? Because he sleeps through the harvest. He wants but he won't work. He loves sleep, is glued to his bed and will follow worthless pursuits trying to get rich quick. On the other hand, the man who pursues his work earns a good living, has plenty of food, is rewarded for his effort and earns respect even before kings...it says in chapter 22 verse 29. Teach your sons to pursue their work...so very important.

Chapter 10 verse 4, "Poor is he who works with a negligent hand but the hand of the diligent makes rich. He who gathers in summer is a son who acts wisely. But he who sleeps in harvest is a son who acts shamefully. Teach your son to work and to plan ahead in his work."

Now, now that he's working there's a ninth lesson he needs to learn. Here's another one...Son, manage your money...manage your money. Go back to chapter 3 for a moment and among these repeated lessons is this one...and there are some basic principles that I would draw to your attention. Verse 9, here's principle number one with money. "Honor the Lord from your wealth and from the first of all your produce so your barns will be filled with plenty and your vats will overflow with new wine." In other words, if you are generous with God, He will be generous with you. So honor the Lord with your money. Teach him how to manage his money. Lesson number one is to give from the top from the firstfruits to the Lord, all of the money is to honor the Lord, he's to use all his money to honor the Lord...all of it. Teach him how to give. If you're a mediocre giver, if you're a come see, come saw parttime giver, that's what he'll be. And as you have forfeited the promised blessing of God, so will he and so you sentence your son to a life time of the kind of thing that you've had. If you want your son to know the fullness of the blessing of God, and all of it poured out on him, then teach your son how to give God generously.

You see, what we do as fathers is simply produce the next generation. And it either moves up or it moves down. The positive thing...teach him to honor the Lord with all his money, that whatever he does with it it is to honor the Lord. Now let me flip that over, there's a negative thing, too, chapter 6 verse 1, and this is a very good lesson and there's much more here than initially meets the eye. Verse 1 says of chapter 6, "If you have become surety for your neighbor, have given a pledge for a

stranger." Now listen, if you've cosigned...now the Bible says you should never do that for a stranger. Don't cosign for a stranger. You say...why would anybody in their right mind co sign with a stranger? I'll tell you, you know what it means? It means that some stranger came along and told you if you gave him this money or if you signed on for this debt, in the end you would become...what?...rich. That's the whole bottom line. In other words, if you'll just put your resources behind my project, in the end you're going to get rich. I mean, how many times have you heard that story? And how much money have you lost believing it? When a stranger comes and says...you know, just put your money behind this...what you have done now is you have yielded up the stewardship of your own money to a person for whom you cannot be accountable. So you have literally released your Godgiven stewardship. Teach your son not to do that. Teach your son that God has given him his resources for him to use wisely as a steward of God, not to become liable for another person whose behavior he cannot control. In other words, make very wise investments and make sure you control. Don't cosign for a stranger so that on his default you become liable. That's the point. Why? Because you are given money as a steward of God and you must use it at your discretion as the Lord leads, not have it snatched out of your hand by the discretion of someone else. Do you understand? Control your money to honor the Lord and don't get involved in getrichquick schemes that are going to put you in a position of liability.

And if you get caught...look how he says to deal with it, verse 2...if you've been trapped because you made some promise with your mouth, then do this, my son, deliver yourself, get out of it. Don't let it linger, you get out of it. Since you've come in to the hand of your neighbor, go humble yourself and importune your neighbor. You know what you do? You get down on your face and your knees, you humble yourself and you beg and you negotiate a settlement. You do it immediately, you get that thing off your back so that it doesn't go on and on and on. Settle it, get it done with, humble yourself, don't even give sleep to your eyes, don't give slumber to your eyelids until you get yourself out until like a gazelle from a hunter's hand, or a bird from the hand of a fowl, or get out of that mess, get it settled, humble yourself, plead for mercy and do whatever you can to get out of it so you are not continually under the bondage of being liable for someone else's conduct. Teach your sons that.

One final lesson. Son, love your neighbor. When we say you don't cosign for a stranger we don't mean you don't give money to someone in need. No. Chapter 3 verse 27, "Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due when it is in your power to do it." If you've got the money, give it. If you've got the goods, give them to the person in need. Generosity to the poor, meeting the needs of people around you when you have the resources is a part of honoring God. You're to be generous in showing sacrificial love to your neighbor. Don't say...verse 28..."Go, come back and tomorrow I'll give it." Don't do that, if you've got it in your pocket, give it. If you have it, give it. Don't tell them to come back. He has a need, you give the need. If you have it with you don't send him away and have him come back.

Another thing about your neighbor while you're loving him, don't devise harm against your neighbor when he lives in security beside you. He feels well being beside you and you've got some plot going on where you're going to get back at him in retaliation for something he did, or where you're going to confiscate the corner of his property, or you're going to do something to cut off his water or whatever it is. Don't do anything that is going to harm your neighbor. Don't contend with your neighbor, verse 30, without any reason if he's done you no harm. Don't be vengeful, is verse 31. Don't have vengeance toward a neighbor. Don't envy people who resolve all issues with violence and say...Boy, I wish I could...if I had my way I'd cut him up...don't be vengeful. Don't choose any of the ways of violent men. The curse of the Lord is on those kinds of people.

So, take care of your neighbor. Love him, live with him in peace. Forgive him, meet his needs. Those are the rules. And verse 35 says you'll inherit honor...honor.

Well, such is the duty of a father. And I close with this, listen carefully. You have this duty as a father and I want to lay it as clear as I can at your feet. If you fail, father, to teach your son to fear God, the devil will teach him to hate God. If you fail to teach your son to guard his mind, the devil will gladly teach him to have an open mind. If you fail to teach your son to obey his parents, the devil will teach him to rebel and break his parent's heart. If you fail to teach your son to select his companions, the devil will gladly choose them for him. If you fail to teach your son to control his body, the devil will teach him to give it over completely to lust. If you fail to teach your son to enjoy the marriage partner that God has given him, the devil will teach him to destroy the marriage. If you fail to teach your son to watch his words, the devil will fill his mouth with filth. If you fail to teach your son to pursue his work, the devil will make his laziness a tool of hell. If you fail to teach your son to manage his money, the devil will teach him to waste it on riotous living. And if you fail to teach your son to love his neighbor, the devil will gladly teach him to love only himself. We have a great responsibility to this generation and the next as fathers.

Lord, we thank You for our time this morning in worship and the Word. I would pray for all here who are fathers that we might be faithful to teach what we should teach to our sons, to all our children, that we might be instruments of Your grace to bring about a godly seed in the next generation. Amen.

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