

Lesson 6 7 December, 2014

Perpetuating the Faith

Lesson Scope: Proverbs 3, 4, 6, 10, 13, 16, 17, 19, 20, 22, 23, 29, 30

Lesson Focus

The Book of Proverbs contains an excellent array of insightful proverbs related to homelife. Homes based on these foundational principles will be

- blessing to the church, to the community, and to subsequent generations. A decadent society views homelife as inconsequential, parenthood as
- demotion of status, and children as a nuisance. As the state becomes increasingly intrusive in directing the affairs of the home, it is of utmost importance that we consider the truths of God's Word regarding homelife and review each of our God-given responsibilities as directed by the Scriptures. God created the home as a sacred institution. Any society that ignores the basic, God-designed concept of the home will soon deteriorate.

These proverbs guide the home as effectively today as they have for generations. This lesson focuses on the role of the home in transmitting the faith from one generation to the next.

Worldly wisdom relentlessly threatens godly homes. Parents must instruct and discipline their children, and children must obey and honor their parents for faith to be propagated.

Judge Franklin J. Goldstein wisely quipped that "the place to stop crime is at the highchair, and not the electric chair." Much of the evil in society can be traced to broken homes or dysfunctional homelife. On the other hand, stable well-ordered homes are a tremendous blessing to any community. However, the goals of a Christian home should include more than that. To provide a safe place where children can learn to know God and choose to follow Christ should be the highest goal a Christian home can have. Doing this is simply returning to God what already belongs to Him. This lesson focuses on child training with a special emphasis on perpetuating the faith in the following generations. These proverbs are God's direction for homelife and child training. To

follow alternative methods will not produce the desired results

Lesson Aim: To identify principles related to perpetuating the faith in our homes.

Theme Verse: **Proverbs 22:6.** Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

Lesson Text

"He Taught Me Also"

Proverbs 4:1-4 ¹Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father, and attend to know understanding. ²For I give you good doctrine, forsake ye not my law. ³For I was my father's son, tender and only *beloved* in the sight of my mother. ⁴He taught me also, and said unto me, Let thine heart retain my words: keep my commandments, and live.

Proverbs 16:31 The hoary head *is* a crown of glory, *if* it be found in the way of righteousness.

Proverbs 17:6 Children's children *are* the crown of old men; and the glory of children *are* their fathers.

Proverbs 22:6 Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

"Withhold Not Correction"

Proverbs 13:24 He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.

Proverbs 19:18 Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying.

Proverbs 22:15 Foolishness *is* bound in the heart of a child; *but* the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.

Proverbs 23:13-14 ¹³Withhold not correction from the child: for *if* thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. ¹⁴Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell.

Proverbs 29:15 The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left *to himself* bringeth his mother to shame.

Proverbs 29:17 Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul.

"Hearken Unto Thy Father"

Proverbs 3:1-4 ¹ My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments: ² For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee. ³ Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart: ⁴ So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man.

Proverbs 6:20-23 ²⁰ My son, keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother: ²¹ Bind them continually upon thine heart, *and* tie them about thy neck. ²² When thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; and *when* thou awakest, it shall talk with thee. ²³ For the commandment *is* a lamp; and the law *is* light; and reproofs of instruction *are* the way of life:

Proverbs 10:1 The proverbs of Solomon. A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish son *is* the heaviness of his mother.

Proverbs 20:11 Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work *be* pure, and whether *it be* right.

Proverbs 23:22-26 ²² Hearken unto thy father that begat thee, and despise not thy mother when she is old. ²³ Buy the truth, and sell *it* not; *also* wisdom, and instruction, and understanding. ²⁴ The father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice: and he that begetteth a wise *child* shall have joy of him. ²⁵ Thy father and thy mother shall be glad, and she that bare thee shall rejoice. ²⁶ My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways.

Proverbs 30:17 The eye *that* mocketh at *his* father, and despiseth to obey *his* mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it.

Questions for Study

"He Taught Me Also"

1. What is the faith that must be perpetuated?
2. Why is it essential that each generation in turn be faithful in perpetuating the faith?
3. What actions of parents will aid in perpetuating the faith?

"Withhold Not Correction"

4. Of what value is corporal punishment?
5. What necessary elements must be coupled with corporal punishment for it to be effective?

6. What are some common misconceptions about child training?

"Hearken Unto Thy Father"

7. What are some characteristics of children who have learned from discipline?

8. List some blessings that come to the home when children choose rightly.

Analyzing the Passage

"Length of days" (Proverbs 3:2) does not necessarily guarantee long life for any individual, but history has shown that any society that follows God's laws will endure longer.

"Bind them about thy neck" (Proverbs 3:3; 6:21) is a familiar Jewish reference regarding adorning oneself with character qualities of great worth, as one would a valuable ornament, clearly visible and not easily lost.

Hear and attend (Proverbs 4:1) convey the thought of pricking up the ears and listening attentively and intelligently to what is being taught.

Betimes (Proverbs 13:24) refers to the time at dawn, figuratively referring to beginning early and diligently with child training. "While there is hope" (Proverbs 19:18) refers to the fleeting opportunity parents have to teach their children effectively.

Ravens and eagles (Proverbs 30:17) are scavengers that eat the carcasses of dead animals. Many disobedient and rebellious children have finally died an ignominious death because of their wrong choices. Some have died as criminals, which in ancient times were hung or crucified and left to decay.

Principles and Applications

"He Taught Me Also"

1. Perpetuating the faith rests with each generation in turn (Proverbs 4:1-4).

The faith that one generation receives from a godly heritage must be transmitted to the next. The current generation cannot be passive or merely depend on past generations to instill the faith in those following. The lack of responsibility in perpetuating the faith will result in a dying faith that will no longer serve the future generations.

2. Parents and grandparents help perpetuate the faith even in their old

age (Proverbs 16:31; 17:6). Grandparents can be a source of much wisdom and direction for the following generations that are in the midst of teaching their children. Even though they may be no longer directly involved in child training, their consistent faith and living example can be inspirational for those following.

3. Godly training in childhood guides a person throughout his life (Proverbs 22:6). Children who are taught the foundational truths of God gain a frame of reference that will aid them greatly in living the faith received from their parents. Even though each child still must choose his own course in life and can go astray, the influences of a godly home will leave a lasting impression that is hard to shake off.

"Withhold Not Correction"

4. The training of children requires corporal punishment for wrongdoing (Proverbs 13:24; 19:18; 22:15; 23:13-14). Children come to us with the fallen nature. The sooner the child links the pain of corporal punishment to his wrongdoing, the better the hope of success in restraining those evils in the child. Corporal punishment will be most effective when it is administered lovingly and consistently.

5. Restraining the evil nature of the child helps him to develop his own self-control (Proverbs 29:15). Corporal punishment, along with verbal guidance, will help the child practice right actions, thus learning from discipline. If left unchecked, a child's sinful nature will rule him and bring shame and sorrow to himself and to his family.

6. Effective discipline and well-ordered homelife bring rest and joy to parents and children (Proverbs 29:17). An undisciplined child brings frustration and heartache to his parents. Unpunished wrongdoing can cause guilt in the child, leaving him discontented and insecure. Effective discipline, balanced by love and acceptance, creates a relationship between parent and child that promotes happiness, peace, and contentment.

"Hearken Unto Thy father"

7. To perpetuate the faith, parents must teach their children (Proverbs 3:1-4).

Even though children can learn much about the faith from church services, Sunday schools, and Christian day schools, it will be greatly enhanced if the foundation of learning is created at home. When fathers lead in family worship, mothers read Bible stories, and children have

access to sound literature, children will be much better able to receive the teaching they hear elsewhere. Children will not respond well, however, if parents do not live the faith they are trying to teach.

8. Godly counsel guides and protects the home (Proverbs 6:20-23). The best source for guiding the home comes from God's Word. Any book, counseling, sermon, or seminar on child training and homelife must be based in the Scriptures. Caution is required because many writers and speakers—tainted by humanistic psychology—advocate encouraging self-esteem in children and are quick to advise medical remedies for dealing with the carnal nature.

9. All nurturing must be aimed at reaching the heart of the child (Proverbs 23:22-26). The goal of child training is to bring the will of the child into subjection. Effectively nurturing children involves much more than corporal punishment. Parents must be available to their children, both to listen to their concerns, questions, and stories and to lead them in the ways of truth through teaching and explanation. When discipline results from anger or frustration, or when it is inconsistent or even avoided, it will only drive parent and child farther apart. "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4).

Answers to Questions

1. What is the faith that must be perpetuated?

Most importantly, it is a faith in God. It includes the whole system of truth revealed in God's Word and the way of life that belief in this truth produces.

2. Why is it essential that each generation in turn be faithful in perpetuating the faith?

When one generation is lax in perpetuating the faith, it creates a weak link that will be even weaker in the following generation. Apostasy will eventually take its toll. God's plan is for each generation to take personal responsibility.

3. What actions of parents will aid in perpetuating the faith?

Family worship and reading Bible stories is foundational to exposing children to truth. Parents must be convinced themselves of the truth so that their lives reflect it. Faithful church attendance reminds children of the importance of our faith. Be available to listen to your children and

answer their questions. Win their hearts. Expecting obedience and being consistent in discipline will positively shape children's lives for their own walk of godliness.

4. Of what value is corporal punishment?

When a child learns that his unacceptable behavior brings painful consequences, he will learn to choose good behavior in order to avoid punishment.

5. What necessary elements must be coupled with corporal punishment for it to be effective?

Unconditional love must be present even during punishment. As a child grows, punishment should be accompanied with "reproof" so he understands why he is punished. Punishment must be consistent, timely, and then forgotten. In other words, after the punishment, the wrongdoing is resolved and is not brought up to shame or to berate a child. Never punish children when you are angry or when their guilt is in question. Neither should a child be punished because he lacks ability or has an accident. If you wrongfully punish a child, you must apologize to him so that you do not "provoke ... your children to wrath."

6. What are some common misconceptions about child training?

A prevalent, false concept is that children are basically good: if they are allowed to follow their own inclinations, they will grow up happy and fulfilled. Corporal punishment supposedly will hinder this development and their true freedom. Another false concept is that punishment will cause the child to be abusive when he matures. Claims that all corporal punishment causes psychological disorders and destroys the inner confidence and self-esteem of the child are also false. Parents must guard against the feeling that they love their children too much to punish them. Such love is false.

7. What are some characteristics of children who have learned from discipline?

As children learn from discipline, they will become truly happy, content, and unselfish. They will have correct outward actions as well as correct inner attitudes. They will obey promptly and respect their parents.

8. List some blessings that come to the home when children choose rightly.

Peace, joy, love, and satisfaction can bloom when children grow up

choosing right. Children who choose right will enjoy a good relationship with their parents and siblings. Each generation that chooses right is another link added to the godly heritage that preceded them and will be in a position to pass the faith to subsequent generations. Ultimately, children who choose right will receive Christ and devote their lives to Him, which brings joy to the home as well as in heaven!

Important Teachings

1. Perpetuating the faith rests with each generation in turn (Prov 4:1-4).
2. Parents and grandparents help perpetuate the faith even in their old age (Proverbs 16:31; 17:6).
3. Godly training in childhood guides a person throughout his life (Proverbs 22:6).
4. The training of children requires corporal punishment for wrongdoing (Proverbs 13:24; 19:18; 22:15; 23:13, 14).
5. Restraining the evil nature of the child helps him to develop his own self-control (Proverbs 29:15).
6. Effective discipline and well-ordered homelife bring rest and joy to parents and children (Proverbs 29:17).
7. To perpetuate the faith, parents must teach their children (Proverbs 3:1-4).
8. Godly counsel guides and protects the home (Proverbs 6:20-23).
9. All nurturing must be aimed at reaching the heart of the child (Proverbs 23:22-26).

Summarizing the Lesson

Lord, give us Christian homes!

Homes where the Bible is loved and taught,

Homes where the Master's will is sought,

Homes crowned with beauty Thy love hath wrought;

Lord, give us Christian homes; Lord, give us Christian homes!

Lord, give us Christian homes!

Homes where the children are led to know

Christ in His beauty who loves them so,

Homes where the altar fires burn and glow;

Lord, give us Christian homes; Lord, give us Christian homes!

—B. B. McKinney

Research Guide

1. Several chapters in the booklet *Building Christian Homes*, by Eastern Mennonite Publications, offer relevant resource material.
2. *Ye Fathers*, by David Burkholder, would be inspirational to read prior to teaching this lesson.