

“Self-centeredness steps in the way of sharing wisdom.”

For Future Generations

A Study of Proverbs: Proverbs 4

“Because we don’t think about future generations, they will never forget us.” – Henrik Tikkanen

I found this quote interesting. What do you think it means?

There is a lot that can be drawn from this statement. Some may initially think about the environment. Others may think about children repeating the sins and mistakes of the parents.

Proverbs thinks of passing wisdom to our children.

It sounds like this would be obvious, but it’s not. Why do some parents not teach their children wisdom?

Have you heard the old adage from a parent, “Do what I say not what I do”? Sometimes parents try to teach their children what is important, but then do not follow their own wisdom. In fact, the quote above really is a commentary of our self-centeredness.

Self-centeredness steps in the way of sharing wisdom. Proverbs helps us to understand that we must look out for the welfare of our children and our children’s children and be concerned with them.

Now don’t get me wrong. I know that most loving parents are looking out for their kids. Most parents want to see their kids do well and survive the wild, untamed world, but that’s about the extent of it. Parents will tell their kids not to touch something hot and to make sure they don’t do anything stupid, but these general statements are circumstance specific. They are bound by certain parameters.

There is an old song about ship that was out at sea. It was a dark night and stormy. Visibility was next to nothing. On the horizon the ship saw the beacon of another ship headed straight for them. The captain hailed them and cautioned them to turn off course. The response was, “I sorry, but you need to adjust your course.” The ships were quickly

Hear, O sons, the instruction of a father, and give attention that you may gain understanding, for I give you sound teaching; do not abandon my instruction. When I was a son to my father, tender and the only son in the sight of my mother, then he taught me and said to me, "Let your heart hold fast my words; keep my commandments and live; acquire wisdom! Acquire understanding! Do not forget nor turn away from the words of my mouth. "Do not forsake her, and she will guard you; love her, and she will watch over you." The beginning of wisdom is: Acquire wisdom; and with all your acquiring, get understanding. "Prize her, and she will exalt you; she will honor you if you embrace her. "She will place on your head a garland of grace; she will present you with a crown of beauty."

Proverbs 4:1-9

coming closer. The captain become agitated and sent out a command for the other ship to adjust its course, but still the same response. A collision was inevitable. The captain barked out over the com, "This is a Navel Destroyer, adjust your course ten degrees, no discussion, over and out." He waited, with eyebrows furrowed.

The ships were quickly coming closer. Each moment that passed brought them closer to slamming into each other. A finally message was sent. Fear gripped the captain and he shouted out orders to veer ten degrees.

The message was simply, "I am the lighthouse."

Often, times we rush into situations and challenges with our guns blazing. We think that we know what to do. We think that we are acting wisely, but then come to realize that there is a whole different story, then what we had thought.

Describe a situation in your life when you were thinking you were acting wisely, and it turned out you weren't.

Read through Proverbs 4:1-9.

Here, the father is encouraging his son to seek out wisdom. It is the same wisdom that his father told him to seek after. It is not just simply a parent telling his child to do what he says. This is a parent that recognizes he does not have all the answers to all of life's problems. He is telling his son that wisdom must be sought after. It must be embraced. Only then will it guard and protect.

A wise parent recognizes that he or she cannot be there 24/7 to protect his or her son or daughter.

Do you know what a helicopter parent is?

It is a parent that continues to hover around there child, no matter how grown up he or she is. How do you think a grown up child would feel with that?

Maybe you have even experienced that. It is hard because the child

“The rule players have no problem because they play by the rules.”

wants to branch out. He or she wants to try to fly on their own, but the parent is just not ready to let go.

Proverbs 5:10-19 is a parent letting go of his child. He is sending him or her out into the big world. This parent leaves his child with one age old piece of advice.

Play by the Rules!

Why is living by the law wise?

This parent will never know all that his or her child will be involved in, but this parent knows that playing by the rules is the wisest thing. There is a contrast between rule breakers and rule players.

On the one side, the rule breakers have to always be covering their backs. They have to make sure that they are watching what is going on so that they can see how to manipulate it to their own selfish needs. (That word selfish comes up a lot!) They will stumble over themselves because they are playing outside of the rules. The rule players have no problem because they play by the rules. The rules are clear and so it is easy to follow, no stumbling.

Checkers. It is a simple game. If someone cheats at it, they may have won the game, but they never learned to play it. They are forced to cheat every time in order to win. On the other hand, someone that learns the rules and plays the game continues to learn how to play better. In the end, the former learns nothing while the later learns everything.

But that's not the end.

How do you know if someone is listening to you? I mean really listening?

You have seen the drivers that are not paying much attention. They are talking on the cell phone, eating breakfast, and putting on make-up all at the same time. They are driving, but they are not paying attention to driving.

“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. For they are life to those who find them and health to all their body. Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life. Put away from you a deceitful mouth and put devious speech far from you. Let your eyes look directly ahead and let your gaze be fixed straight in front of you. Watch the path of your feet and all your ways will be established. Do not turn to the right nor to the left; turn your foot from evil.”

-Proverbs 20-27

There is a difference and the same is true with listening. Proverbs knows this.

Read verses 20-27.

Take note of the different senses or parts of the body that are used. There are the ears in verse twenty, the eyes and the heart in verse twenty-one and the mouth in twenty-four. There are the feet as well in verses 26-27.

This is not just simple a casual hearing of wisdom. It involves the entire individual. Wisdom is not something we put on and take off. It is something we live out in every aspect of our lives. Following the rules is a physical, mental, and spiritual thing. Wisdom is finding God and reflecting Him regardless.

It is playing by the rules and then teaching our children and their children to play by the rules.

I know, not everyone plays by the rules and it's not fair.

You're right – it's not fair, but then if everyone cheated, there would be no real playing. The rules would be useless and no one would really win. Everyone would be going about masquerading as something else.

Besides, the foolishness of some should not be an excuse for all of us to be fools, but then that is what wisdom is all about. Not being a fool.

So, play by the rules and teach your kids to do the same.

What do you need to do in response to this lesson?
