Words of Wisdom For Parents and Grandparents

PROVERBS 20: 7

“The righteous man leads a blameless life; blessed are his children after him.” ------Proverbs 20: 7

Introduction

Back in the 50’s, they were America’s Favorite Family. Every week Ozzie and Harriet and their two sons, David and Ricky would make their appearance in our homes in glorious “black and white” TV.

In each lighthearted, half-hour episode, OZZIE and HARRIET dispensed parental wisdom to help solve David and Ricky’s latest dilemas. The Nelsons were a very close-knit family. .........they ate meals together (including breakfast)............they had fun together....and even sat down and talked regularly.

And by the end of each and every episode, everything was fine and dandy in the Nelson household. The Nelsons represented what FAMILY LIFE is supposed to be.......but we have to remember, OZZIE AND HARRIET HAD A SCRIPTWRITER.

Unfortunately for us..........there are NO SCRIPTWRITERS. As many of us have already discovered and some of you are still discovering...........PARENTING POSES ONE OF THE GREATEST CHALLENGES IN LIFE.

As a matter of fact, when it comes to PARENTING.........none of us ever gets a LICENSE.............we all have LEARNER’S PERMITS.
ILLUSTRATION: In his book, GIFTS FROM GOD, Dr. David Jeremiah compares PARENTING to A WAR. He writes:

Every baby starts life as a little savage. He is completely selfish and self-centered. He wants what he wants when he wants it: his bottle......his mother’s attention.......his playmate’s toy.......his uncle’s watch. Deny him any of these things and he seethes with rage and aggressiveness, which would be murderous if he were not so small and helpless. This means that ALL children, not just certain children, are born DELINQUENT. If permitted to continue in the self-centered world of infancy.......if given free reign to his impulsive actions, every child would grow up a criminal......a thief........a killer......or a rapist.

We are living in a time when the FAMILY is rapidly becoming the most endangered species in America. More and more states are undermining God’s design for the FAMILY by passing SAME SEX MARRIAGE LAWS. The divorce rate is as high as it has ever been in the history of this country. Nearly half of the children in America are being raised in single parent homes.

If ever there was a time when CHRISTIAN FAMILIES need HOPE and ENCOURAGEMENT it is now.

And for all you Christian parents here this morning, you need to understand that the best HOPE your FAMILY has for survival in these difficult times is to build your HOME on the rock solid principles found in the WORD OF GOD!

God’s Word is filled with WISE COUNSEL to PARENTS.......and a great deal of it can be found right here in the BOOK OF PROVERBS.

For our thoughts this morning, we will first look at some WISE WORDS FOR PARENTS, and secondly, we will look at some WISE WORDS FOR GRANDPARENTS.
First........

I. SOME WISE WORDS TO PARENTS

1. Out of everything Proverbs has to teach us about WISE PARENTING, it can all be summed up in one single verse of scripture:

Proverbs 22: 6  Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.

COMMENTARY: The usual interpretation of this proverb is that if you TRAIN UP A CHILD properly, he will stay on the right path the rest of his life.

Does this mean if you have your children in Sunday School and Church and Youth Group every week that they will never stray away from the Lord? NO! It doesn’t mean that. We know children have a free will and when they become teenagers and think they’ve got all the answers, they may go through a period in their life where they don’t think they need the Church or the Lord any more.

But here’s the hope of this promise we find in Proverbs 22:6........ Once our sons and daughters have been exposed to the truth of God’s word, they can never erase that from their memory banks. Their minds and hearts are just like the hard drive on a computer. They may run from the Lord. They may run from the Church. But they can never run away from the TRUTH that was instilled in them as a child.

NO MATTER HOW FAR THEY RUN AWAY FROM GOD......those truths they learned as young children will follow them wherever they go!
HENRY WARD BEECHER once said: It is not hard to make a child or a tree grow right if you train them when they’re young, but to make them straighten out after you’ve allowed things to go wrong is not an easy matter.

Analogy: If you have ever planted a young tree, you probably drove a stake in the ground and fastened that tree to the stake so it would grow straight. You see, while that tree is young and tender, you can control the direction in which it grows.

The same thing is true of us as parents. While our kids are young, while their minds and hearts are still tender and pliable, we can control the direction their lives grow by staking them to the TRUTHS found in the Word of God.

2. Parents, let’s consider TWO ASPECTS of what it means to TRAIN YOUR CHILDREN.

(A) First of all parents, you have a responsibility to train your children in the way they SHOULD GO!

Turn with me to Proverbs 4. In the first 14 verses of this chapter, we listen to a Father’s wise instruction to his son about the way he should go in life. Let’s take a look at what this father says.

READ: PROVERBS 4:1-14

How do I as a parent teach my children the RIGHT WAY TO GO? Don’t TELL them.......SHOW THEM!

Our kids learn a whole lot more by WATCHING OUR WAYS than listening to our WORDS.
Do you want them to BE FAITHFUL to the Lord’s Church when they grow up? Then SHOW THEM your faithfulness.

Do you want PRAYER to be an important part of their lives when they grow up? Then SHOW THEM how important prayer is to you.

Do you want THE BIBLE to be the governing authority over their lives? Then demonstrate how the Bible is the governing authority over your life.

Do you want them to BE HONEST and TRUSTWORTHY? Then SHOW THEM how to be honest and trustworthy.

Do you want them to BE HARD WORKERS WHO GIVE AN HONEST DAY’S WORK? Then SHOW THEM how to be an honest, hard worker.

Do you want your children to TREAT other people right? Then SHOW THEM how by how you treat people.

* Do you want your SONS to grow up to be GOOD HUSBANDS and FATHERS.............then Dads, show them how to do it.

*Do you want your DAUGHTERS to grow up to be GOOD WIVES and MOTHERS.............then Mothers, show them how to do it.

Parents listen: Our kids will never travel the right road in life, if they don’t first see our footprints on that same road.

TRANSITION: But training our children doesn’t just involve training them in the way they SHOULD go, it also involves........
(B) TRAIN THEM IN THE WAY THEY SHOULD NOT GO

If you will think of a ONE WAY STREET a One Way Street serves a TWO-FOLD purpose. A One Way Street means there is a way YOU SHOULD GO and A WAY YOU SHOULD NOT GO.

In a sense, we parents are to serve as a ONE WAY STREET SIGN for our children. On the one hand, we are to show them the way they SHOULD GO and on the other, we should show them the way they SHOULD NOT go!

How Do We TRAIN Our children in the way they SHOULD NOT GO? We do it through LOVING DISCIPLINE.

Forget what DR. SPOCK says! Forget what modern day CHILDREN’S PSYCHOLOGISTS say and listen to THE GREATEST AUTHORITY ON CHILD-REARING and that is GOD.

-PROVERBS 13: 24 He who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is careful to discipline him.

-PROVERBS 19: 18 Discipline your son, for in that there is hope; do not be a willing party to his death.

-PROVERBS 22: 15 Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of correction will drive it far from him.

-PROVERBS 23: 13, 14 Do not withhold discipline from a child; if you punish him with the rod, he will not die. Punish him with the rod and save his soul from death.

-PROVERBS 29: 15, 17 The rod of correction imparts wisdom, but a child left to himself disgraces his mother. Discipline your son, and he will give you peace; he will bring delight to your soul.
Parents: Let me ask you something............

*Which would be more painful to you? Spanking your child or seeing them sit in a jail cell one night?

*Grounding them for a week...........or...........watching them serve a prison sentence of six months to a year?

*Taking the CAR KEYS away from them when they’ve been out drinking...........or...........going to the morgue to identify their body?

*Questioning them about the drug paraphenalia you found in their pants pocket............or...........watching them lie in a hospital bed fighting for their life from a drug overdose?

As Christian Parents, TRAINING our CHILDREN right, means, TRAINING THEM IN THE WAY THEY SHOULD GO as well as TRAINING THEM IN THE WAY THEY SHOULD NOT GO! And in both cases, nothing speaks louder than our own example!!!
1. Contrary to popular opinion, Our role as Christian Grandparents is not to “spoil our grandkids rotten” so they can pay our sons and daughters back for all the grief and heartache they caused us.

2. As Christian Grandparents, we play a very important role in the lives of our grandkids.

   We are our Grandkid’s link to a time when Christian Values and Morals were held in higher esteem than they are now.

   As Christian Grandparents, we possess a wisdom our grandkids cannot find anywhere else. Through our wisdom, our teaching and our example, we become A BRIDGE for our GRANDKIDS to cross from this generation to the next.

   It is NOT our responsibility to REPLACE or CONTRADICT our sons and daughters who are trying to raise our grandkids, but to CONFIRM and RE-INFORCE the Christian values they are hopefully instilling in our grandchildren.

3. That scripture we read in Proverbs 13: 22 says,

   “A good man leaves an inheritance for his children’s children, but a sinner’s wealth is stored up for the righteous.”

When we think of leaving “an inheritance” for our grandkids, we tend to think in monitary terms.

But grandparents do you realize the greatest inheritance we can leave to our grandchildren isn’t money or material things, but rather the LEGACY OF OUR FAITH IN ALMIGHTY GOD.

Long after the inheritance money is spent, the legacy of our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ will live on in the lives of our grandchildren and great grandchildren after them.
CONCLUSION

There are little eyes upon you, and
They’re watching night and day,
There are little ears that quickly take in,
Every word you say;

There are little hands all eager to do everything you do,
And a little child who dreams of one day being like you.

You’re your children’s idol, you’re the wisest of the wise.
In their little minds about you, no suspicions ever rise.
They believe in you devoutly, holding tight to all you say and do.
They will say and do in your way, when they’re grown up just like you.

There’s a wide-eyed child who believes you’re always right,
Their ears are always open and they watch you day and night.
You now set an example in all you say and do,
For the little child whose watching
Will one day be just like you.

As we close, let me give one FINAL NUGGET of Wisdom to all you Christian parents who are still raising your children.

Don’t ever forget , the greatest danger facing you as a Christian Parent is NOT doing the WRONG THING in raising your children............BUT RATHER, NEGLECTING TO DO THE RIGHT THING!

Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.