

A Mother's Teaching
Proverbs 6:20-35 (05/14/17)
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I wanted to title this message, "How to Raise a Happy Mom." Proverbs 23:25 says, "Let your father and your mother be glad, and let her rejoice who gave birth to you." We all know the potential for great joy and great grief for a mother as she tries to rear her children to honor the Lord. The calling and influence of a mother are awesome. Thank God for godly mothers! Thank God for the mothers of D. L. Moody, George Whitefield, the great Scottish preacher Alexander Whyte who died in 1921, the early church preachers Chrysostom, Augustine, and Timothy, all of whom were reared by godly mothers but whose fathers either died in their youth or deserted the family or never submitted to Christ as their Lord. I say this for the encouragement of you mothers who may not have the support of a godly husband and father in the home. God's grace is sufficient!

God designed this world to be peopled by families. He designed for children to grow up under the authority of God's Word coming through the hearts and lives of godly fathers and mothers. We're focusing on mothers today, but this is not to discount the importance of fathers. Too many men come home every night, not to love, serve, and lead, but to rest, refresh, and amuse themselves.

One author wrote, "Let the husband and father do his utmost to lighten her labor and cheer her heart. The wounded spirit of a neglected wife cannot bear its own weight, far less sustain with buoyant, smiling countenance the continual tension of several children hanging about her, with all their wants and all their quarrels from morning until night." Dad, your day isn't over at 5 PM.

But we're going to focus on the moms this morning, assuming that you dads are giving that loving, learning, and serving leadership in your home. Kids, no one loves you more than your mom. She loves your dad first, but she is committed to you and desires and prays that you will grow to know, love, and serve Christ. She carried you around within her own body for nine months and labored to bring you into the light of day. Then she fed, burped, and changed your diapers until she could trust you to use the potty. Since then she's been nurturing you and praying as you enter adulthood that you will invest your life in the things that really matter for time and eternity. No one loves you more, no one wants your best more, no one rejoices more when you honor God, and no one grieves more deeply than when you make foolish decisions as seen in today's section of Proverbs. God put your mother in your life to be His instrument to nurture and guide you in the way you should go. Let's look at five life-impacting effects of a godly mother's teaching.

Your mother's teaching shines the light of truth into your life – vv. 20-23

*20 My son, observe the commandment of your father And do not forsake the teaching of your mother;
21 Bind them continually on your heart; Tie them around your neck. 22 When you walk about, they will guide you; When you sleep, they will watch over you; And when you awake, they will talk to you.
23 For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching is light; And reproofs for discipline are the way of life.*

Here you have a mom and dad working together for the good of their son or daughter. Mothers are always in the background of God's plan for parents, even though it's usually dad giving the guidance and warning. Mom is there beside him, working together with their God-given male and female perspectives to love and nurture the children. Let me give you all one caution. There are no guarantees in this parenting endeavor. In every family, there are as many sinners as there are tax deductions. Never forget, every child is a sinner and will do some wrong stuff. Some seem to easily honor mom and dad, and some kick up their heels and rebel and make life miserable for everyone. Every mom and dad needs the grace of Christ, patience, forgiveness, hope, and comfort all along the way.

Everybody is born a sinner with a spiritually dead, dark soul, no matter how precious that little cooing thing is. Each son and daughter needs the light of truth. God never intended young people to rear

themselves. And they certainly don't come pre-trained. Not even the first family God created saw all their kids do well. So we all need the gospel and the power of the Spirit to do this parenting.

Compare verses 20 and 23 and you see dad is responsible for the overall spiritual teaching and leadership in the home. He holds the lamp. Psalm 119:105 says, "Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." The lamp is God's authority, God's revelation, God's instruction on what we should do in order to please Him. Dad tells us what to do; mom tells us how to do it. Mom focuses on the guidance in working it out, how we do it day by day. The Hebrew word for teaching is torah, to point the finger in the way to go. Do you see the picture? Dad's the lamp shining out; mom's the light showing how to apply it. Moms are good at that. They aren't satisfied with general truth. They want to know what do we do with it? How do we apply it?

So what are you supposed to do with what mom (and dad) tells you? Verses 21-22 give us four things: 1) observe or take them in, guard them. 2) Don't forsake, don't ignore or despise or think you know better than your mom. 3) Bind them on your heart, take them seriously, develop your convictions, what you will or will not do, and 4) Tie them continually around your neck, every day, in every circumstance – recess, locker room, lunch room, ball diamond and soccer field, and your home.

What happens when God plants His truth in your heart? Verse 22 explains how God guides you. It is not by mystical voices, visions, and vibrations. God guides you by His Word as you hear it and take it into your heart. God's lamp and light are right there to guide, guard, and talk to you when you walk, sleep, and wake up. God is personal. He reaches down to us through His Son and His Word to take you by your heart and hand. He uses your parents, especially your mother's tenderness, to lead you in the good way, the way of truth, peace, joy! And when you blow it, which you will, God's Word assures you of His mercy and forgiveness in the gospel.

Don't miss that last part in verse 23 – "Reproofs for discipline are the way of life." We need correction. Proverbs 29:15, "A child who gets his own way brings shame to his mother." Not severity, not cruelty, not unreasonable reproofs, but correcting you to help you put off those ugly sinful habits and put on godly habits – that's what life is all about. Jesus said I came that you might have life and life more abundantly. If you want a rich, rewarding, joyful, peaceful, satisfying life, you will humble your heart under the lamp and light of your parents teaching, your mother's teaching! She may be a mean mother – eat this, not this; wear this, not that; go here, not there; put your clothes here, not there; buy this, not that; these friends, not those; you know what I'm talking about – a mean mom, and she's just what you need. "Viva la mean momma!

Your mother's teaching helps you be discerning and make wise decisions – vv. 24-25

24 To keep you from the evil woman, From the smooth tongue of the adulteress. 25 Do not desire her beauty in your heart, Nor let her capture you with her eyelids.

Back to this theme of warnings about impurity. Why does God make such a big deal about this? Because God takes sexual purity and marriage very, very seriously. God put murder and adultery beside each other in the Ten Commandments for a reason. Murdering someone is a direct attack on God because man was made in the image of God. Every human being reflects God the Creator. And adultery is also an attack on God because His creation design in bringing Eve to Adam was a sacred covenant of marriage. Adultery is a betrayal of that sacred trust and immorality of all sorts has plagued the human race ever since. This is why God keeps pounding this into our heads and hearts. God takes marriage dead seriously.

A man and a woman faithfully loving each other in marriage displays the ultimate love story of the Son of God coming to win to Himself His sinful, undeserving bride and to love her and live with her forever. One author wrote, "God created the universe for the purpose of telling that love story." Every attack on this God-created, God-designed, God ordained relationship of a man and a woman cleaving and weaving their lives together – any and every attack on this design is a direct attack on God. It is flagrant rebellion against our loving heavenly Father who gave us all the direction and counsel we need to glorify Him in

our marriage relationship. And nothing creates more pain and perplexity and grief and anger and rage than the sins of immorality.

In verses 24-25 the mother and father's teaching warns every son and daughter. Chuck Swindoll captures these verses with four decisions you will do well to make.

- Stay away from the evil person, especially one who is looking for sexual adventure.
- Guard against that smooth, silky, seductive tongue, those affirming and inviting words that prove so hard to resist. There's poison in it.
- Squelch immediately those secret desires for exciting but sinful involvement. Jesus said to look and lust is adultery in the heart. Take those initial thoughts immediately to the cross of Christ and submit to the power of God's Spirit in your heart. For you singles, remember, beauty is only skin deep. Didn't your mom tell you that?
- Beware of those alluring, welcoming eyes. Some interpret those eyelids as eyelashes capturing the naïve and stupid man in a net.

Your mother's teaching exposes the deluding power of sin and especially lust – vv. 26-29

26 For on account of a harlot one is reduced to a loaf of bread, And an adulteress hunts for the precious life. 27 Can a man take fire in his bosom And his clothes not be burned? 28 Or can a man walk on hot coals And his feet not be scorched? 29 So is the one who goes in to his neighbor's wife; Whoever touches her will not go unpunished.

One very wise pastor said, "When the physical gets involved, passions are aroused, and reason flies out the window." That's exactly what's happening here. Sin deceives, deludes, and blinds you to the consequences. All you can think about is fulfilling your desires; you must have the object of your passion. You're so driven and obsessed with your lust that by now you aren't thinking straight. Don't be the guy who thinks that girl in the car beside him at the light is flirting with him, when she's just trying to tell him he's got a flat tire!

Verses 27-28 are graphic. You're so consumed with yourself and deluded under lust's power that you think you can take fire in your arms or walk on hot coals and not get burned. "We won't get caught. My wife won't ever know. It'll just be once. I deserve it. God brought her into my life." Our Vice President was recently mocked and criticized throughout the media for declaring publicly that he never dines alone with a woman except for his wife. Do you know what you call a man like that? Wise! How many unintended trysts began with what looked like an innocent relationship, perhaps over lunch, at the out of town conference, even in the parking lot!

It's bad enough with a harlot or unprincipled female who isn't married, but worse with a married woman. All sin has consequences. All sin is like fire; it burns. Remember what your mom told you, "Be sure your sin will find you out." You may pursue it in the darkness, behind a closed door, late in the night at your laptop, wherever the fool has to sneak. But it's fire and it burns. Colossians 3:6 warns, "Because of these things the wrath of God will come upon the sons of disobedience." Only those who love you will tell you this.

Your mother's teaching would keep you from ruining your life – vv. 30-33

30 Men do not despise a thief if he steals To satisfy himself when he is hungry; 31 But when he is found, he must repay sevenfold; He must give all the substance of his house. 32 The one who commits adultery with a woman is lacking sense; He who would destroy himself does it. 33 Wounds and disgrace he will find, And his reproach will not be blotted out.

A hungry man who steals at least had a genuine need – food. This adulterer has only one need – to satisfy his own pleasure. "But we love each other." No, it's not love. Adultery is never true love. Love is commitment. Adultery is stupid, dumb, foolish, or as God describes the adulterer here, "lacking sense." He's like someone who goes out and keeps banging his head as hard as he can against a brick wall.

No one loves and cares for you more than your parents, and especially that precious woman who brought you into this world. She is warning you, "Don't ruin your life by your unrestrained lust and passion." Don't

exchange fifteen minutes of thrills and chills for a lifetime of reproach and the memory of stupidity. Here's what the law says. Leviticus 20:10, "If there is a man who commits adultery with another man's wife, one who commits adultery with his friend's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death."

Hold it. What about the woman taken in adultery when Jesus said, "He who is without sin, cast the first stone?" Exactly. Aren't we glad God has mercy on sinners? Aren't we thankful Jesus came into the world to die for sinners, gossips, slanderers, fornicators and adulterers? Aren't we glad God knows how to save people who otherwise would completely ruin our lives? Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners of all kinds, but all this doesn't blunt the edge of God's command. Sin burns. And remember Jesus told that lady, "Go and sin no more."

Your mother's teaching will not keep you from the deadly consequences of your rebellion – vv. 34-35

34 For jealousy enrages a man, And he will not spare in the day of vengeance. 35 He will not accept any ransom, Nor will he be satisfied though you give many gifts.

Here's the bottom line – no father or mother can change the heart of their son or daughter. We must pray to God for that. If a son or daughter persists in his or her rebellion and rejects the lamp and light of their parents, they will probably live a miserable life, turning to drugs, alcohol, serial immorality, serial divorces, poverty, conflict, anger, bitterness, and a whole swarm of spiritual hornets that buzz and sting in the wake of rebellion. In this case, the betrayed and jealous husband who caught the man with his wife will fly into a rage, furious, out for revenge. Proverbs 27:4 says, "Wrath is fierce and anger is a flood, but who can stand before jealousy."

My dad had a brother I never knew because he died when I was young. He married Eva and had six children. The younger one was David; we called him Davey. He was shy. I lost track of him in my early twenties. On the morning of June 10, 1979, David was in bed with another man's wife. The man's name was William Beliveau. He drove up the Allentown Road to the house, walked into the bedroom, found his wife there with David, and jealousy enraged him. He did not spare in the day of vengeance, and proceeded to kick and beat David to the point of rupturing an artery in his head. Davey died ten hours later.

David's mother, my aunt Eva, grieved greatly. No one loved David more than his mother. No one loves you more than your mom and dad. No one wants you to succeed and honor Christ in your life more than your mother. Parents and Grandparents, let's do all we can to be God's lamps and lights to our sons and daughters. Kids, thank God for a mother who loves you. Rise up and call her blessed. And everyone, thank God that though we have all sinned and come short of God's standards and laws, Jesus came to save all who will repent and trust in Him.

What about you? Are you a mother or dad shining God's light and truth into the lives of your children? Have you yourself bowed your heart to Christ, calling on His name as your Savior and Lord? Perhaps you have crossed that line of impurity and need to repent of going where you know you should not have gone? I John 1:9 assures us, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."