

The End of the Beginning

A Study of Proverbs: Proverbs 1-31

“Recommend to your children virtue; that alone can make them happy, not gold.” - Beethoven

In a previous study we talked a little about parents encouraging their children to be wise and to play by the rules. As we close out this series, it is important to recognize that wisdom must be a family heirloom.

What are some of the significant things about family heirlooms?

Family heirlooms can be passed down from generation to generation. It seems they grow more valuable with each hand they pass through regardless of whether there is “real” value in them or not. A family cherishes things passed down from generation to generation. There is a wealth of history and meaning in each thing.

Think about it. Why pass down heirlooms?

When does a family heirloom become de-valued?

It seems that there is more to a family heirloom than just the item. There are stories and history that follow it. There may be exciting tales of family heroes or chance happenings. Each heirloom carries a different tale and important value.

It is amazing to think that we pass down family heirlooms, but neglect to pass down wisdom.

That’s right – it is the job of the parent to pass down wisdom.

We have already mentioned this in another study, but the importance of family needs to be pounded. It is the responsibility of the parents to pass down wisdom. Take a look at the following verses from Proverbs.

“Hear, my son, your father’s instruction, and forsake not your

"Wisdom is the same today as it was 4,000 years ago."

mother's teaching, for they are a graceful garland for your head and pendants for your neck." (Pro 1:8-9)

"When I was a son with my father, tender, the only one in the sight of my mother, he taught me and said to me, "Let your heart hold fast my words; keep my commandments, and live." (Pro 4:3-4)

"My son, keep your father's commandment, and forsake not your mother's teaching." (Pro 6:20)

"My son, keep my words and treasure up my commandments with you; keep my commandments and live; keep my teaching as the apple of your eye; bind them on your fingers; write them on the tablet of your heart." (Pro 7:1-3)

"Cease to hear instruction, my son, and you will stray from the words of knowledge." (Pro 19:27)

"Listen to your father who gave you life, and do not despise your mother when she is old." (Pro 23:22)

"My son, give me your heart, and let your eyes observe my ways." (Pro 23:26)

"The eye that mocks a father and scorns to obey a mother will be picked out by the ravens of the valley and eaten by the vultures." (Pro 30:17)

Throughout Proverbs we are reminded of the relationship between the parents and the child. There is a continuing dialogue going on.

The Jewish traditions and faith thrived in the family. We see this from the beginning. Take a look at Deuteronomy 6:7-9. The family unit was the place to learn about life and wisdom. It was the place to understand how to live through some of the struggles and heartaches of life. It was the place to find out how to avoid some of the pitfalls. A good family was a key to a good community.

This is still true today. Remember that wisdom is timeless. Wisdom is the same today as it was 4,000 years ago. It will be the same in the future as it is today. Of course, the situations may be different. We are not in the same setting, but this does not change wisdom. Wisdom

“Wisdom cries aloud in the street, in the markets she raises her voice;”

-Proverbs 1:20

has the same application today, as it did back in Israel’s day.

Why is it so important to pass wisdom through the family?

What are some other ways that wisdom might be passed down?

No matter the family setting the children will learn the most from their parents. The children watch the parents and how they respond to situations and people. They learn what is acceptable and what is not. In counseling, disorders are often seen in light of family relationships. It is not question of if the parents are teaching their children, but what is being taught. Things are passed down no matter what.

So what are you teaching?

Maybe after reading through this series or even this lesson, you feel as if it is a lost cause. Your family has fallen apart, you never had a good relationship with your parents, they set a bad example, or you feel you are in a rut.

It is true that we learn from our parents, but remember what wisdom says of itself.

“Wisdom cries aloud in the street, in the markets she raises her voice;” (Pro 1:20)

There is hope.

Although wisdom needs to be passed down from generation to generation, there is also a responsibility and opportunity of each individual to seek out wisdom. We have God’s word to study and apply for ourselves. I am not one to say place all the blame on parents, but they do have a responsibility.

I am however a believer in the grace of God and His work in the heart and mind of every individual. God can pull each one of us out of the most difficult, hurtful, and painful family backgrounds and teach us wisdom to live by. Many of us may be able to see where our parents failed, but let’s remember – none of us are perfect and we will fail. We will neglect wisdom, but this does not mean we cannot continue to pursue it. The pursuit of wisdom is a life-long endeavor that prom-

ises to be a rewarding journey. It is the beginning of hope and change in an individual and family.

I think Proverbs speaks for itself.

“For whoever finds me finds life and obtains favor from the LORD, but he who fails to find me injures himself; all who hate me love death.” (Pro 8:35-36)

I wonder what the world would be like if all of us treated wisdom like a family heirloom?

We might just make the world a better place.

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

