

Teaching Your Children Wisdom from the Word

The book of Proverbs could be considered a manual for parenting. There are many passages in the Bible which speak about marriage, family, and parenting, but Proverbs focuses on imparting wisdom to children. What is wisdom? Wisdom is skillful living. More specifically, wisdom is the application of God's Word to life. As we live and obey God's Word we experience peace with God, with self, with others, and His blessings. As we make wise choices and seek to glorify God in all we do, we are rewarded for following His ways (Ps. 1; Josh. 1; John 13:17). As we apply God's Word to our lives, we come to know Him better and we realize His ways are best. Biblical wisdom includes knowledge, understanding, discernment, and right conduct. Throughout the whole book of Proverbs, there are pleas from parents to their children for them to be wise:

Hear, my son, your father's instruction and do not forsake your mother's teaching; indeed, they are a graceful wreath to your head and ornaments about your neck. (Prov. 1:8-9)

My son, if you will receive my words and treasure my commandments within you, make your ear attentive to wisdom, incline your heart to understanding; For if you cry for discernment, lift your voice for understanding; if you seek her as silver and search for her as for hidden treasures; Then you will discern the fear of the Lord and discover the knowledge of God. For the Lord gives wisdom; from His mouth come knowledge and understanding. He stores up sound wisdom for the upright; He is a shield to those who walk in integrity, guarding the paths of justice, and He preserves the way of His godly ones. Then you will discern righteousness and justice and equity and every good course. For wisdom will enter your heart and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul; discretion will guard you, understanding will watch over you, to deliver you from the way of evil... (2:1-12)

My son, do not forget my teaching, but let your heart keep my commandments; for length of days and years of life and peace they will add to you. (3:1-2)

Hear, O sons, the instruction of a father, and give attention that you may gain understanding, for I give you sound teaching; do not abandon my instruction. (4:1-2)

When I was a son to my father, tender and the only son in the sight of my mother, **then he taught me** and said to me, "Let your heart hold fast my words; keep my commandments and live; Acquire wisdom! Acquire understanding! Do not forget nor turn away from the words of my mouth. Do not forsake her, and she will guard you; Love her, and she will watch over you. The beginning of wisdom is: Acquire wisdom; and with all your acquiring, get understanding." (4:3-7, see also 5:1, 6:20, 7:1)

My son, observe the commandment of your father, **and do not forsake the teaching of your mother**; bind them continually on your heart; tie them around your neck. When you walk about, they will guide you; when you sleep, they will watch over you; and when you awake, they will talk to you. For the commandment is a lamp, and the teaching is light; and reproofs for discipline are the way of life... (Prov. 6:20-23)

As you can see, Solomon, who was considered to be the wisest man living, urges his children to listen to the Word of God, and to live according to His Word. He tells his children to gain wisdom

at all costs. So, are we teaching our children wisdom? We must teach them the Scriptures and we must model God's Word.

The following is a list of ten topics that you can teach your children from the book of Proverbs. There are many more topics which you can discover by reading the book of Proverbs in the Old Testament, but this list is a good start. You and your children could memorize one or two verses from each topic below. You'll notice that some Proverbs repeat, but repetition is key to learning. Since there are ten topics, you may focus on one topic for a month and choose two from the New Testament such as the list of godly attributes from 2 Peter 1, Christian disciplines from Romans 12, or Biblical love from 1 Corinthians 13. There are many creative ways in which you can teach your children God's wisdom. For example, for number two, one parent wrote out some verses (Phil. 4:8-9, Prov. 4:23) on note cards and taped them onto the television and video game systems. Each time they turned on the TV, they asked themselves, "Is this true, honorable, right, and pure? Should my mind dwell on these things?" Teach your children wisdom. (The following verses are from the New American Standard Bible. It is also helpful to read the same proverbs in other translations such as the New International Version, the New Century Version for children or the New Living Translation.)

THE MOST IMPORTANT THING YOU CAN TEACH YOUR CHILD is to believe in Jesus Christ as his or her Savior. Teaching them about His death and resurrection for their sins is the most important thing you can pass on (1 Cor. 15). If you do not know how to share the Gospel with your children, here is a link to a site that has a simple, clear, and effective Gospel presentation: http://www.evantell.org/resc/new_blue.pdf

Nothing that follows will make much sense (or have that much impact) unless your child has a living faith in Jesus Christ. Although some children may not come to faith in Christ until they are older (or never at all), it is important to follow these principles regardless of their spiritual status (i.e. regardless of whether they are believers or not, you must teach them right from wrong, you must discipline them, you must teach them moral principles about sexuality, you must teach them principles about speech. These are important teachings that all children should learn about.). However, our hope is that each child comes to believe in Jesus Christ as his or her Savior for the forgiveness of sins and the gift of eternal life.

Paul reminded Timothy that because Timothy's mother and grandmother faithfully taught him the Word of God, he learned about salvation (2 Tim. 3:14-17; see 2 Tim. 1:1-4). Since we don't know exactly when or if our child will trust in Christ, it is imperative to consistently teach them the Bible, to live a Christ-like example, to have devotional times with them as a family, to have them surrounded by a close fellowship of believers in Church and in their friendships, and to pray for them. The Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20) starts in your house. Who better to disciple than your children? After using this study guide, a good approach to teaching Proverbs is to read a chapter a day (since there are 31 chapters) with your children just to get an overview. Then, go through it more slowly to apply the principles.

A very helpful book and quick-reference guide that arranges the Proverbs topically, is *Proverbs for Parenting* by Barbara Decker. It has verses you can share with your child as you look up a recent behavioral issue such as fighting, lying, teasing, complaining, anger, greed, pride, and so forth. It also lists plenty of godly virtues that you want to instill in your children such as trust in God, good

judgment, knowledge, wisdom, self-control, diligence, faithfulness, goodness, humility, justness, righteousness, and stewardship. It's a helpful reference guide for the Proverbs.

In all of these areas, do not let this turn into moralism or legalism. Show your child how Jesus embodies all of these virtues as one who was the truly wise man. Let them know that we cannot do these things in our own strength. Show them from the New Testament that it is only by God's grace through Jesus Christ that we can obey these commands. These aren't rules to be a burden. They are life-giving principles that we can follow by the power of the Holy Spirit in order to experience God's blessings and to rightly glorify Him.

One reason it's critical to teach the Word that transforms our souls, is because we often focus on behavior rather than beliefs and character. But it's the right beliefs and the internal heart change made by the Spirit of God that changes behavior. When outward behavior changes but there's no heart change, it's just moralism (trying to be good in our own strength apart from God) or hypocrisy. God wants us to be changed from the inside out by His Word.

Since children will never outgrow their depravity, or sinfulness, their greatest struggle is to put to death the deeds of the flesh as Romans 8 says and to walk by the Spirit. Our goal is not behavior control, it's sanctification (true growth in holiness). It's showing them how Jesus saves us, gives us a new heart, a new disposition, and empowers us to live an obedient life that pleases Him until the day we see Him in heaven. Parents and children must constantly be reminded that there's a root issue, not just a fruit issue.

Addressing the behavior without addressing the heart is like cleaning off dirty oranges on a dead orange tree that's been cut down. Wiping the dirt off the fruit won't fix the root problem. That's like putting on a bandage for cancer instead of operating. External change without internal transformation is not what God wants.

God wants to change the root, so that there's healthy fruit in our lives. And 2 Tim. 3:16 says that it's God's perfect Word that brings this internal transformation, that instructs us in sound belief, correction, and training in holy living (see Ps. 78). May God give you the grace to instruct your children in the Word (Eph. 6:4) and to model Christ-like virtues so that your children become godly children and adults who glorify God.

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work. (2 Tim. 3:16-17)

1. TEACH YOUR CHILDREN TO FEAR GOD

Fearing God means that we honor, revere, obey and respect Him. Fearing God means that we consider Him to be sacred and acknowledge His awesome holiness and perfection. Fearing God also means that we do not want to displease Him. We fear the consequences of sin and doing that which God says is evil, wrong, hurtful, or dishonoring to Him and to others. One writer says that in order to teach children the fear of God we must teach them God's attributes (holy, faithful, good, all-knowing, all-present, all-powerful, loving, sovereign, unchanging, merciful, compassionate, just, patient, supreme, wrathful, graceful, righteous, etc). Only when they know who God truly is, can they revere Him.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction. (Prov. 1:7)

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. (9:10)

The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, that one may avoid the snares of death. (14:27)

By lovingkindness and truth iniquity is atoned for, and by the fear of the Lord one keeps away from evil. (16:6)

Better is a little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and turmoil with it. (15:16)

The fear of the Lord leads to life, so that one may sleep satisfied, untouched by evil. (19:23)

In the fear of the Lord there is strong confidence, and his children will have refuge. (14:26)

“Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.” (Matt. 10:28)

2. TEACH YOUR CHILDREN TO GUARD THEIR HEARTS AND MINDS

With so much sin and evil at our children’s fingertips, be it through the internet or a TV remote control, we must protect them and help them guard their hearts as well. For younger children, monitor what they are watching and listening to. Use an internet filter such as www.bsafecom.com. It takes diligence to have a pure heart, but the rewards are great (see Matt. 5:3-16). Much of their life will be impacted by what is in their heart. Lives have been torn apart by those who harbored bitterness, pride, sin, and lust in their hearts. May it be filled with His Word and His Spirit so that they manifest Christ’s character and honor their Father in heaven.

Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life. (4:23)

He who loves purity of heart and whose speech is gracious, the king is his friend. (Prov. 22:11)

Listen, my son, and be wise, and direct your heart in the way. (23:19)

He who trusts in his own heart is a fool, but he who walks wisely will be delivered. (28:26)

I will set no worthless thing before my eyes; I hate the work of those who fall away; it shall not fasten its grip on me. (Psalm 101:3)

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me...Restore to me the joy of Thy salvation, and sustain me with a willing spirit. (Ps. 51:10, 12; see Phil. 2:12-13)

“The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; Who can understand it? I, the Lord, search the heart, I test the mind, even to give to each man according to his ways, according to the results of his deeds.” (Jer. 17:9-10, see also Mark 7:20-22)

Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on

these things. The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you. (Phil. 4:8-9)

“Only give heed to yourself and keep your soul diligently, so that you do not forget the things which your eyes have seen and they do not depart from your heart all the days of your life; but make them known to your sons and your grandsons.” (Deut. 4:9)

Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my anxious thoughts; and see if there be any hurtful way in me, and lead me in the everlasting way. (Psalm 139:23-24)

“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery’; but I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.” (Matt. 5:27-28, when age appropriate)

My son, do not forget my teaching, but let your heart keep my commandments; so you will find favor and good repute in the sight of God and man. Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight. Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and turn away from evil. It will be healing to your body and refreshment to your bones. (Prov. 3:1, 4-8)

3. TEACH YOUR CHILDREN TO OBEY THEIR PARENTS (AND PARENTS MUST FOLLOW THROUGH WITH CONSISTENT AND FAIR DISCIPLINE)

Hear, my son, your father’s instruction and do not forsake your mother’s teaching (Prov. 1:8)

He who withholds his rod hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines him diligently. (13:24)

Hear, O sons, the instruction of a father, and give attention that you may gain understanding, for I give you sound teaching; do not abandon my instruction. (Prov. 4:1-2, see all of chapter 4)

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother (which is the first commandment with a promise), so that it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth. (Eph. 6:1-3, This is a reiteration of the 5th commandment from the 10 Commandments, in Exodus 20:12.)

The eye that mocks a father and scorns a mother, the ravens of the valley will pick it out, and the young eagles will eat it. (Prov. 30:17)

Discipline your son while there is hope, and do not desire his death. (19:18)

Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; the rod of discipline will remove it far from him. (22:15)

Do not hold back discipline from the child, although you strike him with the rod, he will not die. You shall strike him with the rod and rescue his soul from death. (23:13-14)

The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child who gets his own way brings shame to his mother. (29:15)

MacArthur writes that we must not use love as a tool of reward or punishment. “A child can sense if a parent cares for him less when he is disobedient than when he behaves. That is not how God loves and is not the way He intends human parents to love. God disciplines His children just as much out of love as He

blesses them...Because it is so easy to punish out of anger and resentment, parents should take special care to let their children know they love them when discipline is given.”

Never forget that discipline is a form of love as Hebrews 12 states. Speaking in the context of enduring persecution, the author of Hebrews preaches this:

You have not yet resisted to the point of bloodshed in your struggle against sin. And have you forgotten the exhortation addressed to you as sons? “My son, do not scorn the Lord’s discipline or give up when he corrects you. “For the Lord disciplines the one he loves and chastises every son he accepts.” Endure your suffering as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is there that a father does not discipline? But if you do not experience discipline, something all sons have shared in, then you are illegitimate and are not sons. Besides, we have experienced discipline from our earthly fathers and we respected them; shall we not submit ourselves all the more to the Father of spirits and receive life? For they disciplined us for a little while as seemed good to them, but he does so for our benefit, that we may share his holiness. Now all discipline seems painful at the time, not joyful. But later it produces the fruit of peace and righteousness for those trained by it. (NET Bible, Heb. 12:4-11; see Prov. 3:11-12)

4. TEACH YOUR CHILDREN TO SELECT THEIR COMPANIONS WISELY

Your children may never rise above their friends. Studies show that peers will influence your children as much if not more than you do in many cases depending on how involved you are as a parent. Teach them to select their friends with the utmost care.

He who walks with wise men will be wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm. Adversity pursues sinners, but the righteous will be rewarded with prosperity. (Prov. 13:20-21)

Do not be deceived: “Bad company corrupts good morals.” (1 Cor. 15:33)

Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough? (1 Cor. 5:6)

My son, if sinners entice you, do not consent. (Prov. 1:10, see also Prov. 1:11-18 and Prov. 2:10-15)

Do not enter the path of the wicked and do not proceed in the way of evil men. (4:14)

“The fear of the Lord is to hate evil; pride and arrogance and the evil way and the perverted mouth, I hate.” (8:13)

A perverse man spreads strife, and a slanderer separates intimate friends. (16:28)

A man of violence entices his neighbor and leads him in a way that is not good. (Prov. 16:29, see also 2 Cor. 6)

A righteous man is cautious in friendship, but the way of the wicked leads them astray. (12:26)

5. TEACH YOUR CHILDREN TO WATCH THEIR WORDS

Put away from you a deceitful mouth and put devious speech far from you. (Prov. 4:24)

The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life, but the mouth of the wicked conceals violence. (10:11)

The tongue of the righteous is as choice silver, the heart of the wicked is worth little. The lips of the righteous feed many, but fools die for lack of understanding. (10:20-21)

The mouth of the righteous flows with wisdom, but the perverted tongue will be cut out. The lips of the righteous bring forth what is acceptable, but the mouth of the wicked what is perverted. (10:31-32)

He who has a crooked mind finds no good, and he who is perverted in his language falls into evil. (17:20)

There is one who speaks rashly like the thrusts of a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing. (12:18)

The lips of the wise spread knowledge, but the hearts of fools are not so. (15:7)

Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit. (18:21)

There is gold, and an abundance of jewels; but the lips of knowledge are a more precious thing. (20:15)

Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord, but those who deal faithfully are His delight. (12:22)

Like a club and a sword and a sharp arrow Is a man who bears false witness against his neighbor. (25:18)

When there are many words, transgression is unavoidable, but he who restrains his lips is wise. (Prov. 10:19, see also James 3 and Eph. 4:17 and following)

Pleasant words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones. (16:24)

He who goes about as a talebearer reveals secrets, but he who is trustworthy conceals a matter. (11:13)

He who restrains his words has knowledge, and he who has a cool spirit is a man of understanding. Even a fool, when he keeps silent, is considered wise; when he closes his lips, he is considered prudent. (17:27-28)

6. TEACH YOUR CHILDREN TO WORK HARD AND TO BE DILIGENT

Go to the ant, O sluggard, observe her ways and be wise, which, having no chief, officer or ruler, prepares her food in the summer and gathers her provision in the harvest. How long will you lie down, O sluggard? When will you arise from your sleep? "A little sleep, a little slumber, A little folding of the hands to rest" – your poverty will come in like a vagabond And your need like an armed man. (Prov. 6:6-11, see also Prov. 24:30-34)

Do you see a man skilled in his work? He will stand before kings; he will not stand before obscure men. (22:29)

Poor is he who works with a negligent hand, but the hand of the diligent makes rich. He who gathers in summer is a son who acts wisely, but he who sleeps in harvest is a son who acts shamefully. (10:4-5)

The hand of the diligent will rule, but the slack hand will be put to forced labor. A lazy man does not roast his prey, but the precious possession of a man is diligence. (12:24, 27)

The soul of the sluggard craves and gets nothing, but the soul of the diligent is made fat. (13:4)

The desire of the sluggard puts him to death, for his hands refuse to work (21:25)

Laziness casts into a deep sleep, and an idle man will suffer hunger. (19:15)

Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve. For he who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done, and that without partiality. (Col. 3:23-25)

7. TEACH YOUR CHILDREN TO MANAGE THEIR MONEY AS STEWARDS OF GOD

Give your best to the Lord. All of your money should honor the Lord since He is our provider and owns all things (Ps. 23-24). Be a careful steward or manager of what God gives you since our time on earth is short and we will give an account before Him regarding how we used the time, treasures, and talents He entrusted to us. Give back to His Kingdom and use the rest wisely in a way that glorifies God.

Honor the Lord from your wealth and from the first of all your produce; so your barns will be filled with plenty and your vats will overflow with new wine. (Prov. 3:9-10)

There is one who scatters, and yet increases all the more, and there is one who withholds what is justly due, and yet it results only in want. The generous man will be prosperous, and he who waters will himself be watered. He who withholds grain, the people will curse him, but blessing will be on the head of him who sells it. (11:24-26)

One who is gracious to a poor man lends to the Lord, and He will repay him for his good deed. (19:17)

He who profits illicitly troubles his own house, but he who hates bribes will live. (15:27)

A faithful man will abound with blessings, but he who makes haste to be rich will not go unpunished. (28:20)

Do not weary yourself to gain wealth, Cease from your consideration of it. (23:4)

He who trusts in his riches will fall, but the righteous will flourish like the green leaf. (11:28)

He who oppresses the poor to make more for himself Or who gives to the rich, will only come to poverty. (22:16)

Jesus said: "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. (Matt. 6:19-21)

But godliness actually is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment. For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content. But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. But flee from these things, you man of God, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness. (1 Tim. 6:6-11)

Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy. Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed. (1 Tim. 6:17-19)

Riches do not profit in the day of wrath, but righteousness delivers from death. (Prov. 11:4)

Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and will then repay every man according to his deeds." (Matt. 16:24-27)

"But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you." (Matt. 6:33)

I have been young and now I am old, yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken or his descendants begging bread. For the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord gives grace and glory; no good thing does He withhold from those who walk uprightly. (Psalm 37:25, 84:11)

But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever. (1 Tim. 5:8)

For even when we were with you, we used to give you this order: if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either. (2 Thess. 3:10)

And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus (Phil. 4:19; notice that in context, this verse comes after faithful giving and good stewardship. In other words, it's not an unconditional promise).

The one who is taught the word is to share all good things with the one who teaches him. Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary. So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith. (Gal. 6:6-10, see also 2 Cor. 8-9. See also Romans 13 about taxes and the government)

See www.crown.org for excellent resources to use to teach your children about finances. See also the articles or messages posted on the CCC website regarding finances.

8. TEACH YOUR CHILDREN TO LOVE THEIR NEIGHBOR AND TO LOVE THE FAMILY OF GOD

Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to do it. Do not say to your neighbor, "Go, and come back, and tomorrow I will give it," When you have it with you. Do not devise harm against your neighbor, while he lives securely beside you. (Prov. 3:27-29)

If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat; and if he is thirsty, give him water to drink; for you will heap burning coals on his head, and the Lord will reward you. (Prov. 25:21-22)

"Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" And He said to him, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets." (Matt. 22:36-40)

Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law. For this, "You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet," and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law. Do this, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed. (Rom. 13:8-11)

"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another. This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. This I command you, that you love one another." (John 13:34, 35, 15:12, 17)

Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor. (Rom. 12:10)

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has seen God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us. (1 John 4:7, 11-12)

Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all. (Eph. 4:1-6; see 1 Cor. 12)

Now may our God and Father Himself and Jesus our Lord direct our way to you; and may the Lord cause you to increase and abound in love for one another, and for all people, just as we also do for you; so that He may establish your hearts without blame in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints. (1 Thess. 3:11-13, see also Phil. 1, Col. 1, Eph. 3:14-21; 2 Thess. 3:5)

Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails (or ends)... (1 Cor. 13:4-8)

See Luke 10, the "Good Samaritan" parable.

9. TEACH YOUR CHILDREN TO CONTROL THEIR DESIRES OR LUSTS

These last two topics should be taught at the appropriate age. Most likely, when they are teenagers, it would be best to discuss these issues.

For wisdom will enter your heart and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul; discretion will guard you, understanding will watch over you, to deliver you from the strange woman, from the adulteress who flatters with her words; that leaves the companion of her youth and forgets the covenant of her God; for her house sinks down to death and her tracks lead to the dead; none who go to her return again, nor do they reach the paths of life. (Prov. 2:10-11, 16-19, see also Prov. 5:1-5, Prov. 6:23-33, and chapter 7. Chapters 5-7 are powerful instructions and warnings to men from God about how to avoid the snares of sexual immorality, temptation, and adultery.)

How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping it according to Your word. (Psalm 119:9)

But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. (1 Tim. 1:5)

Now flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart. (2 Tim. 2:22)

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. (Gal. 5:16, see the rest of this chapter)

Finally then, brethren, we request and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us instruction as to how you ought to walk and please God (just as you actually do walk), that you excel still more. For you know what commandments we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, your sanctification [that you become holy]; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you know how to possess his own body in sanctification and honor, not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God; and that no man violate the rights of his brother or take advantage of him in this matter because the Lord is the avenger in all these things, just as we also told you before and solemnly warned you. For God has not called us for the purpose of impurity, but in sanctification. So, he who rejects this is not rejecting man but the God who gives His Holy Spirit to you. (1 Thess. 4:1-8)

He who loves purity of heart and whose speech is gracious, the king is his friend. (Prov. 22:11)

Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever. (1 John 2:15-17)

So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh – for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live. (Rom. 8:12-13)

But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts. (Rom. 13:14)

As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.” (1 Pet. 1:14-16)

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation And sustain me with a willing spirit. (Psalm 51:10, 12)

Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe. (1 Tim. 4:12)

Who may ascend into the hill of the Lord? And who may stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not lifted up his soul to falsehood and has not sworn deceitfully. He shall receive a blessing from the Lord and righteousness from the God of his salvation. (Psalm 24:3-5)

“I have made a covenant with my eyes; How then could I gaze at a virgin?” (Job 31:1)

See <http://www.lifeway.com/tlw/> (True Love Waits) for excellent resources to teach your children about sexual purity, abstinence, and Biblical marriage.

10. TEACH YOUR CHILDREN TO ENJOY THEIR SPOUSES

This topic should not be discussed until the later teen years, but an important one nonetheless - one that is discussed in Scripture. Our goal is to take our cues from the Bible, not the world which has distorted God's truth about love, sex, and marriage (Rom. 12-1-2).

Drink water from your own cistern and fresh water from your own well. Should your springs be dispersed abroad, Streams of water in the streets? Let them be yours alone and not for strangers with you. Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice in the wife of your youth. As a loving hind and a graceful doe, Let her breasts satisfy you at all times; Be exhilarated always with her love. For why should you, my son, be exhilarated with an adulteress and embrace the bosom of a foreigner? For the ways of a man are before the eyes of the Lord, and He watches all his paths. (5:15-21)

“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery’; but I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.” (Matt. 5:27-28)

You husbands in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered. (1 Pet. 3:7)

Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless. So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, because we are members of His body. For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church. Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must see to it that she respects her husband. (Eph. 5:22-33)

Enjoy life with the woman whom you love all the days of your fleeting life which He has given to you under the sun; for this is your reward in life and in your toil in which you have labored under the sun. (Ecclesiastes 9:9)

The husband must fulfill his duty to his wife, and likewise also the wife to her husband. The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does; and likewise also the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. Stop depriving one another, except by agreement for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer, and come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. (1 Cor. 7:3-5)

Marriage is to be held in honor among all, and the marriage bed is to be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge. (Heb. 13:4)

See also the Song of Solomon for more details about love, intimacy, communication, and marriage (when the age is appropriate). Tommy Nelson has a great book based on the Song of Solomon called *The Book of Romance* (and a CD or DVD teaching series as well). It's great for college age singles and married couples. Others recommend resources by Joshua Harris (on dating/courtship) and Elizabeth Elliot but I have not read all their materials.

MORE RESOURCES

Two books that have **many other important lessons** on parenting are:

What the Bible Says about Parenting by John MacArthur and *Shepherding a Child's Heart* by Ted Tripp. Both books are very practical and have transformed families in positive ways.

MacArthur's book traces what the Bible says about parenting and marriage and is probably one of the best Christian books on parenting available and the most comprehensive. Tripp's book is also an excellent resource as well that greatly complements MacArthur's. Many ideas here were taken from these books. I highly recommend that every family go through the MacArthur and Tripp book! *Parenting with Scripture* by Kara Durbin and *Teach them Diligently* by Louis Priolo are also excellent. *Friends, Foes & Fools* by James Merritt is an excellent study on parenting based on the Proverbs.

Chip Ingram has a great DVD series on parenting (*Effective Parenting in a Defective World*) which can be purchased from <http://www.lote.org>. Also see the books and resources listed on our website. Go to www.ccctucson.org, and under "Get Connected" is a Discipleship Resources page. More books on parenting, discipleship, and children's books are listed.

Feel free to contact a pastor if you have questions about which resource to use for a particular parenting issue.

Enjoy the process of training your children. Children can be one of the greatest joys on earth. When you love, nurture, bless, encourage, discipline, and teach them the Word, the rewards are endless.

Never forget that our major focus should be:

1. Jesus Christ – Matt. 28; Luke 24 (teaching about Him, modeling Him, serving Him, showing how He is the message of the entire Bible)
2. The Glory of God – 1 Cor. 10:31; Isa. 43, 48:11; Col. 3:17 (living for God, not self-centered goals)
3. The Word of God – 2 Tim. 3; Ps. 119 (teaching your children the Bible intentionally and systematically)