

HOW TO HAVE A GLAD DAD 6-18-17

I remember going verse by verse through Proverbs with our children when they were young and being impressed with a particular theme that we find running throughout that book of wisdom. It is a theme that fits well with our remembrance of father's day, for the book of Proverbs teaches us that it is the calling of God for his servant to live in such a way as to make one's dad glad. As I indicated, this is a theme that pops up over and over again in Proverbs. We will look at several texts and start with Proverbs 10:1 *A wise son makes a father glad, but a foolish son is a grief to his mother.* You may be aware that the context of the Proverbs is one of a father giving counsel to his son. Often the father will say to his son, "Son, you will be blessed if you walk in my instructions, keep the ways of God and the ways of wisdom." But we know, and the book affirms, that if the son does those things, not only will the son be happy, but so too will the father be happy. Like the verse says, *A wise son makes a father glad.*

This month is graduation month. It is a time of celebrating the accomplishments of our young people. Normally I go to at least a few graduation events or parties each Spring. And a prominent feature at these events is the ever-present proud glow on the face of mom and dad as their son or daughter receives the diploma or receives the award. At those moments I like to watch the adoring parents. You will seldom observe anyone more caught up, more enraptured, more possessed by a natural high than a proud papa or a proud momma. Surely we know how true this is that a wise son makes a father glad.

But that is not all this verse says is it? There is a second part. There is the flip side. So often the Proverbs of Solomon present us with a contrast, and here it says that although a wise son makes a glad dad, a foolish son makes a glum mum. He is a grief to his mother. He is a grief to his father as well. Do you see the enormous contrast here? The parent-child relationship is such that our children can be and likely will be either our greatest joy in life or our greatest heartache or a combination of both. Listen, wealth and health are nice to have as you age, but what I want even more as I age is a wise son and three wise daughters. How many men do you know who, in their older years, are vigorous and healthy, who have great stores of money but whose children have brought them nothing but grief? Dads and Moms, think about that for a minute. Consider what this means for your present investments. Think about how hard you are working to store up for a leisurely retirement. Think about what you do to keep your body fit and healthy. And then consider what matters most when you are 65. Are you making the investments now in your children that will

pay dividends for decades to come? It is wise and godly children that will make a father glad. And it is the realization that you have raised foolish children that will break a parent's heart.

Before I move on, I should note something in passing for you young people. Proverbs 10:5 *He who gathers in summer is a son who acts wisely, but he who sleeps in harvest is a son who acts shamefully.* Let this verse inform your behavior this summer. Summertime is not a time to waste in sheer frivolity. It is a time when young people can learn to work. Disciples of Jesus do not brag about how late they sleep in every day. Instead, they seize each day as an opportunity to learn and to grow, to please their heavenly Father, and to make their earthly parents proud. Would you think about what that means for how you spend the next two months? I challenge you to set some godly goals for your summer. There are books to read, Scriptures to memorize, jobs to be done, ministry to do, money to be earned and saved, classes to be taken. Make the summer count for something good and for gaining in wisdom.

Now back to the main road - Proverbs 15:20 *A wise son makes a father glad, but a foolish man despises his mother.* There it is again. God is concerned that we have some happy daddies isn't he? He is also concerned about the moms. He says that the man who despises his mother is a fool. By that definition have you met a whole lot of fools? Although this does not seem to be the norm, I bet we have some in our church youth group. The world is sadly full of young people who despise their mothers. They treat mom with contempt and disdain. My young friend listen to me. Some of you think your mom is a dumb religious quack. At least you act like that. When she instructs you you roll your eyes, you are slow to obey. You talk back to her disrespectfully, you argue about little things and you speak ill of her to your friends. That is despising your mom and God says you're a fool. You may get some sadistic pleasure in bringing your mother's head down in grief, but I'm telling you that God Almighty has noticed how you treat your mom. Proverbs 30:17 *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.* That is a physical depiction of what is going to happen to the fool who despises his or her mother.

And Dad, I hate to think of this happening in your home but maybe your child is encouraged in this by you? Could it be? Could it be that your children see you treating their mother with contempt? Might they be learning their disrespectful ways from you? I know I failed my wife and children in this way more than once. Let's be careful that you protect the dignity of your wife in the home. It is sadly rare to see a young person treating parents with honor. But that is the rule

isn't it? Enforce the rule in the home, Father. Honor your wife and see to it that your children do also.

On now to more Proverbs. 23:15-16 *My son, if your heart is wise, my own heart also will be glad; 16 and my inmost being will rejoice when your lips speak what is right.* Here we read the thoughts of a godly father. And you see, what is the concern of such a man for his child? His hope is not for worldly success. He doesn't say, "If you make lots of money, my heart will be glad." He doesn't say, "If you become famous my heart will be glad." He points his child to the importance of wisdom. All throughout Proverbs we are reminded that wisdom, Biblical, practical wisdom is the great value of God. And fathers are to intentionally communicate this to our kids. And we are to intentionally promote this in our kids. Father, are you leading in wisdom? Maybe the major part of that involves sharing your faith, your life, and your time with your children. Proverbs 13:20 *He who walks with wise men will be wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm.* Who are your children spending their time with? Critical question.

The verse says that you grow wise by living with, walking with wise men. Let's assume Dad, that you qualify; are you walking with your kids? Are you spending time with them now in hopes that someday you will be a glad dad? Or, do you let your kids hang out with whomever? Most American teenagers spend very little time with their parents, but major hours with their pals. Let me tell you - that is tragic. Kevin Huggins, in his book entitled, "Parenting Adolescents" reflects on studies which have shown that, "The single most important catalyst to mature thinking is personal interaction with others who are thinking maturely. The condition and lifestyle of many American families today severely limits the amount of time a typical adolescent has with a parent who could model mature thought. Schools are structured so adolescents get very little opportunity to interact personally with anyone but peers who think on the same level." Parents will have to swim against the tide to keep their children by their side and on their team, but doing so is a critical part of developing wise children. I challenge you dads to invest in that enterprise. Invest in your children.

The wise father says to his son 15-16 *My son, if your heart is wise, my own heart also will be glad; 16 and my inmost being will rejoice when your lips speak what is right.* What a joy for a dad to hear his son grow to speak words of wisdom and truth! And what a bummer it is for Dad to have to listen to his child speak nonsense. You younger friends may not realize it, but your parents cringe and hurt within when you talk like a fool. There are other specific things you can do that will

grieve your parents. 28:7 (NLT) *Young people who obey the law are wise; those with wild friends bring shame to their parents. 29:3 A man who loves wisdom makes his father glad, but he who keeps company with harlots wastes his wealth.* You see the perspective of God on this? What is wrong with intemperance and harlotry? Besides breaking God's heart, there is the factor of your parent's feelings. What it does to your parents is not an inconsequential thing. It is big in the eyes of God who will hold you accountable for the heartbreak your sin brings to your folks. Your lifestyle choices will either disgrace your parents or honor them. When you choose drunkards and harlots over wise men and family you disgrace your parents. When you spend money foolishly you disgrace your parents. Many young people give little or no thought to how you spend your parents money. Easy come, easy go - you think. Think again. God expects you to honor your parents and their labors by making good use of the money you receive from them. You know, I have seen in many young people an attitude that is very distressing. For years they live free of charge in their parent's home, all expenses paid, but when they turn 16 and start making some money they think it is all theirs and they can spend it however they please without regard to the possible interests of others, like their parents. They think *Mom and Dad have no say, "The money is mine! Nobody can tell me how to spend it!"* Dear, young friend, do you know how ugly that is in the eyes of God? How hurtful that can be to parents?

Some kids do know. Some kids know it hurts their parents and they don't care at all. In fact, for rebellious adolescents hurting their parents is a major goal in life. That is another subject for another Sunday. For today let me address the dads and the moms who have been grieved by their children. Many of us are hurting because of a child we love. The thought of certain children leaves us feeling humiliated, frustrated, and heartbroken. God told us in Genesis 3 when Adam sinned that one result would be pain in the process of child-raising. Being a father or a mother puts us in a vulnerable position, doesn't it? We invest so much of our time, and energies and emotions into this unpredictable creature with potential both to thrill us and to crush us. And when the bad happens, when the disappointment overwhelms, it is devastating. Dad and Mom, I say, as a fellow-struggler, turn to the Lord in your grief. He too is a Father, with children that hurt Him. God understands your pain. He will stand with you in it. And if you are still relating to your children - be aware of how your feelings can affect your behavior. Because your kids can hurt you they can also be the object of your wrath. You may react in anger toward them - Why? Possibly because they have hurt your

pride. Because what they did embarrassed you. Be careful, parents, be careful to let your choices flow out of love not out of wounded parental pride.

And though it surely is a grief to see those we love so, go astray, the flip side is as positive as the other is negative. The apostle John wrote in III John **4** *I have no greater joy than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth.* No greater joy this side of heaven, than to see and hear those in whom we have invested so much bearing fruit of eternal life, demonstrating wisdom in practical ways. Another proverb 27:**11** (NLT) *Be wise, my child, and make my heart glad. Then I will be able to answer my critics.* I can relate to that verse. There is a sense in which I will have no trouble responding to critics if my children are a testimony to the strength of my home. Having wise children provides strength and confidence to a man. What a joy it truly is!

One more verse from Proverbs. 23:**24** (ESV) *The father of the righteous will greatly rejoice; he who fathers a wise son will be glad in him.* We've seen that. Now we come to the application, the point; the directive to all children. **25** *Let your father and mother be glad; let her who bore you rejoice.* If I could pull my young friends close right now, I would. In order to say this. God commands you to seek after the happiness of your parents. You get that? The God who made you said you are to have, as one of your chief goals in life, not as the main goal or the ultimate goal, but one of your chief goals should be to have happy parents who are proud to look at you and say, "That's my boy! That's my girl!" For some of you that desire is there and strong. But others of you have cared little or nothing for how your decisions affect your parents and I pray God might graciously meet you in conviction of sin and repentance. You have not been bringing joy to your parents, but grief! You have been a pain in their necks and a thorn in their sides. And, on the basis of the word of God, I stand before you today and urge you to repent - now! Repent of rolling eyes and argumentative spirits. Repent of your lack of affection. Some of you won't hug your parents or kiss your parents. You fuss if they show you any affection at all, at least if it's public. You act like you are ashamed of your parents. Can you see today how wrong all that is? You take a simple issue like a haircut or like the clothes you are going to wear. How many times have American young people fought with their parents over something like that? Young person, you read Proverbs and the will of God is clear. You wear your hair, and your clothes not to please or impress your peers.

God never said, "Let your peer group be glad, and let her rejoice who flirts with you between classes." He did say to let your father and mother be glad. This means that if you go to

your dad and ask if you can dye your hair purple or wear your hair a certain way, or get a piercing of some sort and your father grimaces - you have seen enough. When you understand that a certain choice brings pain to your parents, unless that choice is commanded by God, then you do as your parents require -no you do more than that. You also do as your parent's desire. 25a *Let your father and mother be glad.*

Now you parents can abuse this on your end and I urge you not to do that. I'm talking to your kids right now. Part of what it means to be a Christian 10 year old, 12 year old, 16 year old, 20 year old is that you hold as one of your chief commitments in life to gladden the heart of your parents. So, perhaps you have some real repentance to do. Perhaps God is weighing on you pretty heavy for your sinful attitudes, because your sinful attitudes have been weighing pretty heavy on your parents. It is time to lay down your pride, let the Spirit of God break you, and soften your heart toward your mom and toward your dad.

Please, let's spend some time in prayer about these things. *O Father God, your word is so clear, and our duty so simple. Forgive us that we have failed so miserably to love our parents as we ought.* If you are a young person, anyone not yet married, whether you are 7 or 27 and you know that you have been failing to honor your parents like you should, you know that you have been giving them grief and not joy I ask you today to raise your hand as a confession of your sin before God and as a statement of your sincere intention to change your ways. You have sinned boldly now repent boldly. Would you please raise your hand - so I can pray for you.

Next I want to pray for adults. As you heard this message today maybe you realized just how much pain your sin caused your parents. It might have been years ago. It might have been this week, but if you are ready to tell God you're sorry and you want to commit yourself to saying that to mom or Dad or both. Would you please raise your hand and let me pray for you. Finally, I want us to pray for some fathers and mothers who are hurting today, who are in the midst of a personal grief over the sin of a child. Let's together lift these parents up to the Lord.