

Mother's Day - Proverbs 1:7-9

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[0 : 00] Well, good morning. Please join me in your copy of God's Word in Proverbs chapter one. This morning, we're going to take some time to consider what it means to be a mother.

What's at the core of that? What is the task ahead? 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.

And this does not go unnoticed, right? Some of that work is happening even this morning. I am proud of each and every one of you and the work that you're doing with your kids.

I know that your job as mothers can often seem mundane and unending, and it is always exhausting.

[1 : 04] My wife has been out of town for the last couple of days, and so I'm especially feeling that this morning. But I want you to be encouraged to persist by grace, to train up your children as God will use you to yield fruit in their lives, right?

Little things across time, God will be shaping your children's hearts. So with that in mind, let's take a look at Proverbs chapter 1, verses 7 through 9.

Proverbs 1, verses 7 through 9. Beloved, 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, even if you're not a mother this morning. Proverbs 1, beginning in verse 7.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge. Fools despise wisdom and instruction. Hear, my son, your father's instruction and forsake not your mother's teaching.

[2 : 12] For they are a graceful garland for your head and pendants for your neck. This morning, I want to draw your attention to five observations from Proverbs chapter 1, verses 7 through 9.

I often give them to you in advance, but they're a little longer this morning, and so I'm just going to take them one at a time. And the first is this. God is the originator and designer of the family.

Solomon is the book of Proverbs author, and he took up his pen under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit to instill wisdom in the everyday of God's people.

The wisdom that he speaks of throughout the book is a wisdom founded in the fear of the Lord. So he begins his teaching with these words.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge. Fools despise wisdom and instruction.

[3 : 17] So as this book is taken up, if we want to find ourselves wise and not foolish, we should pay attention to the beginning, the very foundation of that being the fear of the Lord.

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 toward mankind, created the family. He created this institution pre-fall.

He meant it to be an instructive tool even before the fall, not as an afterthought, but as a preordained design. Reread in Genesis chapter 1, verse 27 and 28.

So God created a man in his own image. And by the age of God, he created him male and female. He created them. It's going to get us in trouble these days, male and female to glorify God.

[4 : 28] And God blessed them. And God said to them, be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.

And it is noted for us in Genesis 2 and verse 24. Therefore, a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife and they shall become one flesh.

The family was and is meant to be an institution itself with God mandated responsibilities. And we find today that the family is under great attack.

There are myriad ways that the enemy is working to break down this first and central institution. So we will have to work, and I think especially hard, to defend the value of the family.

And I think that the most important way for us to do so is by taking up and exercising those responsibilities given specifically to the family.

[5 : 37] To recognize its good design and to exercise its good design. To be different from the world in that way. To make a defense for its value by exercising the instruction given to us.

So the family is originated by God, and it's given purpose by God. Second observation from the text.

The family was designed by God to be a school. Verse 8 says, Hear my son your father's instruction and forsake not your mother's teaching.

The assumption is that there is instruction and teaching happening in the life of the family. Beyond today's text, let's note together some other places in the scripture where God instructs parents to instruct their children.

Places like Deuteronomy chapter 6 verses 4 through 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.

[6 : 48] 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.

This fear of the Lord is meant to be taught to our children diligently, consistently, ongoingly. And the text tells us in all of the walk of life, when you're sitting in your house and when you're walking by the way and when you're lying down and when you rise.

Also, Ephesians chapter 6 and verse 4. Paul here writes, Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

Here, 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.

In fact, the word here translated fathers could also be translated parents. And the Bible instructs children to be students.

[8 : 03] Children, listen to this. Not only in today's text, but also in places like Proverbs 23 and verse 22. Listen to your father who gave you life and do not dispose.

Excuse me. Despise your mother or dispose of your mother. Despise your mother when she is old. Right. And Ephesians chapter 6 and verse 1.

Children, obey your parents in the Lord for this is right. Right. This is the first commandment with a promise that it may go well with you in the land.

So the family was designed by God to be a school. We teach our kids all kinds of things. Right. We teach them. I hope you're teaching your kids how to load and unload the dishwasher and wipe off the table and sweep the floor.

Yep. Put on their shoes and tie them. Right. Put their dirty clothes in the laundry. These things matter. We want our kids to be successful in those things temporal.

[9 : 06] But moreover, we want them to be successful in things spiritual. Right. And we must then treat the family as a school. And we must be about the work of teaching them those things most important.

This is why many of us believe in the benefits of homeschooling. But we want you to know that if you don't homeschool your kids, you are most welcome here. We're not trying to be homogenous in that way.

But however, your children receive their educations, the responsibility of teaching them to have a proper fear of the Lord falls to parents.

It's set squarely on the shoulders of parents. You cannot give away that responsibility. It is yours. And parents, hear me. I think on the last day you will be judged for how well or how poorly you taught your children to fear the Lord.

This responsibility is a weighty one that God empowers for his glory. Third. Third observation from the text.

[10:13] First, the fear of the Lord is meant to be the theme of the family's curriculum. It's meant to be the theme of the family's curriculum. It's meant to inform every other thing that we teach our children.

Again, to verse seven, the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge. You see, all education has at its foundation a worldview.

You cannot remove worldview from education. You have to have a starting point by which to teach your kids. This little story illustrates that, I think, humorously, but I think it illustrates it.

One day a teacher, thinking herself clever, asked her students, what holds the world up? A little boy quickly raised his hand and, upon being called upon, stated that the world sits on the back of a giant turtle.

That's his worldview. The teacher smugly responded, well, if that's true, what holds the turtle up? The boy responded matter-of-factly. That turtle sits on the back of another turtle.

[11:22] The teacher said, well, what holds up that turtle? The boy simply answered, teacher, it's turtles all the way down. We have to make some assumptions, some presuppositions, right, to rightly build an education.

It will be built on something, right? It will be built on the fear of the Lord or on secular humanism or on some other religious structure, but it has to be built on some kind of foundation.

The Christian family is to be sure that the fear of the Lord sets as the base for all other education. Now, this phrase, fear of the Lord, does not mean that we are working to send our children cowering from God, right?

This is not the point that they'd be so scared of him that they might be obedient. It carries rather the idea of reverence and humility.

Think of this when you see this phrase again and again and again, particularly in the Hebrew, right? It's meant to be awe, reverence. This is God and I am not him.

[12:38] We need our children to understand that the universe does not revolve around them. They sure seem to think so, don't they? They need to understand that it revolves around the almighty God.

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 this world. 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, right?

This is what it means to teach them to fear the Lord. Let me show you the importance of such a theme from a couple of Psalms. First, Psalm 31 and verse 19.

Oh, how abundant is your goodness, which you have stored up for those who fear you and worked for those who take refuge in you in the sight of the children of mankind.

[13:44] Psalm 112 and verse 1. Praise the Lord. Blessed is the man who fears the Lord, who greatly delights in his commandments. And Psalm 115 and verse 13.

The Lord will bless those who fear the Lord, both the small and the great. So you can see there is a promise of goodness and blessing from God for those who revere him and his ways.

Don't we want our children to be declared blessed, right? I want that for my children. We want our children to understand that their sin has put them in a desperate position with the God of this world. We want our children to know that this God sent his son to live the perfectly obedient life that they could not live, right? They failed at it from day one to take their punishment on the cross for their disobedience and to be raised and ascended to rule forever.

We want our children to believe that if they are to be saved, that they must throw themselves on the mercy of God in Jesus Christ. They must repent of their sin and place their faith in the person and work of Jesus.

[15:00] We want our children to live their lives by the power of the Spirit of Christ in a way that is pleasing to God so that he will be known and honored in the world.

These things are of highest importance. John Piper, in a sermon on this very text, once said, The family isn't just a place where children learn to hold spoons and walk onto fate and say please and tie shoes and read and look both ways and cut grass and put on makeup and drive a car.

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 reverence of God, the standing in awe of God, the trusting of God, is what families are for. So the fear of the Lord is meant to be the theme of the family's curriculum. Number four, both father and mother are responsible for teaching. Hear my son, your father's instruction and forsake not your mother's teaching.

[16:17] 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.

But in a world of death and severed relationship, not all families are normative. We represent many families that are not normative in this way and are not ideal in this sense.

Some children are raised by single mothers and there is grace for this circumstance. Some children are raised by single fathers.

There is grace for this circumstance. I was shown that grace over the last two days. Some children do not have God-fearing parents.

There is grace for this. And most regularly, the means of said grace is the church. That second institution.

[17:22] God employs the efforts of the church to aid in the raising of children, right? Even a church who says to you, it's your responsibility, welcome children into our meeting together.

We want to, and I think we do, support the raising of kids in many, many ways. I want to show you this manifold grace from the life of Timothy.

Timothy's father was a Greek and, as far as we know, not a follower of Jesus Christ. So he had a God-fearing mother and a God-fearing grandmother, but not a God-fearing father.

But Paul tells us in 2 Timothy 1, verse 5, in writing to Timothy, I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well.

And then he further instructs Timothy in 2 Timothy 3, verse 14 and following, 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 Christ Jesus.

[18:35] So God gave great grace to Timothy in giving great grace to Lois and Eunice. God also gave great grace in giving Timothy a spiritual father.

In 1 Timothy 1, verse 2, Paul addressed his first letter to Timothy with these words, To Timothy, my true child in the faith. And Paul tells us that he instructed Timothy in the way of the Lord in 2 Timothy 3.

He says, So Paul stepped in and served in this way as a spiritual father to Timothy.

So today I want to exhort childless women or childless men to have spiritual children. Train those younger than you in the faith.

Impart a fear of the Lord to someone else. We are meant to be disciple makers both within the house and without, outside of the house.

[19:50] Mothers, you provide many necessary things for your children. You keep them clothed and fed. But your children do not need a perfectly clean house.

This is not the high priority for children. In fact, they're the ones who are always taking it apart. They do not need the most exciting meals. They don't all have to be perfectly nutritious.

What they do need is you and they need your careful instruction in the scripture. Let some of that other stuff go.

Don't be so troubled by all of the perfect Pinterest photos that were posed for a moment before it got destroyed. Focus your attention on shaping the hearts of your children.

The Lord will bless this work. Make that the priority of your efforts. Charles Spurgeon once said, Fathers and mothers are the most natural agents for God to use in the salvation of their children.

[20:58] I am sure that in my early youth, no teaching ever made such an impression upon my mind as the instruction of my mother. And he also said, and this is on your bulletin, And those who think that a woman detained at home by her little family is doing nothing, Think the reverse of what is true.

Fifth and lastly, Last observation. Children who obey their parents are promised a reward. Children, Children who obey their parents are promised a reward.

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

To the Israelites mind, No signs or badges of joy or glory were higher in worth than the garland around the head, The gold chain around the neck, Because they were worn by kings and the favorites of kings.

These were significant symbols of favor. This is the promise of a parent's instruction themed by the fear of the Lord.

[22 : 17] It is the favor of the Lord. What a blessing, Children, For us to have. The fifth commandment found in Exodus 20 verse 12 says, Honor your father and your mother, That your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.

Proverbs 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.

And Proverbs 19 verse 23, The fear of the Lord leads to life and whoever has its rest satisfied, He will not be visited by harm.

The instruction of your parents, The instruction that's teaching you to fear the Lord is of great benefit to you.

So our observations from this text, God is the originator of the family. The family was designed by God to be a school. The fear of the Lord is meant to be the theme of the family's curriculum.

[23 : 30] Both father and mother are responsible for teaching. And children who obey their parents are promised a reward. The task of raising children is a task fraught with challenges.

At every turn in every single day. It is often said, The days are long, But the years are short.

We have a precious few years with our little ones. We need to do the daily, Patient, Hard work of teaching them How to follow and fear the Lord.

Beloved, Be encouraged this morning Because our God provides for all that He commands. He does not give us a command, Give us a responsibility without providing the grace for it.

I'm a father of young children. My youngest is about to turn five tomorrow. In fact, Our oldest will be 11 towards the end of the month.

[24 : 36] And there are still so many things that cause me just to tremble. I don't know what I'm doing most of the time. But thankfully, God provides grace.

As we pick up the word and we try to apply it in their lives. Dads with preteen boys, I'm going to be talking to you a lot in the next couple of months.

That's what I'm most afraid of. Cade's turning 11. There is much grace for our parenting. Plenteous, abundant grace for our parenting.

May we be a church full of fathers and mothers who take up by grace Their God-given responsibility to instruct their children In awe and reverence of the Lord.

May we be a church who helps by grace to equip parents for this task And who step into the gaps to help train children. May we be a church full of people who gladly submit ourselves To God's good word For his great glory In our world.

[25 : 42] Let's pray together. Let's pray together. Let's pray together. Thank you.