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MEN OF THE WORD

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WISDOM: LIVING SUCCESSFULLY IN A TREACHEROUS WORLD

Raising Children, Pt 1

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Children's Lives Matter

- *Black Lives Matter* (BLM): “We disrupt the Western-prescribed nuclear family structure requirement by supporting each other as extended families and ‘villages’ that collectively care for one another, especially our children, to the degree that mothers, parents, and children are comfortable.”
- BLM’s two targets related to the family:
 - (1) The necessity of heterosexual, monogamous, lifelong marriage.
 - (2) The leadership of a father.

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- The “abolition of the family” was a central component of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in their *Manifesto of the Communist Party*.
- The Russian Bolsheviks attempted it after the Revolution of 1917. They . . .
 - downplayed traditional marriage; encouraged open sexual relations;
 - downplayed the concept of “illegitimate children”;
 - made the process of divorce quick and easy;
 - accepted men and women carousing, and the state became the “parent” of the resulting offspring.

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- The result? Great human suffering, particularly for children.
- What BLM and other such movements demand as necessary for true justice is actually the greatest perpetrator of injustice: *the fatherless home*.
- A 2020 US Census Bureau report: “There is a crisis in America. . . . 18.3 million children—1 in 4—live without a biological, step, or adoptive father in the home. Consequently, there is a ‘father factor’ in nearly all of the societal ills facing America today.”

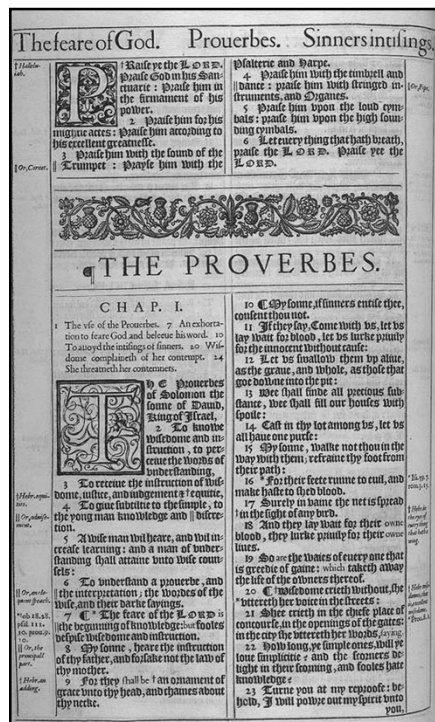
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- Census Bureau: “In 2014, 17.4 million children lived in fatherless homes. This amounted to almost a quarter of all American children (23.6%). In 2017, the number of fatherless homes in America had increased, with 19.7 million children living without a father . . . more than one in four.”
- US Dept. of Health & Human Services: “Statistics on fatherless homes indicate that many of these families in the US live in poverty. Female-led homes with no spouse present had an alarming poverty rate of 47.6% in 2011—more than four times the rate for kids living in families where both parents are present.”

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- US Dept. of Justice: “7 out of 10 youth that are housed in state-operated correctional facilities, including detention and residential treatment, come from a fatherless home.”
- Census Bureau: “Research shows when a child is raised in a father-absent home, she is 7x more likely to become pregnant as a teen.”
- US Dept. of Health & Human Services: “63% of youth suicides are from fatherless homes, 5 times the average.”
- US Census Bureau (July 2012): 57.6% of black children, 31% of Hispanic children, and 20.7% of white children are living absent their biological fathers, and that number has only grown over the past 8 years.

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Ten Lessons on Raising Children from the Book of Proverbs

Part 1

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1. A father's successful leadership begins by instilling in his children the need to fear God.

- *Fearing God*: a relationship of reverence, awe, submission, and adoration.
- The most basic component to a successful life.
- A father's most fundamental duty is to communicate—by word and action—this “fear” to his children.



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- **2:1-5** – “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.”
- **3:1, 7** – “My son, do not forget my teaching, but let your heart keep my commandments 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.”

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- **14:26** – “In the fear of the LORD there is strong confidence, and his children will have refuge.”
- The pronoun “his” probably refers to the father who fears the LORD.

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- Fathers must lead the way in communicating the fear of God to their children.
- **Ephesians 6:4** – “Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.”



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“Most people deal with their children as if they were born only for this world. . . . They educate them for time, not for eternity.”

—Bridges, *Proverbs*, 406

“Alas if our children lose the crown of life, it will be small consolation that they have won laurels of literature or art.”

—C. H. Spurgeon

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2. A father's successful leadership assumes the depravity of his offspring.

- In contrast to other forms of “wisdom,” Proverbs does not affirm that children are born good, innocent, or blank slates.
- Proverbs does not identify environmental factors as the primary cause of a child's foolishness (moral delinquency).
- Proverbs assumes children are all born *in sin*, especially through the use of the phrase “his own way” as a metaphor for the wayward heart.

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- **3:1, 5** – “My son, do not forget my teaching, but let your heart keep my commandments Trust in the LORD with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding.”
- **19:27** – “Cease listening, my son, to discipline, and you will stray from the words of knowledge.”
- **22:15** – “Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; the rod of discipline will remove it far from him.”
- **29:15** – “The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child who gets his own way brings shame to his mother.”

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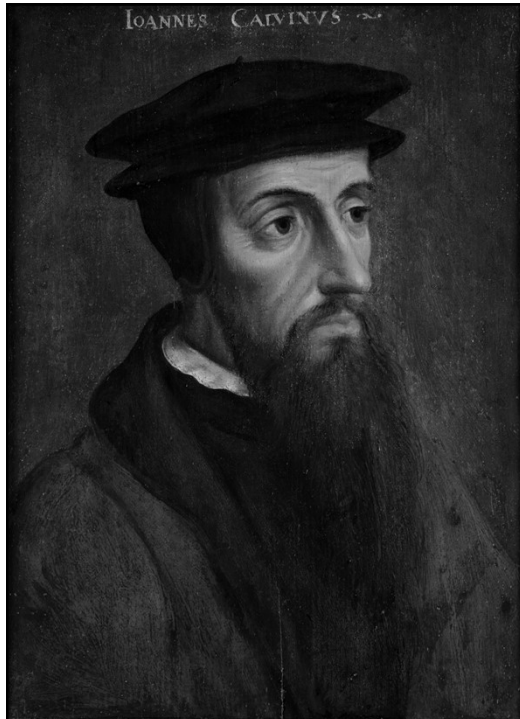
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“What is meant by the concept of total depravity is not that man is wicked as he could possibly be. Bad as we are, we can still conceive of ourselves doing worse things than we do. Rather, it means that sin has such a hold upon us in our natural state, that we never have a positive desire for Christ.”

—*R. C. Sproul*



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To paraphrase John Calvin . . .

“Your child’s nature, so to speak, is a perpetual factory of idols.”

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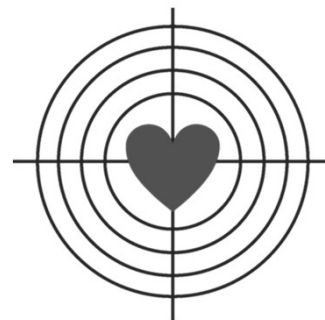
“Rare is the man who views his discipline and instruction of his children through the lens of the gospel. For the most part, our approach to parenting resembles more closely that of Dr. Phil, Dr. Spock, or Dr. Oprah The reason? Our theology. Most men are completely unaware of the impact their theology has on their parenting. This is a fact that cannot be ignored when it comes to equipping family shepherds. Failure to address such fundamental issues will eventually lead to great harm. . . . As family shepherds, we must have a right view of our child’s problem if we’re to have a right view of the solution.”

—Voddie Baucham, *Family Shepherds*, 113, 119

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- Left to “his own way,” the child will always choose convictions and behaviors that are consistent with his sinful nature.
- This realization sets a father on a path of gospel-parenting, where the central focus of his efforts is not behavioral modification but confronting the child’s *heart*.
 - **23:26** – “Give me your heart, my son, and let your eyes delight in my ways.”
- Reveal and explain the child’s depravity, then lead him to the fear of God—to turn to Him as the only hope of rescue.



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3. A father's successful leadership disciplines his children for foolish behavior.

- Understanding the doctrine of depravity has direct implications to a father's exercise of discipline.
- Because the child is a sinner, discipline is needed to protect the child from himself, protect others from him, and to point the child to his need for redemption.
- Discipline instills understanding of the law of *cause and effect*—the truth that moral actions have consequences.

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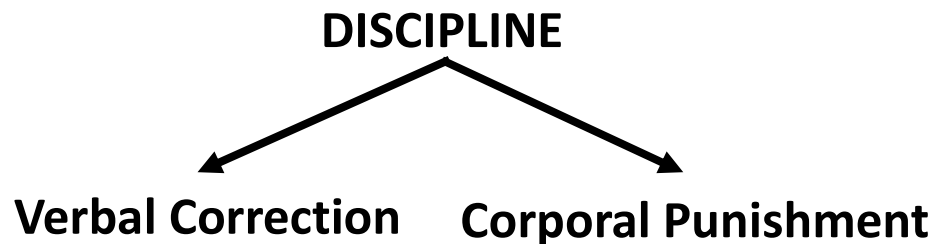
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- **13:24** – “He who withholds his rod hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines him diligently.”
- **19:18** – “Discipline your son while there is hope, and do not desire his death.”
- **22:15** – “Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; the rod of discipline will remove it far from him.”
- **23:13-14** – “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 Sheol.”

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- Proverbs teaches that this discipline is to be administered through two fundamental means:



- Not out of abusive anger, but out of the loving need to teach *justice* (sin requires penalty).
- **Galatians 3:23-24**

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“Family shepherds do not engage in corrective discipline because we believe it’s efficacious for our children’s salvation; we do so because it’s a tool God has given us, and he expects us to employ it in the monumental task of bringing up our children ‘in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.’”

—Baucham, *Family Shepherds*, 134

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- The failure to discipline is itself a form of child abuse.
- **3:11-12** – “My son, do not reject the discipline of the LORD or loathe His reproof, for whom the LORD loves He reproves, even as a father *corrects* the son in whom he delights.”
- **Hebrews 12:5-11** – “. . . God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom *his* father does not discipline? But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. . .”

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4. A father's successful leadership trains his children in the practical skills of wise living.

- Repeatedly in the first segment of Proverbs (chapters 1-9), Solomon beseeches his son to “hear.”
- The verb implies much more than an auditory recognition of words. The verb implies *obedience* and can be translated in the command form as “Obey!”
- These commands reflect the father's effort to *persuade* his son.

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- **1:8** – “Hear, my son, your father’s instruction.”
- **1:10** – “My son, if sinners entice you, do not consent.”
- **1:15** – “My son, do not walk in the way with them. Keep your feet from their path.”
- **2:1** – “My son, if you will receive my words and treasure my commandments within you.”
- **3:1** – “My son, do not forget my teaching, but let your heart keep my commandments.”
- **3:11** – “My son, do not reject the discipline of the LORD or loathe His reproof.”
- **4:1** – “Hear, O sons, the instruction of a father, and give attention that you may gain understanding.”
- **4:10** – “Hear, my son, and accept my sayings.”

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- **4:20** – “My son, give attention to my words; include your ear to my sayings.”
- **5:1** – “My son, give attention to my wisdom, incline your ear to my understanding.”
- **5:7** – “Now then, my sons, listen to me, and do not depart from the words of my mouth.”
- **6:1-3** – “My son, if you have become surety for your neighbor . . . do this then, my son, and deliver yourself . . .”
- **6:20** – “My son, observe the commandment of your father.”
- **7:1** – “My son, keep my words and treasure my commandments within you.”
- **7:24** – “Now therefore, my sons, listen to me, and pay attention to the words of my mouth.”

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- **19:27** – “Cease listening, my son, to discipline, and you will stray from the words of knowledge.”
- **23:15** – “My son, if your heart is wise, my own heart will also be glad.”
- **23:19** – “Listen, my son, and be wise, and direct your heart in the way.”
- **23:26** – “Give me your heart, my son, and let your eyes delight in my ways.”
- **24:21** – “My son, fear the LORD and the king; do not associate with those who are given to change.”
- **27:11** – “Be wise, my son, and make my heart glad, that I may reply to him who reproaches me.”

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- Common topics of instruction for wise living in Proverbs:



- 1) How to relate to women (e.g., 5:1-8; 6:20-35; 7:1-27; 23:26-28; 31:2-3).
- 2) How to relate to the world (e.g., 1:10-16; 23:19-21; 28:7).
- 3) How to relate to wealth (e.g., 6:1-5).

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“The father in Proverbs prepares the son for adulthood and independence by telling him how to restrain his tongue, manage his career, handle his money, avoid sexual immorality, and choose a wife. He seeks to encourage qualities of honesty, self-control, generosity, diligence, and respect for authority. . . . Parents hope to build wise convictions in their children so that they will make wise choices even when no one is looking or forcing them to comply.”

—Newheiser, *Opening up Proverbs*, 154

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5. A father's successful leadership builds upon the model of godly behavior.

- While children have foolishness (depravity) bound up in their hearts (22:15), few things will exacerbate this condition more than the hypocrisy of a father.
- Successful fatherhood requires a dedicated commitment to personal godliness.
- It embraces the *law of assimilation*—that we become like those to whom we are most exposed—and uses it for the child's good.

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“He talketh of prayer, of repentance, of faith, and of the new birth; but he knows only to *talk* of them. I have been in his family and have observed him both at home and abroad; and I know what I say of him is the truth. His house is empty of religion as the white of an egg is of savor. There is there neither prayer nor sign of repentance for sin Thus say the common people that know him: ‘A saint abroad and a devil at home.’ His poor family finds it so For my part, I am of the opinion that he has, by his wicked life, caused many to stumble and fall; and will be, if God, prevent not, the ruin of many more.”

—*Christian*, speaking to *Faithful*, about their travelling companion, *Talkative*, in John Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress*



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- **20:7** – “A righteous man who walks in his integrity—how blessed are his sons after him.”



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“Precept without patterns will do little good; you must lead them to Christ by examples as well as counsel; you must set yourselves first, and speak by lives as well as words; you must live religion, as well as talk religion.”

—*Eleazar Mather*

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Raising Children, Part 1 Review

Lessons from the Book of Proverbs

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2. A father's successful leadership assumes the depravity of his offspring.
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