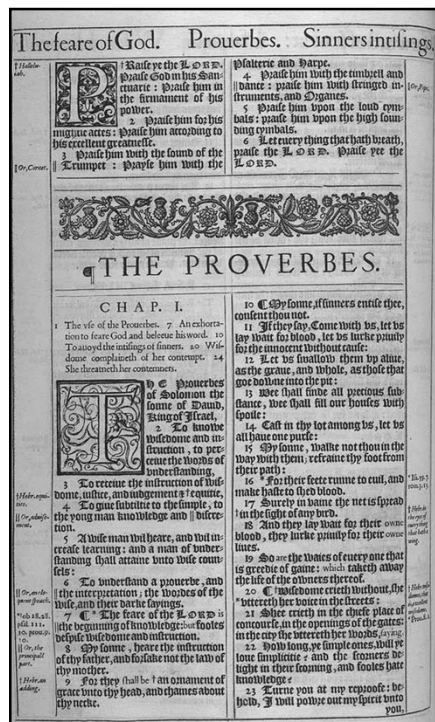


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WISDOM: LIVING SUCCESSFULLY IN A TREACHEROUS WORLD

Raising Children, Pt 3

2



Nine Lessons on Raising Children from the Book of Proverbs

Part 3

3

Raising Children, Parts 1 & 2 Review

Lessons from the Book of Proverbs

1. A father's successful leadership begins by instilling in his children the need to fear God.
2. A father's successful leadership assumes the depravity of his offspring.
3. A father's successful leadership disciplines his children for foolish behavior.
4. A father's successful leadership trains his children in the practical skills of wise living.
5. A father's successful leadership builds upon the model of godly behavior.
6. A father's successful leadership depends on marital unity.

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7. A father's successful leadership creates the potential for incomparable joy.

- While Proverbs recognizes several sources of joy, it most frequently identifies *children* as this source.
- “In Proverbs, this word [‘joy, gladness’] describes the feeling of personal satisfaction that parents have as they reflect on the growth and maturity of their child. It is a wholesome emotion that rewards parents who have devoted themselves to the development of their child” (Steveson, *Proverbs*, 465).

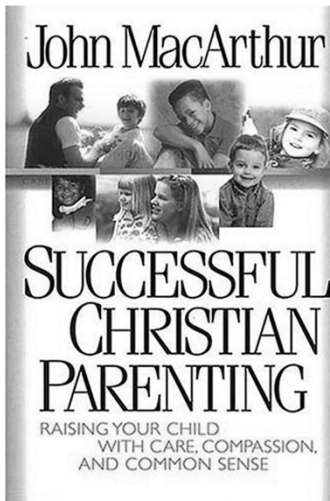
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- **10:1b** – “A wise son makes a father glad, but a foolish son is a grief to his mother.”
- **23:15-16** – “My son, if your heart is wise, my own heart also will be glad; and my inmost being will rejoice when your lips speak what is right.
- **23:24-25** – “The father of the righteous will greatly rejoice, and he who sires a wise son will be glad in him. Let your father and your mother be glad, and let her rejoice who gave birth to you.”
- **29:17** – “Correct your son, and he will give you comfort; he will also delight your soul.”

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“Parents, ours is a solemn and awesome responsibility, but it’s a wonderful privilege. One of the most fulfilling experiences in all the world is to have children committed to the Lord, no matter what the cost, because they have seen the same commitment in us.”

—MacArthur, *Successful Christian Parenting*, 233

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- Conversely, nothing creates *grief* in the heart of parents like a child who refuses their instruction and continues in folly.
- **15:20** – “A wise son makes a father glad, but a foolish man despises his mother.”
- **17:21** – “He who sires a fool *does so* to his sorrow, and the father of a fool has no joy.”
- **17:25** – “A foolish son is a grief to his father and bitterness to her who bore him.”

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“Behold, children are a gift of the LORD, the fruit of the womb is a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, so are the children of one’s youth. How blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them; they will not be ashamed when they speak with their enemies in the gate.”

—*Psalms 127:3-5*



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8. A father’s successful leadership does not guarantee a successful result.

- 22:6 – “Train up a child in the way he should go, even when he is old he will not depart from it.”
 - “Train up” = “dedicate.”
 - “Child” = not an “infant” but a young male, “lad.”
 - “In the way he should go” = “according to his way.”

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- **22:6** – “Train up a child in the way he should go, even when he is old he will not depart from it.”
 - “The way” = best understood as “the way of wisdom.”
 - A positive view of the *cause-and-effect* nature of parental instruction and discipline.
 - “Dedicate a youth according to his way in wisdom, and even when he is old he will not depart from it!”
 - An emphasis on *conditioned behavior*, not heart transformation.

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“The point is that this proverb encourages parents to train their children, but does not guarantee that if they do so their children will never stray. This insight into the form of the proverb is particularly important for parents to grasp when their adult children have not turned out well; otherwise, the verse becomes a sledgehammer of guilt—a purpose that it was not intended to carry. On the other side, the proverb should not become a reason for pride if one’s children turn out well either. The proverb is simply an encouragement to do the right thing when it comes to raising one’s children.”

—Longman, *Proverbs*, 405

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- But 22:6 is just one of many *true* statements that must be considered when developing a comprehensive understanding of parenting outcomes.
- For example, note the *conditional* statements:
 - **2:1** – “If you will receive my words ...”
 - **2:3** – “If you will cry for discernment ...”
 - **4:8** – “She [wisdom] will honor you if you embrace her ...”
 - **23:15** – “If your heart is wise ... ”
 - **24:14** – “If you find it [wisdom], then there will be a future ...”

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- **13:1** – “A wise son *accepts his* father’s discipline, but a scoffer does not listen to rebuke.”
- **15:5** – “A fool rejects his father’s discipline, but he who regards reproof is sensible.”
- **15:20** – “A wise son makes a father glad, but a foolish man despises his mother.”
- **30:11-13** – “There is a kind of *man* who curses his father and does not bless his mother. There is a kind who is pure in his own eyes, yet is not washed from his filthiness. There is a kind—oh how lofty are his eyes! And his eyelids are raised *in arrogance*.”

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- It is in the sphere of childrearing where the *law of cause and effect* collides with the *law of personal responsibility*.

CAUSE AND EFFECT Vs. PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

- Fathers must operate according to the hope of the former but accept the reality of the latter.
- Good parenting does not eliminate the parents' vulnerability to the child's personal choices.
- Proverbs holds children fully responsible for their choice.

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- **20:20** – “He who curses his father or his mother, his lamp will go out in time of darkness.”
- **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.”



- **Deuteronomy 24:16** – “Fathers shall not be put to death for *their* sons, nor shall sons be put to death for *their* fathers; everyone shall be put to death for his own sin.”

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“If we measure our success as parents solely by what our children become, there is no inviolable guarantee in Scripture that we will experience absolute success on those termsThe true measure of success for Christian parents is the parents’ own character. To the degree that we have followed God’s design for parenting, we have succeeded as parents before God.”

—MacArthur, *Successful Christian Parenting*, 17

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9. A father’s successful leadership can establish a powerful legacy.

- In light of Proverbs 22:6, a father committed to raising his children according to wisdom is the only one who has the potential of establishing a legacy of successful living.
- This is the long-term effect of *sowing and reaping*—cause and effect—that fathers are to consider.
- What a father does today affects future generations.

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- **4:1-4** – “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. 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.’”
- God gave Solomon wisdom *directly* (1 Kings 4:29).
- But He gave it also through a legacy of faithful fathers.

Boaz → Obed → Jesse → David → Solomon

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- **Psalm 78:5-8** – “For He established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel, which He commanded our fathers that they should teach them to their children, that the generation to come might know, even the children yet to be born, that they may arise and tell them to their children, that they should put their confidence in God and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments, and not be like their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation, a generation that did not prepare its heart and whose spirit was not faithful to God.”

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- **2 Timothy 1:5** – “For I am mindful of the sincere faith within you, which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am sure that *it is* in you as well.”

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- Not *ancestral traditions* but *biblical wisdom*—the application of unchanging divine revelation to concrete life situations.
- A distinct weakness of children = lack of experience in God’s law of cause and effect and how it operates in a treacherous world.
- They easily succumb to the enticements of sin and foolishness.
- But biblical wisdom passed down from parents and grandparents instructs them from both immutable truth and real life, long-term experiences.

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- **4:6-9** – “Do not forsake her, and she will guard you; love her, and she will watch over you. . . . Prize her, and she will exalt you; she will honor you if you embrace her. She will place on your head a garland of grace; she will present you with a crown of beauty.”
- **17:6** – “Grandchildren are the crown of old men, and the glory of sons is their fathers.”

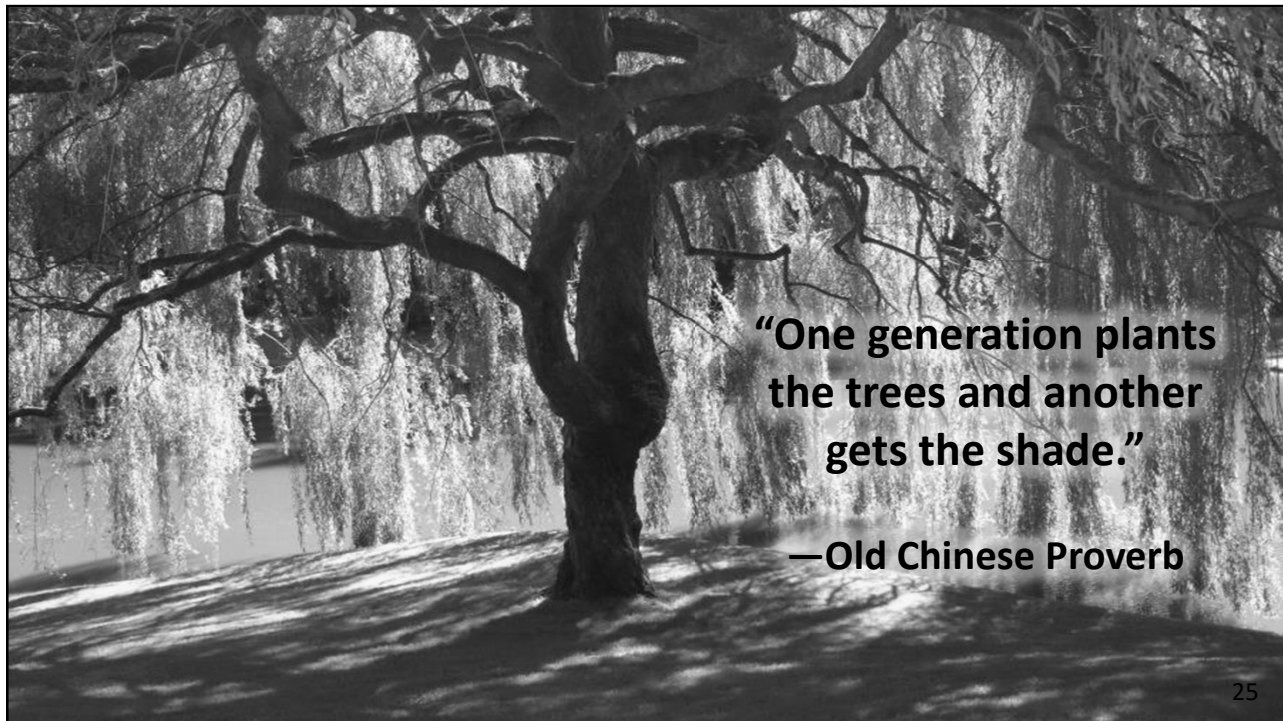
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A COMPARISON OF LEGACIES (A. E. Winship, <i>A Study in Education and Heredity</i>)	
Jonathan Edwards	Max Jukes
18th century Puritan pastor-theologian; married to Sarah; raised 11 children.	18th century man known for his idleness, heavy drinking, and irreverent lifestyle.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 U.S. vice-president • 3 U.S. senators • 3 governors • 3 mayors • 13 college presidents • 30 judges • 65 professors • 80 public office holders • 100 lawyers • 100 missionaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 murderers • 60 thieves • 50 women of debauchery • 130 other convicts • 310 paupers, who, combined spent 2,300 years in poorhouses • 400 physically wrecked by indulgent living • The Jukes descendants cost the state in their time more than \$1,250,000.

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- 8. A father’s successful leadership does not guarantee a successful result.**
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