

Proverbs:  
*Practical Parenting*

According to a videotape of a meeting of the Wisconsin Taxpayers Party, guest speaker Rev. Matthew Trehwella told the audience that church congregations should be prepared to fight physically against legalized abortions. Trehwella said he had trained his 16-month-old son to identify which finger is his trigger finger and told parents not to play "pin the tail on the donkey" but rather to substitute the exercise in which a child is blindfolded and learns to take a gun apart and put it back together.

On the opposite end of the bizarre parenting spectrum high school student Leigh Ann Fisher and her parents filed a \$4.2 million lawsuit for emotional distress after she was replaced as captain of her high school cheerleader squad in Vilonia, Ark., near Little Rock.

Examples of lousy parenting abound. We won't come up short looking for examples of dreadful parenting.

But where can we go to find out how to parent the right way? Where can we go to get practical parenting help?

We could turn to [parenting.com](http://parenting.com), [parenting.org](http://parenting.org), [familyeducation.com](http://familyeducation.com), [parenthood.com](http://parenthood.com), [parentingtoolbox.org](http://parentingtoolbox.org), or any of thousands of other web sites.

If you look under the book section of Amazon and type in "parenting" you get a little over 29,000 titles!

The problem is, there's no uniform system of parenting in those 29,000 titles. You'll get every philosophy from common sense to the latest in pop psychobabble.

How do we even begin as parents? Where do we go to get some answers? Don't you wish kids came with an owner's manual?

Well, you'll be glad to hear that in a real sense, they do.

There's an instruction manual for parents. We call it the Bible.

When it comes to the practical parenting instruction in the Bible, we don't have to wonder, "Is this really the way to do things?"

You don't get a bunch of conflicting personal opinions in the Bible. You get the objective, authoritative standard of God's eternal truth.

The Bible claims to be the Word of God and backs up those claims with fulfilled prophecy and life changing power.

If the Bible is the book it claims to be then we can be sure that it's instructions are valid, because they're God-given. If God created us then certainly He knows best how we were supposed to function in life.

Now, we're in a study of the immensely practical Old Testament book of Proverbs.

Proverbs was written almost 3000 years ago. That alone is enough to make a lot of people ignore it's teaching.

They figure a lot has changed in 30 centuries so we certainly can't expect to find anything worthwhile in an ancient book.

But just the opposite is true. God's truth and principles are eternal and people really aren't much different than they ever were. Human nature has remained amazingly static since Adam and Eve took that bite of fruit in the Garden.

Interesting, Proverbs uses the words "son," "child," "father," and "mother" 67 times. One of the main subjects of Proverbs is the family. The book is written as if a father was speaking to his son about life issues.

So let's look at the book of Proverbs once again and see what it has to say about this foundational area of life.

**First of all turn to Proverbs 2 pg 561**

*I. God Gives Instruction For Life*

**Read vs1-6**

In this case a father is giving his son instructions. If you seek wisdom, not just education or learning, but wisdom, you'll look to God because only God gives wisdom that we can always trust. In fact, anything that contradicts God's direction isn't wisdom at all. It might seem appealing. It might sound kind of good or clever. But it's not wisdom.

The responsibility for parents begins with the example of the way God responds to us.

It's not by chance that 17 times in the Bible God is called the "Father" of believers. He's our example for parenting. He's the model.

What parents should be concerned about most is, what heritage they're leaving to their children.

After weeks of getting the cold shoulder from his wife, an unhappy husband finally confronted her. "Admit it" he said, "The only reason you married me is because my grandfather left me \$10 million." "Don't be ridiculous!" she shot back. "I don't care who left it to you."

When we think about an inheritance we usually think of money or stuff.

What God values is character, morality, and a good reputation. God the Father wants us to receive His wisdom and discretion.

That's the most important thing a parent can leave to their children.

God gives us his teaching. *From His mouth come knowledge and understanding.*

Obviously we're not audibly hearing God speak today. He did speak to certain people in the Bible, but those times were very limited. But God used the writers of Scripture to give us His words.

It's interesting that the phrases the Word of the Lord, or the Word of God are used over 300 times in the Bible.

God has spoken. He's spoken clearly and authoritatively. From His mouth comes wisdom.

Listen to some of the 50 wisdom references in Proverbs:

fools despise wisdom  
incline your ear to wisdom  
the LORD gives wisdom  
Happy is the man who finds wisdom  
Wisdom is the principal thing; Therefore get wisdom  
My son, pay attention to my wisdom  
wisdom is better than rubies  
How much better to get wisdom than gold!  
He who gets wisdom loves his own soul  
Whoever loves wisdom makes his father rejoice

See, God gives instructions for life. *The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.* Proverbs 9:10

A good parent says, “Not only will I live by God’s wisdom, but I’ll teach my children the wisdom of God too.

*I. God Gives Instruction For Life*

*II. Parents Are To Teach Their Children God’s Truth*

**4:10-13 6:20-23**

It’s challenging to see the stress in Proverbs on the wisdom of obedience to parents.

Of course it’s not *always* wise for children to obey their parents or to incorporate their values into their lives. If the parents don’t care about God or His wisdom then it would be a bad thing, not a positive thing for kids to model their parents example.

Proverbs, like all of the Bible, always has to be taken in context. Your father’s direction will be a path to life if he’s giving you the right advice.

Now notice, where does all the responsibility go back to? It’s parents, right.

**10:1 13:1 15:20 28:7**

Parents need to be careful to train their kids in God’s way of thinking. And that

doesn't mean you preach at them all the time or lecture them in the Bible.

But I believe it means what we read in God's command to Israel just before they entered into the promised land.

### **Turn to Deuteronomy 6 Pg 165**

In the Hebrew Bible the name of this book is "These are the words" because the Old Testament books were titled by their first line.

The Hebrew Bible was translated into Greek before the time of Christ because so many Jews spoke Greek and didn't know Hebrew any more. The Greek title is Deuteronomy. Deuteros means "second" and nomos means "law."

That title came because God led His people out of Egypt but they chickened out when He brought them to the land of Canaan.

He promised them the land but there were some pretty fierce inhabitants at that time and even though God said "I'm leading you" only Joshua and Caleb were willing to go in.

Because of that God said, "No problem. You'll just wander in the desert for 40 years until the generation who refused to go in dies off." That's exactly what happened.

Now Moses rehearses God's law a second time for this new generation.

Here they are on the plain of Moab, east of Jericho and the Jordan river about to go into a land whose inhabitants practiced every perversion from bestiality to child sacrifice.

How do you prepare your kids for that kind of culture?

### **Read 6:1-9**

You talk about God's truth in the natural flow of life. There are some times when the instruction is more formal but for the most part just incorporate God's truth into everyday life.

No soapboxes. No hour-long lectures. (Do we have any dads here who give lectures? Dad lectures? Dads are famous for that. It's like an occupational hazard of being a dad.) Make it a part of life so that God's truth becomes natural to your children.

That's what He's saying. That's the best way to prepare them for a godless culture.

So we need to teach our kids God's truth in a natural way, which means we have to know it well ourselves, and then a second part to that.

### **Back to Proverbs. 19:18 Read**

When you hear the word "chasten" do you think positively or negatively? it sounds so negative, doesn't it?

But God says along with teaching, you have to discipline. You have to chasten. But only to correct, not to damage or destroy.

The Hebrew word translated "chasten," *yasar* means to correct, to discipline, to give instruction, to train.

Once again, who do we have as our example? God! how does God discipline us when we need it? **Back to chapter 3 read 11-13**

Hebrews 12 in the New Testament, quotes this passage then adds, *Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.*

God gives these directions in Proverbs:

13:24 *He who spares his rod hates his son, But he who loves him disciplines him promptly.*  
22:15 *Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; The rod of correction will drive it far from him.*

Maybe you didn't notice this but babies come into the world as totally self-centered little guys. They don't say, "Hey, I'm hungry but mom and dad are resting so peacefully. I think I'll let them get their sleep and eat in the morning."

All they know is that they're hungry. They don't care if you're asleep. They're oblivious to every one and everything except them selves.

Maturity is learning that you're not the center of the universe. A child who never learns that usually grows up to be a criminal.

We all know some adults who are little infants in big people's bodies.

God says, "Parents, your job is to train your children. Sometimes that means punishment."

29:15 & 17 *The rod and rebuke give wisdom, But a child left to himself brings shame to his mother. Correct your son, and he will give you rest; Yes, he will give delight to your soul.*

Now remember, this isn't negative. This is correction that has a goal of maturity. This kind of correction has no nagging, no uncontrolled anger, no alienation. When you discipline your child ("discipline" & "disciple" come from the same root) you do it to see them mature and get prepared for life.

God never says to us, "Get out of here, you bother me." He never says, "I can't believe you're so stupid." God never chastises us because we annoyed Him or got in His way.

God always has a goal of building us up and helping us grow. that's the Biblical parenting pattern.

In fact the New Testament adds this piece of important advice, Ephesians 6:4 *"Fathers do not provoke your children to wrath."* The parallel passage in Colossians 3 says, *"Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged."*

NIV translates the Colossians verse: *"Fathers, do not embitter your children,"* and NASB says: *"Fathers, do not exasperate your children."*

How many kids are angry, embittered, and exasperated?

Jay Adams, who's kind of the father of Biblical counseling writes: "The most interesting fact that emerges in talking to young people is that it's not discipline itself, nor even primarily over discipline, but rather under discipline that

exasperates kids more than anything else.”

You’ll notice those Proverb verses on discipline say do it to teach and do it in a timely fashion.

You know what drives kids up the wall more than anything else? I believe it’s inconsistency.

One day we’re tired and we come down on our children for every little thing and the next day we feel guilty and we let them get away with just about everything.

That drives kids crazy. They don’t know where the boundaries are. They begin to figure that this is just all about your opinion and how you happen to feel.

The end goal of a parent should always be to establish that disobedience is ultimately a spiritual issue. That the real issue is between God and the child.

It’s hard to discipline a child. I think that’s why so many parents don’t bother. It’s a lot of work.

It’s a lot of work and it’s almost impossible to be consistent 100% of the time. But let me give a couple of practical suggestions:

- 1.) Don’t make too many rules. You’re better off with a few rules that are consistently enforced than a whole bunch that are haphazardly implemented
- 2.) Don’t make rules in the heat of anger. I hear parents say this kind of stuff to their kids, “You do that again and you’re not going to go to Disney World with us this year.”

You know what? Your child knows you’re not going to leave them home on family vacation.

Don’t just shoot from the hip with things you’ll never follow through on.

- 3.) Make sure the authority in the house isn’t divided. Kids are masters at setting one parent against the other. If you disagree on rules and punishment do it in private, not in front of the kids. They know who’s the softie.



4.) Take the time to do discipline right. The rest of Ephesians 6: 4 says: *“bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.”*

You might translate verse 4 “by actions as well as words.” By what you do as well as what you say.

That means we have to first model by our actions God’s way of doing things. Then we have to teach with our words, God’s truth.

All this takes time. It takes planning. It takes work.

By admonition we tell our children about God and His character, and by training we demonstrate His character.

Think about the message of correction when children do wrong.

God hates sin. God is angry with sin. But God forgives and directs sinners.

That’s the message we want to get across. Sin is serious to God but at the same time God forgives sin through Jesus Christ. God takes us at any time, no matter how badly we’ve blown it and gives us a new start.

I. *God Gives Instructions For Life*

II. *Parents Are To Teach Their Children God’s Truth*

III. *There Is Blessing For Those Who Listen And Shame For Those Who Don’t*

### **Proverbs 10 Verses 1-3**

When a member of the family chooses to live in rebellion to God everybody’s impacted.

Not only that but God says, Here’s real end of the matter. The person who lives for Me will have a fullness and a richness in their soul. But but the rebel will never find the satisfaction he thinks he’s going to get.

What kind of blessings come from appropriating God’s wisdom? **3:1-8**

Literally the Hebrew says “refreshment to your bones.”

Here’s the blessings: peace, a good life, getting along with people, the joy of

walking God's path, strength and refreshment. Sounds good to me.

But notice how this section starts. *My son do not forget my law.*

It's kind of like the second law of thermodynamics and entropy in physics. Things don't tend towards uniformity in nature, they tend toward randomness. And what's true in nature is true in human nature.

We don't tend toward remembering God's wisdom, we tend toward forgetting it. We don't need anyone to remind us to forget God's truth. That's not our problem.

That's why verse 1 here says not only don't forget, but let your heart keep God's commands. The word translated keep can mean "guard."

Over and over again in Proverbs God tells us that His wisdom principles are more valuable than gold.

Currently there's 147.3 million ounces of gold in Ft. Knox. On Thursday gold closed on the spot market at \$640 an ounce. That's about \$93.4 billion.

The vault door at Ft. Knox weighs more than 20 tons. No one person is entrusted with the combination. Various members of the Depository staff must dial separate combinations known only to them.

The vault casing is constructed of steel plates, steel I-beams and steel cylinders laced with hoop bands and encased in concrete. The vault roof is made of the same and is independent of the Depository roof.

The outer wall of the Depository is constructed of granite lined with concrete. Construction materials used on the building included 16,500 cubic feet of granite, 4,200 cubic yards of concrete, 750 tons of reinforcing steel and 670 tons of structural steel.

Do you get the idea they don't want anybody to get in there? They're guarding that gold because of its value.

God says, "You've got something that's worth a whole lot more. My commands and My wisdom. Let your heart guard those commands.

Why is it that we'd go ballistic if we owned some of that gold and someone snuck in and took it, but we're so willing to let God's truth slip out of our memory banks?

Every sort of influence in this twisted world is trying to wean us away from God's way. Guard that truth and hang onto it with all you've got.

That's what parents need to be modeling and teaching their children.

There is blessing for those who listen, but there is shame for those who don't.

### **Proverbs 30:17 Read**

Man. Talk about in your face. There's no subtlety here.

Proverbs uses the word "fool" to describe those who won't listen. In fact, it's used 44 times in 31 chapters.

There's three different Hebrew words translated as "fool" and they all have a little different nuance.

Dr. Bruce Waltke of Reformed Theological Seminary divides them up this way. There's the stupid fool, who's foolish because of his willful ignorance. There's the stubborn fool, who knows truth but doesn't care. And then there's the shameful fool.

3:35 *The wise shall inherit glory, But shame shall be the legacy of fools.*

11:2 *When pride comes, then comes shame.*

12:16 *A fool's wrath is known at once, But a prudent man covers shame.*

13:18 *Poverty and shame will come to him who disdains correction.*

There's consequences to foolish behavior that bring shame. Proverbs 11 says a disobedient person will inherit the wind. In chapter 15 it says he despises his own soul.

So when we don't listen to God's instruction there are shameful consequences.

How many people here can say, "I know that's true because I've lived it." That makes a whole lot of sense to those of us who've experienced life. It's hard for a child to get a hold of that same truth because somehow they think it won't happen to them.

The parents' responsibility is to teach them God's wisdom, so they they won't have to learn by experience.

*I. God Gives Instructions For Life*

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*IV. Some Will Not Listen No Matter What*

Getting to this stage of life and ministry I've seen hundreds of homes where God's truth was taught and lived out by example and children have rejected that teaching and gone their own way.

The depths of the pain and the heartache that causes parents goes right off the charts.

But when I look at the Bible I see that while it's more likely that godly parents will have godly kids, it doesn't always happen that way. In fact, the most striking example of all is God Himself.

He creates Adam and Eve, puts them in the perfect environment, and they still choose to rebel.

Solomon himself, eventually left the teachings of his own Proverbs and did the opposite of what God had told him to do and went through a very difficult time.

Some won't listen no matter what kind of home their brought up in, but God's command to parents is still the same.

In fact, His command to all of us no matter where we are in life, is still the same, be faithful, seek wisdom, fear God, and let your heart guard His commands.

Begin at the beginning. Come humbly trusting the person of Jesus Christ for the

forgiveness of sin. Receive new life as a gift. Then begin to apply God's principles to everyday life.

Everyone of us needs to evaluate and ask, "Am I being a fool in some area of life? Is it time to wisely follow the biblical directives that my Creator/God so clearly has given.