

Proverbs 1:7-9

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Preacher: Nathan Raynor

[0 : 00] As the spring semester has come to an end and we're entering into the summer, we have begun a verse-by-verse exposition of the book of Colossians. So let me invite you to turn there with me to Colossians chapter 1 while I explain to you why I'm not going to be preaching from Colossians this morning.

But I want to show you the why and the how of it. Last week was a very busy week for me, primarily because the Dhalonega Care Center had its banquet on Friday.

And thank you to all of you who were part of that and made it possible. It went very well, but occupied much of my extra brain capacity. So I got started very early in the week, hammering after Colossians 1, 15 through 20, this great cosmic Christological hymn.

It's such a precious, precious text. It's the center, although not in verse counting, but it's the center of Paul's letter to the Colossian church.

It is a phenomenal passage of text. And so I got an early start on it and went after it hard and have enjoyed my study of it and am prepared to preach 15 through 20.

[1 : 19] But I failed my little bit of extra brain bandwidth to realize that I got way ahead of myself in my preparation. That for our schedule for the summer, I had intended to preach verses 15 through 17.

And then next week, verses 18 through 20. Which made a mild conundrum. Not a large conundrum, but a small one. Just that if I preach Colossians 1, 15 through 20 this week, we'd be a week ahead. And at some point would have to drop out or finish early and fill in something topical before college students come back in the fall. Not a major deal, but began to make me go, huh, I wonder if maybe. All this happening at 5 o'clock yesterday evening. As I said to you previously, going throughout the week, I heard many, many, I won't be there this Sunday. And so those two things combined caused me to say, well, let me step away from the text.

We'll pick up next week again, 15 through 20, in Colossians. But let me step away from it for this week. And then our main crew will be back next week and we can press on together in the book of Colossians.

[2 : 27] So this morning, I'll preach a Mother's Day sermon of sort. So if you will, join me in Proverbs, the book of Proverbs, chapter 1. I'm thankful for a church that appreciates verse by verse exposition.

I hope this doesn't offend your sensibilities too much. Too upset with me. Proverbs, chapter 1, verses 7 through 9.

This is God's Word to us.

It was written for His glory and our good. We would all do well to listen to it in order to believe its promises and obey its commands. And this morning, I want to observe, to pull out from these three verses, six realities from Proverbs 1, 7 through 9.

A little less complex than last week. You won't have three lists within a major list. Just one list, six realities from Proverbs 1, 7 through 9.

[3 : 46] Firstly, reality number one, the family is an institution of God's making. Solomon here, writer of this beginning proverb, writing to his son, takes for granted that his readers will have fathers and mothers to listen to.

That God's good design would be at play in the world. God created the family. The family is God's plan.

God's desire. To put it one more way, the family is ordained by God in creation. In the very first chapter of the Bible, Genesis 1, 27 and 28 says, And God created man in His own image.

In the image of God, He created them. Male and female, He created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.

I brought you together. One of the purposes of Adam and Eve being brought together was that they would multiply, that they would be a family. How were they to do this fruitful earth filling by indiscriminate mating pregnancies?

[5 : 09] The second chapter of the Bible, Genesis 2, 24, gives the answer. A man shall leave his father and his mother and shall cleave to his wife and they shall become one flesh.

This profound relationship between one man and one woman whose covenant relationship shows the world the way that God relates to His covenant people in love and faithfulness was meant to reproduce little ones who also honor God as His image bears.

This was God's original intention. His original design. All of this by grace God has sustained countless imperfect people and countless imperfect situations for the sake of His name.

But God intended for the family to be in full function in the world. Why do you think that Satan is so going after the family to destroy it, to rip it apart?

As goes the family, so goes the society. Do you know the three institutions that God's ordained? There's three.

[6 : 20] The family, the church, and the government. All ordained by God to serve a very particular role and function.

And when those roles and functions are traded, when the parameters between them get skewed, bad things always happen.

The family was created by God to help God's little ones worship Him. And Solomon assumes the family is exercising its role in this text.

So the family is an institution of God's making, firstly. Second reality, the family is meant to be a school. The family is meant to be a school.

Note verse 7, the commendation of knowledge. Fools despise wisdom and instruction. And then Solomon says to his son, how is it that this wisdom and instruction is going to come to you?

[7 : 27] It's going to come to you by your mother and your father in the family. The family is God's basic school for instructing children how to live in the world.

Unlike many animals, children do very little instinctually. There's some amazing things they do, like when a baby's brand new, first born, if you knew this or not, but you can get them to grasp your fingers and you can pick them up.

I haven't tried it, but so I'm told that this is true. That if you blow in their face or hold their breath and you can dunk them under water, also wasn't allowed to try that one. They suckle by instinct.

They cry when they're hungry or tired. They blink. Probably it. Not much more than that. As humans, we must be taught how to eat and walk, how to talk and read, how to show gratitude and other manners.

Just about everything that we do is learned. The family is God's intended school for this massive undertaking.

[8 : 38] The family certainly may employ the help of others in this effort. Relatives, a nanny, a school, the church, I would encourage all of those things. But ultimately, the responsibility for passing along the necessary skills for this life and, more importantly, the next life is laid squarely on the shoulders of the family.

Parents, future parents, that is your responsibility. Proverbs 22.6 says, Train up a child in the way he should go.

Even when he is old, he will not depart from it. Deuteronomy 6.4-7 Speaking of God's moral law, 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.

And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. Then, verse 7, 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.

The family is an institution of God's making and the family is meant to be a school. Thirdly, the third reality in our text, the proper object of family instruction, the great end, the goal of all of the instructing that happens is the fear of the Lord.

[10 : 11] Verse 7 tells us, the fear of the Lord is the very beginning of knowledge. It is that foundation for anything else important in life that must be learned.

What is the fear of the Lord? It's not a carnal fear, a fear that is faithless, that doesn't depend on the goodness and the sovereignty of God, but rather it's a divine fear.

It's a faith-filled fear, which is the reverencing and adoring of God's holiness, the recognition that He is perfect, that His being is worthy of our awe.

And it's the setting of ourselves always under His sacred inspection. Recognizing that in His holiness, He looks down upon us and expects the same.

And we place ourselves under that and this causes a fear because we fail at this. The infinite distance between God and us causes this fear.

[11 : 20] And it's a good thing. It's a healthy thing because it drives us to the cross. Fear of the Lord is the leading grace.

It's the beginning grace. The thing that God works in our hearts to change us. The thing that sends us running to the cross of Christ. Recognizing that God is holy and we are not and we will be judged and we need someone to stand in that gap for us.

To make propitiation for our sin. Ecclesiastes 12, 13, and 14. In the book of Ecclesiastes, there's some speculation about who wrote it but likely Solomon wrote it.

And it's amusing on what is of value in life and it sums up this way. Ecclesiastes 12, 13, and 14. The end of the matter. All has been heard.

Fear God and keep His commandments for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every deed into judgment with every secret thing whether good or evil.

[12 : 30] So if we love our children properly, we will seek their greatest good. This is the aim of love. To seek the greatest good of the object of that love. I see so many parents these days simply pacifying their children.

Giving in to their every whim and want. Meeting their children's felt needs rather than their real needs. Parents, this must not be so of us.

We need to give our children what is good for their souls. Behavior modification should not be the ultimate goal of our parenting although it is part of it.

We expect our children to act appropriately. I say to my sons all the time in punishment after the fact when we're reconciling I say to them all the time you're my son and I love you and that's why I want you to obey.

Because of who you are you will act like my son. And I'm hoping that they'll get this and that it'll translate to who they're meant to be in Christ. Because you belong to God you will do what God wants you to do.

[13 : 38] Because ultimately what we want to see happening in our children is heart change. This is the aim of teaching them these things. This is why the fear of the Lord is so important because it's this leading grace in their lives.

Our children need to fear the Lord so that they will run to the cross. So that they will embrace Christ in all that He offers them. All that He does in their place.

We need to teach them the fear of the Lord so that they will find God so awesome that they will tremble at His holiness. A proper use of the word awesome. They will tremble at His holiness and they will also find Him so beautiful that they will never want to leave His presence.

Proverbs 14 verse 26 and 27 reads, 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. And Proverbs 19.23 reads, The fear of the Lord leads to life and whoever has it rests satisfied.

[14 : 50] He will not be visited by harm. So, the family is an institution of God's making. It is meant to be a school and the proper object of family instruction is the fear of the Lord.

The fourth reality from the text, the instruction in the fear of the Lord is the responsibility of fathers and mothers.

It is the responsibility of fathers and mothers. I hope this is fairly obvious to you in the text, but it bears saying. Now, as the Father is meant to give leadership in the home, is primarily charged with leadership in the home, this includes also the instructions in the way of God.

All things spiritual. He is ultimately responsible for this. But He is not alone in the task praise God.

We've been given a partner, a helper, that's suitable for us to help us in this task.

Still giving leadership to it, but having our dear wives and mothers come alongside us and help us in it. Verse 8, we see both at play here.

[16:05] Hear my son, your father's instruction and forsake not your mother's teaching. Now, since today is Mother's Day, I'm going to take a moment to encourage our mothers.

At this point, certainly we could speak at length about the responsibility to fathers. Maybe some other Father's Day will do that. But to mothers today, we praise God as we rightly should for the mothers of our church.

Mothers do so much and are so very often underappreciated. And the reality of it is that many mothers also undervalue their work.

Many moms here today are very guilty of being swayed by Pinterest. You know that the wonderful moms on Pinterest took a long time to clean that corner of the room up so it looked so perfect and put together and as soon as they took the photo, it was destroyed by their children.

So many moms feel day in and day out like such failures. But let me say to you that from the outside as an observer, the mothers of our church are doing a wonderful, wonderful job.

[17:27] I admire each and every one of you. None of you are perfect and have it wonderfully, perfectly figured out, but you are doing so well and so much better than many others.

A lot of moms war against feminism. This idea that women must have careers, that simply being a mom is not enough, that that in and of itself is not a job, that you must do more and make more, that you're not created different to have a different task.

Creeping into the church is the idea of egalitarianism, that men and women are alike in all ways.

This is simply not true. This is a way that the enemy is attacking the very fabric of the family.

We are complementarianism. Excuse me. We believe that men and women are equal. Stand before God equal, but different.

Created to fulfill different roles. We have women in this church that are embracing that role, and I praise God for that. I think that's a grace working in your hearts to that end.

[18:42] But you war against feminism. People ask you what you do for a living, and you say, I'm a mom, and I hear it in your voice sometimes, like it's less. It's not as good as.

Don't believe those lies. A lot of moms wrestle with the mundane, trying to find the value in the day-to-day, and the cleaning up, and the little messes, and all of that.

Let me just encourage you that you are investing in the future of your children. What a valuable, valuable task. I remind Sam often, she reminds me at times, that we're not raising boys, we're raising men.

There's going to be an end product that we're producing. And as they're arrows in my quiver, I want them to be perfect and straight, that they'll hit their mark. Where God intends for them to go.

There's a greater thing at play in the day in and the day out of the spit up and the messes. Learn to worship God in the mundane.

[19:45] Your task is so important. God has designed you in His image, in His image to be caretakers of the home.

It's valuable, it's a beautiful task. It's something that should be revered amongst us. Speaking of the excellent wife, in Proverbs 31, out of 22 verses, 9 refer directly to the excellent wife's work in the home.

A substantial amount of them refer to this work. It is a precious one. In a letter to Ann Landers, I'm going to date myself, I had no idea who Ann Landers is.

I don't know if any of you know who Ann Landers was. It was a pen name for a Chicago Sun Times advice columnist. This is a letter from 1988. I found it someplace else in another sermon.

But this woman wrote this to Ann Landers. I'm so tired of all those ignorant people who come up to my husband and ask him if his wife has a full time job or if she's just a housewife.

[20:54] Here's my job description. I'm a wife, mother, friend, confidant, personal advisor, lover, referee, peacemaker, housekeeper, laundress, chauffeur, interior decorator, gardener, painter, wallpaper, remember I was in 88, dog groomer, veterinarian, manicurist, barber, seamstress, appointment manager, financial planner, bookkeeper, money manager, personal secretary, teacher, disciplinarian, entertainer, psychoanalyst, nurse, diagnostician, public relations expert, dietician and nutritionist, baker, chef, fashion coordinator and letter writer for both sides of the family.

I'm also a travel agent, speech therapist, plumber and automobile maintenance and repair expert. From the studies done, and there's been a recent Facebook post going around, some of you may have seen where the guy writes, I can't afford my wife, from the studies done, it would cost more

than 75,000 a year to replace me.

It took time out of my busy day to write this letter, Anne, because there are still ignorant people who believe a housewife is nothing more than a babysitter who sits on her behind, also a 1988 word, I think, all day and looks at soap operas.

And all of this was found in a book by Linda Weber from Focus on the Family called Mom, You're incredible. You ladies do a massive amount of work. Guys, stay at home for two days with no help from your wife and you'll appreciate her to a very, very high degree.

So this responsibility of raising up and instructing in the fear of the Lord is the responsibility of fathers and mothers. Ladies, thank you for your hard work in this regard.

[22 : 44] Fifthly, children are responsible for submission to this instruction.

And this includes both at home and away from home. See the words in verse 8, Hear my son your father's instruction. Present, you're here. Hear my instruction.

Use my instruction. And do not forsake your mother's teaching. When you leave our presence, when you go out into the world, college students, when you walk away and you're in a different place living on your own, do not forsake your mother's teaching.

These people have been placed over you by God to help you in this life. One commentator has said of verses 7-9, verses 7-9 may be regarded as a summary statement of the principle on which the whole book of Proverbs is based, and of the duty which it enjoins.

The principle is that true wisdom is based on the fear of God, and the duty is to listen to parental instruction. That this proper worship, the true wisdom, is based on the fear of God.

[24 : 00] And how ought we to gain that wisdom? Listen to your parents. God finds this so important that it is part of his moral law.

Exodus 20-12, honor your father and your mother. Paul states it again, Ephesians 6-1. Children, you should be familiar with this one. Children, obey your parents and the Lord, for this is right.

That is, it is what is proper for children to do. Thomas Watts, a 17th century English Puritan, stated that fear of the Lord leads to industry.

And I like that. would have to come from a 17th century Puritan to use that type of language. But that is that it leads to action. That if we're going to properly worship God, our parents should have led us to a fear of God.

But even if they didn't, a fear of God ought to lead us to being obedient and listening to our parents' instruction. Now, I recognize that many of us don't have perfect parents.

[25 : 04] And the reality of it is that none of us have perfect parents. Because all of our parents are dealing with sin in their own lives. Most, if not all, of our parents have really tried.

And they've really done their very best. I know a lot of you struggle with very, very difficult parents. Consider for a moment who Solomon's parents were.

David, who certainly possessed much wisdom, and his mother was Bathsheba. We don't know a whole lot about Bathsheba, except that she was beautiful. But these two came together under a messy, messy circumstance.

There had to have been some challenges in their marriage. A marriage that began with adultery and murder on David's heart. But yet, Solomon says, listen to the instruction of your parents.

The same applies. Provided that their instruction does not oppose the command of God. Your parents have wisdom for you even if they're not followers of Jesus Christ.

[26 : 12] Remember that Proverbs is aimed at helping us walk wisely in this world. Ultimately aimed at toward culminating with the fear of the Lord, the glory of God.

This is the direction that it's taking us in, but there are still good and wise things that we can learn from our parents. Let me encourage you if you have difficult parents, to find those things that they are good at, that they know to be true.

Respect your parents and listen to them. Remember that God gave you your parents. Recognize, embrace His sovereignty.

He gave them to you. I love Romans 8. 28. It should be so familiar to you. You suffer in this world, and we know that for those who love God, all things, including parents, difficult parent situations, work together for good for those who are called according to His purpose.

God knew the parents you needed to gain the best for you, the greatest for you. He knew the parents that were necessary for that to take place.

[27 : 24] God is using even the sins of our parents to bring us to Him. I want to read to you a poem as an encouragement to that end by John Piper called On Grace.

It speaks to this very thing. He writes, Some people tell me I was free when I believed in Christ, and by my power got victory when all the world enticed.

I think they did not know my heart nor theirs. Let it be said that I for one had sought no part in rising from the dead. They wonder at the sovereign rights that I allow my king and puzzle at the worship heights to which his rule gives wing.

But I will rest God's grace today on this I need no other. He did not give any say but chose for me my mother.

My reading at the beginning of this morning in Psalm 139 had this in mind God's personal care for you includes the grace of your parents being given to you.

[28 : 39] So the family is an institution of God's making meant to be a school with the object of the instruction of that family aimed at the fear of the Lord. The responsibility of fathers and mothers and of children to listen to it and obey it.

And then sixthly and lastly, last observation from the text. There is a promise given in this instruction is submitted to. There is a promise given if this instruction is submitted to.

Verse 9 For they are a graceful garland for your head and pendants for your neck. They are a graceful garland for your head and pendants for your neck.

These were signs of victory. If a race was won or a battle was conquered, these were signs of victory of the day.

The rest of Ephesians 6 after verse 1 beginning in verse 2 and 3, this is Paul's commentary on Exodus 20 12. He says, Honor your father and mother.

[29 : 45] This is the first commandment with a promise that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land. There were many promises given along with the commandment, but later on in the text, this is the first one as God gave to Moses the Ten Commandments, the moral law that contained in the actual commandment a promise that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.

Do you remember the Proverbs I read previously? Proverbs 14 26 and 27? 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. In Proverbs 19 23, the fear of the Lord leads to life and whoever has it rests satisfied.

He will not be visited by harm. This is the wreath on your head. And the ornament on your neck for embracing the fear of the Lord that your mother and father taught you.

A fountain of life and strong confidence and deep satisfaction. And so the family was created by God and ultimately for God.

[31 : 07] He designed that the family should be a school of instruction and godliness. Fathers and mothers instructing their children in the ways of the Lord so that the children will have Godward lives with a sure eternal confidence.

Whether or not our families have been a perfect representation of God's intent and purpose, we ought to always recognize that He is good and given our particular families to us for our good.

Fathers and mothers, let us strive together. It's one of the great graces of the church that we can work together and encourage one another and support one another in this endeavor.

Let us strive together to fulfill the high calling that God has placed on our lives to instruct our children and let us praise God that He provides for all that He commands.

Let's pray together. Let us pray together.