

Proverbs 1:7-9

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[0:00] Please take out your copy of God's Word, which I hope you have with you, that it's well read and treasured in your heart this morning and turn with me to the book of Proverbs chapter 1.

This morning we're taking a break from our verse by verse exposition of the sermon on the mount from Matthew chapter 5 through 7. We've been working up to Matthew 5, 17 through 20. We've began to talk about the law and the gospel.

And I kind of charged into that whole thing, not really stopping to consider that today was Mother's Day. And so this week I went, you know, let's not talk about the law and gospel from Matthew 5, 17 through 20 and Exodus 20 this morning.

But let's take a little time to consider all that it means to be a mother. It is my intention today to be an encouragement to the mothers of our congregation by reminding you of your high calling in Jesus Christ.

You may find some challenge in God's Word to us this morning. But I want you to know that I believe that the mothers of our church work very hard to excel in their disciple making.

[1:19] And this does not go unnoticed. I am proud of each and every one of you. I know that your job as mothers can often seem mundane and unending and that it is always exhausting.

And so I want to encourage you to persist by grace to train up your children as God will use you to yield fruit in their lives.

So with that in mind, let's take a look at Proverbs 1, verses 7 through 9. Before I read, beloved, let me remind you that this is God's Word to us.

It was written for His glory and our good. And we would all do well to listen to it in order to believe its promises and obey its commands.

Proverbs 1, verse 7. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge. Fools despise wisdom and instruction.

[2:26] Hear, my son, your father's instruction and forsake not your mother's teaching. For they are a graceful garland to your head and pendants for your neck.

This morning I want to draw your attention to five observations from Proverbs 1, 7 through 9 in brief. At least that's my plan.

I know sometimes I plan that and it doesn't go according to plan. But that is my plan both because I know most, at least many of us, have lots of afternoon things to take care of.

But also, and I'll ask for prayer on your behalf, I just don't feel well this morning. I've had a morning where I thought I could go back to bed at any time here.

So we'll see how this goes. You know how I get when I get into the points sometimes. So, in attempt, five observations from Proverbs 1, 7 through 9.

[3:25] Number one, God is the originator of the family. God created the family. Solomon is the book of Proverbs author.

The wisdom that he speaks of throughout the book is a wisdom founded in the fear of the Lord. So, he leads his teaching out in chapter 1 with these words from verse 7. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge. Which fools despise this knowledge, the wisdom and the instruction that will follow in the books.

And he begins his instruction with a most important note concerning the source of wisdom. The family.

He instructs his son to hear his father's instruction and to not abandon his mother's teaching. So, God in his loving kindness towards mankind created the family.

[4:47] We read in Genesis chapter 1 verses 27 and 28. So, God created man in his own image. In the image of God, he created him male and female.

He created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, be fruitful and multiply. Have children.

And fill the earth. And subdue it. And have dominion over fish of the sea and birds of the air. And over the heavens. Every living thing that moves on the earth.

God gives to them this multiplying mandate. And we come to further understand, as is noted for us in Genesis 2.24, that there's a unit that's created here.

Right? Moses writes in Genesis 2.24, Therefore, a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

[5:45] And so, God created this institution of family, and we create, as we multiply and marry, families. Right? We continue to portion ourselves off and create families.

The family was and is meant to be an institution itself with God-mandated responsibilities. So, second observation.

So, first observation, God is the originator of the family. Secondly, the family was designed by God to be a school. The family was designed by God to be a school.

Again, in verse 8. Hear, my son, your father's instruction, and forsake not, don't abandon, your mother's teaching. Beyond today's text, let's note together some other places in the Scripture where God instructs parents to instruct their children, like Deuteronomy 6, verses 4-7.

Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might.

[7:02] And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.

Right? There's a fervency about the teaching, and there's an ongoing teaching about the ways of God to our children. Also, in Ephesians 6, verse 4, fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline, the training, and instruction of the Lord.

Right here in Ephesians 6, Paul places the emphasis of raising children on fathers as the head of the household, but this does not exclude mothers as they are helpers of the fathers in this task. And the Bible instructs children to be students. So then it follows that the family, the home, is a school. Not only in today's text, but also in places like Proverbs 23, verse 22.

Listen to your father who gave you life, and do not despise your mother when she is old. And Ephesians 6, verse 1. Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.

[8:27] Get your children to memorize that and repeat it back to you often. So, the family was designed by God to be a school, to be a place of instruction in the ways of God for our children.

This is why many of us, I venture to say all of us, but I don't want to err in that way, but many of us in this church believe in the benefits of homeschooling, right?

Because it creates such good opportunity for this very thing. But however our children receive their educations, the responsibility of teaching them to have a proper fear of the Lord falls to parents, and it is not a responsibility that can be given to anyone else.

Third, the fear of the Lord is meant to be the theme of the family's curriculum. The fear of the Lord is meant to be the theme of the family's curriculum.

And it's the reality that ties all things we teach our children together. Again, in verse 7, the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.

[9:46] It's the prerequisite course of knowledge, right? It should infiltrate everything our children learn so that they have a right and proper worldview.

All education has, at its foundation, a worldview. We are teaching our children something about the world even by not talking about God.

Our education these days, our public school education, I'm okay if you're a fan of public school education, I love our public school teachers that are part of our church and for the work that you're doing, but has at its foundation secular humanism, right?

By not talking about God at all and by suggesting that education is the answer to all of your problems, you build a worldview for your children, right?

All education has to sit on a base of something. The Christian family is to be sure that the fear of the Lord is set as the base for all other education.

[10:55] Now, this phrase, fear of the Lord, does not mean that we are working to send our children towering from God. It carries rather the idea of reverence and humility.

A child that fears the Lord will recognize that they are a created being and they live in a created world and will, as such is true, desire to live in accord with the creator and sustainer of that created world.

Right? They will see that it's all built upon the fact, the reality, that God created this world and intends to rule over it as its good king.

They will see the world's goodness under God's rule and they will also see the world's brokenness in rejection of God as king.

Let me show you the importance of such a theme from a couple of psalms. So, Psalm 31 and verse 19. The psalmist says, Oh, how abundant is your goodness, which you have stored up for those who fear you and work for those who take refuge in you.

[12:15] Psalm 112 and verse 1. The psalmist writes, Praise the Lord. Blessed is the man who fears the Lord. Blessed, doing well as the man who fears the Lord, who greatly delights in the Lord's commandments.

And Psalm 115 and verse 13. The Lord will bless those who fear the Lord, both the small and the great.

So, there is a promise of goodness and blessing from God to those who fear Him and want to follow in His ways.

We want our children to be declared by God blessed. And building all that we do in instructing our children on this fear of the Lord, letting it be the foundation, ultimately, has its final good in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

If our children are humbled because of their sin and parents, we have so many opportunities to teach them about their sin. And they are amazed at the magnificent holiness of God.

[13:36] They will want to know the good news of Jesus Christ. We create for them the problem. We don't create a problem. We create for them the problem.

It is a problem that exists. They are born in sin. As Voddie Bauckham likes to say, do you know why babies are so small? It is because if they were any larger, they would kill you.

We have seen the rage in our young ones. They are sinful from birth. Reject the good rule of God as king. If they did not, they would listen to the loving kind, help and instruction of their parents.

If they do not, they transgress the fifth commandment from day one. We want to show them their great need of a Savior, Jesus Christ. They need to put on His righteousness before God.

John Piper, in a sermon on this very text, said, the family isn't just a place where children learn to hold spoons and walk on two feet and say please and tie shoes and read and look both ways and cut grass and put on makeup and drive a car.

[14:47] The family is where all of this and more begins in God, is guided by God's Word and is shown to be for the glory of God.

The fear of God, the reverencing of God, the standing in awe of God, the trusting of God is what families are for.

So that was the third point. The fear of the Lord is meant to be the theme of the family's curriculum. Fourthly, both father and mother are responsible for teaching.

Verse 8, the son is instructed to hear his father's instruction and to not abandon his mother's teaching. Solomon tells his son to heed the teaching of both his father and his mother.

in the normative family, both exist. And both work to the great end of teaching children to fear the Lord.

[15:56] But in a world of death and severed relationship, not all families are normative. Some children are raised by single mothers and there is grace for this.

Some children are raised by single fathers and there is grace. Probably extra measures of grace for this. Some children do not have God-fearing parents or one who is and one who is not.

And there is grace for this. And most regularly, the means of said grace is the church called together as a faith family.

God employs the efforts of the church to aid us in raising children. And I want to show you this manifold grace from the life of Timothy.

Timothy's father was a Greek and not a follower of Jesus Christ by all that we can tell. Most likely. Maybe he converted at a later age.

[17:05] But the way Paul writes concerning Timothy's father doesn't appear that he was. But Paul tells us in 2 Timothy 1 and verse 5 as he's writing to Timothy, he says, I am reminded of your sincere faith.

The faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice. And now, I am sure, dwells in you as well.

And then further instructs Timothy in 2 Timothy 3 verses 14 and 15. But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it.

And how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. Timothy finding himself as a prominent Christian leader in the Ephesian church owes so much to God's grace to him through his grandmother and his mother.

So God having great grace to Timothy and giving great grace to Lois and Eunice, God also gave great grace in giving Timothy a spiritual father.

[18:22] It would seem that his biological father was not this for him. But in 1 Timothy 1, the beginning of verse 2, Paul addresses his first letter to Timothy with these words.

To Timothy, my true child in the faith. It would seem that there was some kind of spiritual adoption on Paul's mind here.

He was willing to father Timothy in the faith. And Paul tells us that he instructed Timothy in the way of the Lord in 2 Timothy 3, verse 10, and the first part of verse 11, where he writes, You, however, have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, my persecutions, and sufferings.

Doesn't that sound like Deuteronomy 6? This teaching, passing on diligently to your children these commands. Dwelling on these things and the rising and the sitting in the house and the walking along the way Paul had instructed Timothy as a spiritual father.

So today, I want to exhort childless women to have spiritual children. children. And I want to exhort women with children to have spiritual children.

[19:55] Train those younger than you in the faith and impart a fear of the Lord to someone else. We are meant to be disciple makers both within the house and without of the house.

Mothers, you provide many necessary things for your children. You keep them clothed and fed, some better than others, but they are surviving.

But your children do not need a perfectly clean house or the most exciting meals. They do need you and they need your careful instruction in Scripture.

Make that the priority of your efforts. On your bulletin this morning is a Charles Spurgeon quote, as I like to do. I keep awaiting the jokes made about my Spurgeon quotes.

You'll be a clever one if you can come up with good jokes concerning that. He wrote this, Fathers and mothers are the most natural agents for God to use in the salvation of their children.

[21:08] I am sure that in my early years no teaching ever made such an impression upon my mind as the instruction of my mother. And today you get a bonus Spurgeon quote.

Those who think that a woman detained at home by her little family, so let me just repeat that.

Those who think that a woman detained at home, busy, so busy, at home by her little family is doing nothing.

Think the reverse of what is true. There is so much value, ladies, in the hard work you do the day in and the day out with your little ones.

Fifth, children who obey their parents, heed their parents' instruction, are promised a reward.

Verse 9, for they, and what Solomon is referring to, for they, your father's instruction and your mother's teaching, right, are a graceful garland for your head and pendants for your neck.

[22:26] To the Israelites' mind, no signs or badges of joy or glory were higher in worth than the garland around the head or the gold chain around the neck.

They were worn by kings and they were worn by the favorites of kings. They were doled out by kings to honor people.

This is the promise of a parent's instruction themed by the fear of the Lord. We must make that caveat, right? Parental instruction themed, held together by the fear of the Lord.

The promise is the favor of the Lord. The fifth commandment found in Exodus 20 and verse 12 says, Honor your father and mother that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.

In Proverbs chapter 14 verse 26 and 27 says, In the fear of the Lord one has strong confidence and his children will have a refuge. The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life that one may turn away from the snares of death.

[23:39] And Proverbs 19 and verse 23, The fear of the Lord leads to life and whoever has it rests satisfied. He will not be visited by harm.

And this is not wisdom for the day to day of harm and avoiding death. This is talking about eternal favor found in God by faith in Jesus Christ.

And the teaching of the good news of Jesus Christ has its start at the very foundation in understanding who we are and who God is.

We will see the great chasm fixed between us and be desirous to cross that chasm when we cross it by faith in Jesus Christ. And we want our children, we desperately want our children to cross that chasm with us.

And so we see in brief from Proverbs chapter 1 verse 7 through 9 God is the originator of the family. The family was designed by God to be a school.

[24:49] The fear of the Lord is meant to be the theme of the family's curriculum. Both father and mother are responsible for teaching and children who obey their parents are promised a reward.

And so beloved, let's take up the task of this great charge that's been given to us as those with kids and as part of a church that has children to preach the gospel well.

To found everything that we do as families and with our children in the fear of the Lord. This reverence for who He is and how He intends for us to walk in the world.

And let's do this from the joy of obedience and by grace. Let's pray together.