

**A FATHER'S LOVING -
A SON'S HONORING - (Part one)**

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We now come to a very intimate, tender subject in Solomon's Proverbs. Here Solomon bares his heart. The urging takes on a urgent tone - to the point that the "sons" in this passage are to consider their father's words as though their lives depended on listening to and heeding them. **This is a most important point:** our relationship to our earthly father (and mother) is so vital that God places a special blessing by our honoring them.

Exodus 20:12 **"Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you.**

A Loving Father

The similarity between the urging of a loving father for his sons to listen carefully to his words and the urging to lay hold of Wisdom is striking. Here is a comparison between father's words and Wisdom;

Father speaking

Many Years from Listening

Prov 4:10 **Listen, my son, accept what I say, and the years of your life will be many.**

Lay Hold and Live

Prov 4:4 **he taught me and said, "Lay hold of my words with all your heart; keep my commands and you will live.**

The importance of Listening

Prov 1:8 **Listen, my son, to your father's instruction and do not forsake your mother's teaching.**

Wisdom speaking

Many Years from Listening

Prov 9:11 **For through me your days will be many, and years will be added to your life.**

Lay Hold and Live

Prov 3:18 **She is a tree of life to those who embrace her; those who lay hold of her will be blessed.**

The importance of Listening

Prov 1:33 **but whoever listens to me will live in safety and be at ease, without fear of harm."**

The importance of the father's role. it is important in an absolute sense for the fathers of our generation to assume the proper role of priesthood of the household. For a man to abdicate his responsibility to lead his family in a proper relationship with God is a tragic sin on his part. First, it is important for a man to be sure of his salvation. Then that he have a total commitment to his Lord and for him to lead his family spiritually.

Eph 6:4 **Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.**

I would like to put the emphasis a little differently than normal. Fathers, we *will*

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exasperate our children *if* we do not bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord! We owe our children that much! Let me put it another way. If a father neglects the instructions of God's Word in bringing up his children (in particular Solomon's Proverbs) he will exasperate his children by withholding from them a foundation for living and direction in living. Psalm 127 uses an interesting word-picture of the archer who skillfully "aims" his quiver that is full of arrows. The arrows are his children and the arrows (his children) are to be in his hand *for the purpose of being skillfully aimed and to hit the target*. The target as depicted here (vs 1) and in Proverbs and other portions of God's word is a life that is being built by the LORD and on *his* foundation. Recall Luke 6 and the man who built his house on the sayings of Jesus Christ. We must *not* abdicate our role as father in our household.

David's Special Relationship with God as His Father.

Psa 27:10.¹ David in writing of his relationship with the Lord speaks of him as his father. He did not enjoy a good relationship with his earthly father.

Psa 89:24, 26, 28, 33, 35.² The Lord, in affirmation, speaks tenderly of David as his son.

God, Father of The Fatherless.

Psa 68:4, 5.³ Our Heavenly Father becomes our surrogate father in cases of the fatherless. For a child to be fatherless he either has lost his father through circumstances such as death or the father is completely dysfunctional. (See also *Psalm 10:17, 18*). The problem has always been that God is perceived as unapproachable. In reality it is God's desire that man enter into a relationship with him. That relationship to the first person of the trinity is best pictured as that of our fathers - thus Jesus uses the term "Heavenly Father."

OUR HEAVENLY FATHER

¹ Psalm 27:10 **When my father and my mother forsake me, then the LORD will take me up.**

² Psalm 89:24 **But my faithfulness and my mercy shall be with him: and in my name shall his horn be exalted.**

Psalm 89:26 **He shall cry unto me, Thou art my father, my God, and the rock of my salvation.**

Psalm 89:28 **My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him.**

Psalm 89:33 **Nevertheless my lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail.**

Psalm 89:35 **Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David.**

³ Psalm 68:4-5 **Sing unto God, sing praises to his name: extol him that rideth upon the heavens by his name JAH, and rejoice before him. [5] A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, is God in his holy habitation.**

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It is God's plan that we initially learn about our Heavenly Father from our earthly father. Jesus, expanded the concept of the first person of the trinity as Father in many ways.

Like father like son - Mat 5:44-48. In this passage Jesus is showing that just as our earthly fathers have a major impact on our lives - so our Heavenly Father should affect us. This may be a little of a "stretch" but remember that Jesus is teaching that we should "imitate" our heavenly father *just as we do our earthly dads*.

Our Heavenly Father cares and provides for us - Matt 6:24-34. The relationship between our Heavenly Father is plain. As children we learn early on to trust our father to provide for us. The lesson of our Heavenly Father's care and provision is clear.

Our Heavenly Father disciplines us in love - Deut 8:5; Prov 3:11, 12; Heb 12:7-11. We've been here before. This is just a reminder of our earthly / Heavenly father's role in discipline. The comparison is between our earthly father and our Heavenly Father is clear - if we rebel against our earthly father's discipline (make that "tough love"), how can we learn from God's allowing difficulty in our lives? Look at the context (vs' 2-4). The problem with any given generation of believers may well be the lack of parental authority of its rejection by their sons and daughters.

Our Heavenly Father is generous - Luke 11:5-13. Jesus was speaking to the fathers in the crowd of would-be disciples. The implication should have been clear if they had not been so dense. As children, many could remember the times when their fathers would grant their request - the lesson, in this case, was that they should ask for the Holy Spirit as per the Old Testament dispensation so that they could advance spiritually. The original request was that Jesus would teach them how to pray - he gave them the "model" Lord's prayer then he showed them the real key - the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Our Heavenly Father has provided everything we need to advance spiritually. Just as our earthly father wants us to grow and succeed, so it is with our heavenly father. We cannot underestimate our relationship with our earthly father. With it is the key to understanding the role our Heavenly Father plays in our lives. But we should not forget our role either. Notice the emphasis on the bold approach by the needy neighbor? Our Heavenly Father does not expect a detached "your life / my life" attitude in our relationship with our Heavenly Father. No. He expects us to come to him *boldly* and share with him our needs. In turn, we should expect dynamic participation on "Dad's" part. Just as a good dad is dynamically involved with his children's lives the same case is true with "Dad."

Entrance to Honor - Humility.

Humility is a two-way street when it comes to dad's attitude toward his children and his wife. Jesus, himself made this point:

Matthew 11:29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

How many times has a family argument escalated into a major "fight" because all parties including dad have assumed a "know-it-all" and dad assuming a "I'm the boss around here" attitude during a family confrontation? A very important point is that honor is the result of years of earning this honor by assuming a Christ-like attitude regarding dad's leadership role in the family. Listen again to our Lord:

Matthew 20:25-28 But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. [26] But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; [27] And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: [28] Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

It's a delicate balance between being passive in your leadership, dad, and leading your family with a Christ-like firmness. Scary. But, nevertheless, the task is ours dads. We must not abdicate our priestly responsibilities regarding our families. Let's move on to this morning's lesson.

The Importance of Humility.

Prov 22:4 Humility and the fear of the LORD bring wealth and honor and life.

Solomon interweaves in this chapter, his relationship with David, his father. The reader can pick out the closeness Solomon had with his father;

Prov 4:3 For I was my father's son, tender and only beloved in the sight of my mother.

The relationship between the father and his son is so important. The father is to love his son with the same attitude as Jesus loved his disciples and provide companionship. The son, in turn, returns his dad's love with an attitude of humility and acts of honor. In this lesson we learn that in order to have (and give) honor, we must have an attitude of humility. **Humility gives us entrance into honor.**

The Danger of an Argumentative Attitude.

Prov 20:3 It is to a man's honor to avoid strife, but every fool is quick to quarrel.

Actually, this is a general command to avoid a predisposition for being argumentative - nothing crushes the spirits of parents or provokes them more than when their child (especially a teenager) questions or debates their judgment. This has to be today's most disruptive problem in the home. The tragedy is that a child who

indulges in this practice develops this into a constant judgmental attitude toward his parents. This endangers his whole future when it comes to God blessing his life (*Deut 5:16*).⁴

The High Gate Called "Argument."

Prov 17:19 He who loves a quarrel loves sin; he who builds a high gate invites destruction.

There is no way around it. A child arguing with his parents is sinning. But it's an especially tragic sin for it is destructive both in their relationship and in the child's development toward a gracious, mature attitude toward those around him. Then there is the problem of a believing child being out-of-fellowship with his Heavenly Father.

This text draws the word picture of a high gate that bars entrance. This gate comes between a close, endearing relationship between the child and his parents. As long as the child assumes this attitude he severs a very special bond between himself and the *only* people who would stick by him for life - his parents.

The high gate "argument" can lead to tragic consequences if the child is allowed to build it between himself and his parents.

Humility Precedes Honor. Prov. 15:33; 18:12; 29:23

Prov 15:33 The fear of the LORD teaches a man wisdom, and humility comes before honor.

Prov 29:23 A man's pride brings him low, but a man of lowly spirit gains honor.

The single most important lesson a child can learn in life is that before promotion, responsibility, a fulfilling place in life he must mature, he must learn wisdom. This comes from two areas in his life; first, he must honor his parents. At the same time a relationship with his Lord is very important. While it is true that many have "made it" in life outside of a saving experience - such is not the "norm" in the plan of God.

Humility is that attitude in the child where he submits his will and thinking to both his parents and his Lord. Jesus is the best example of humility. Luke, the physician, records that the Lord Jesus as a child "...went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them..." even though he was aware that he was the Son of God, and could have, at this time, become quite a sensation at Jerusalem, in humility, he submitted to his parents and returned home. It is not a coincidence that Luke recorded in the next verse that "...Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men." Humility is not complete without a proper, submissive relationship with *both* the child's Lord and his parents. As exemplified by Jesus' life.

So, we see that before honor comes humility - a child that rebels against this principle *will be brought low*.

God Blesses Humility. Prov. 3:34; 22:4

⁴ Deut. 5:16 Honour thy father and thy mother, as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee; that thy days may be prolonged, and that it may go well with thee, in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

Prov 3:34 He mocks proud mockers but gives grace to the humble.

Prov 22:4 Humility and the fear of the LORD bring wealth and honor and life.

God does indeed, bless humility. Today's lesson, properly learned by both children and parents alike can bring grace into the household. One very important teaching is that if the parents and children are *both* assuming an attitude of humility toward their Lord and each other, God's promise is that that household will be given grace. Grace⁵ here is salvation along with *the Lord's moral character of graciousness*. It is pleasant to live in a household that reflects the graciousness that comes from the Lord.

Look at our second text; there is a direct relationship between our spiritual life and our life in the mundane, especially the family life. For a home to prosper under the umbrella of God's graciousness, humility and the fear of the Lord must be the prevailing attitude. A parent or child who professes spirituality and yet does not have a humble attitude and show graciousness is living a lie.

A warning to the unthinking child or parent - the proper role of the father, mother and child *must* be honored in the context of humility. A child cannot accuse the father of not being humble if he is exercising his responsibility of fatherly discipline. Nor can the father exasperate his child by assuming a brutish, cruel behavior. Yet, to withhold the training and admonition of the Lord also will exasperate the child.

The dire warning to the household wherein dwells pride and mocking is this: God promises to mock them by withholding his graciousness.

⁵ Grace (*heb* = *chen* = "kane") depicts a heart felt response by someone who has something to give to one who has a need. It has the sense of generosity - it does not always mean that the recipient is in dire need. It is frequently used with the phrase "find grace in the eyes" of someone. Frequently used in the sense of a man finding pleasure in the company of a woman. Noah and Moses found grace in the eyes of the LORD giving the sense of pleasant fellowship. This is the sense of this passage. Pleasant fellowship comes from gracious folks. See also James 4:6.