

FATHER KNOWS BEST

Monday, November 17

Reading: Proverbs 4:1-9

Proverbs 4:3 *For I too was a son to my father, still tender, and cherished by my mother. 4 Then he taught me, and he said to me, "Take hold of my words with all your heart; keep my commands, and you will live.*

In the 1950's there was a popular TV show called 'Father Knows Best.' It followed the lives of the Anderson family. Robert Young portrayed the loving father who often gave his children advice for their lives. The portrayal of families on TV sure has changed! Today, most TV families are not a picture of what God wants for this building block of society. In Proverbs 4, Solomon gives more fatherly advice. We have seen this many times already in Proverbs but here we get a glimpse of how wisdom was passed on from one generation to another.

In Old Testament times, the home was the primary setting for the education of young people. The average youth did not have the time or resources to attend an official school and the elementary schools found in the synagogues did not begin until closer to the time of Jesus. The parents' teaching in the home was for most the only schooling they received. It was in the home that they learned a trade and received much of their moral and religious instruction.

"These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up" (Deuteronomy 6:6-7).

We can almost picture a young Solomon sitting with his father David and learning God's wisdom for living. Perhaps that is why Solomon later asked God to give him "a discerning heart" (1 Kings 3:9), because he had learned from his father the importance of wisdom. David's words still echo in Solomon's ears..."Get wisdom, though it cost all you have...love her...cherish her...embrace her...and she will protect you...watch over you...exalt you...and honor you." Wisdom does all this by steering us in the right paths and away from decisions that will lead to ruin.

Twice David says to "get wisdom" (4:5, 7). This word means to acquire or buy something. "We have to get our priorities right. Wisdom comes first...the verse is not saying that we must put wisdom at the top of our shopping list, so to speak, but that no price is too high to pay for it."¹ Verses 8-9 picture wisdom as a cherished bride. It was the custom at weddings for the bride to place a garland crown on the head of her bridegroom. Thus God's wisdom (like a marriage) takes work, but the benefits are great.

The New Testament instructs parents to bring up their children "in the training and instruction of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4). A Christian home should have God at its center and His wisdom as its guide. With our society and schools drifting farther and farther away from God's standards of righteousness, we need Christian parents who will teach their children God's Word through their words and actions. While the church is here to assist in training our children in the Lord, the home is still the best place for them to learn how to follow God.

Do your children (or grandchildren) see you spending time in God's Word and prayer? Do you have a family devotion time together? What can you do to better raise the next generation to love and serve the Lord?