

Intro

Not every sermon on Sundays will be equally applicable to every person at every stage of life.

The big themes apply to everyone – person and work of Christ, presence of sin, the glory of the gospel.

But . . .

We will teach on work knowing that we have retirees with us that have closed that door.

We will cover questions that some people ask and care deeply about, but others don't see with the same weight.

We will teach on fatherhood, knowing that at least half the people in attendance have never been fathers and will never be fathers.

And so today we come to a topic that Proverbs devotes significant real estate to – family life – knowing that it won't equally apply to everyone here. Yet we all benefit because we all should desire to see the church body flourish in obedience to Christ. We all should care about the little ones that were just dismissed to Jr Church, because they are precious in the sight of the Lord.

1. Your family is a **gift** from the Lord.

a. **Proverbs 18:22** He who finds a wife finds a good thing And obtains favor from the LORD.

i. **Proverbs 8:35** "For he who finds me finds life And obtains favor from the LORD.

ii. The intentional parallel seems to imply that finding a good wife is on par with finding wisdom. Or that after wisdom, the next best thing a man could be blessed with is a good wife.

iii. Not even a certain caliber of wife is in mind here – just a wife!

b. **Proverbs 19:14** House and wealth are an inheritance from fathers, But a prudent wife is from the LORD.

i. Fathers can arrange for and hand down house and wealth, but only the Lord can provide a prudent wife.

ii. This was during a time when parents arranged most marriages as well. So the father was actively involved in providing a wife, but ultimately he was only the means that the Lord used to provide a prudent wife.

1. Prudent – shrewd, insightful, wise

2. How many young men say, "I just want to marry a woman who is prudent!" According to this, that's exactly what you should say and the type of wife you should pray for.

iii. Paul Tripp talks about this in *What did you expect?* When we worship God as creator, sovereign, and savior we can accept His provision of our spouse. When we reject His provision it reflects our view of the giver.

iv. Today you married because you love each other. Tomorrow you'll love each other because you're married. —Wedding toast by Elizabeth Elliot

c. **Psalms 127:3** Behold, children are a gift of the LORD, The fruit of the womb is a reward.

i. Likewise, children are viewed as a good gift from the Lord, and should be received as such, even if the timing or number or gender or personality isn't what you had in mind.

- ii. All parents know the experience of teaching their children to be grateful for gifts even if initially it wasn't what they expected. Only a young child or a rude, older child complains about a gift freely given to them.
- iii. Likewise, a parent with 7 boys can trust God's good hand when baby boy number 8 comes along.
- d. What about those who long for a spouse or children but feel like they have been denied?
 - i. Marriage is significant but temporary. It's a representation of something much bigger – the relationship between Christ and the church. That person may miss out on the temporary representation but they will experience the permanent reality.
 - ii. Of course there is still a pain there. It isn't to minimize the pain but to recognize that the pain, if there, is temporary. The joy will be eternal.

2. Wisdom builds an **appealing** home.

- a. **Proverbs 24:3-4** By wisdom a house is built, And by understanding it is established; ⁴ And by knowledge the rooms are filled With all precious and pleasant riches.
 - i. Parallel with the same agents that the Lord used in establishing the world.
 - ii. **Proverbs 3:19-20** The LORD by wisdom founded the earth, By understanding He established the heavens. ²⁰ By His knowledge the deeps were broken up And the skies drip with dew.
 - iii. Built → established → filled
 - iv. This sets a great vision for what our homes can be like.
 - 1. Filled with wisdom, understanding, and knowledge.
 - 2. Rooted in the fear of the Lord since that is the beginning of all these things.
 - 3. The result is that the rooms are filled with "precious and pleasant riches." What do these refer to?
 - a. Joy, laughter, peace, education, Biblical worldview, hospitality
 - v. This kind of home doesn't just come into being by default. It takes intentionality, effort, and time.
 - vi. You don't get it by pursuing that kind of home straight away. You get that kind of home by pursuing wisdom. You get wisdom by pursuing the Lord.
- b. It's not a matter of material prosperity. A loving, godly, poor home is preferred to a wealthy, hate-filled home.
 - i. **Proverbs 15:16-17** Better is a little with the fear of the LORD Than great treasure and turmoil with it. ¹⁷ Better is a dish of vegetables where love is Than a fattened ox *served* with hatred.
 - ii. Dinner is a time when the entire family gets together. It could also be a time where a family's prosperity is seen. A poor family would not be able to afford meat for dinner but would dine primarily on vegetables. A rich family could afford meat.
 - iii. Dinner time, then, is a window into a family's overall level of prosperity. This proverb says that even more important than a family's prosperity or diet is whether there is love in the house or hatred.

- iv. Even the best food is undesirable when eaten in the company of a hateful house, while love makes even the lowliest of foods enjoyable when eaten together.
3. A woman plays a significant role in the ***tone*** of her home.
- a. Women have immense power in their home to shape it in good and bad ways.
 - i. Paintings of Mary Cassatt – Russ Ramsey – “Cassatt helped bring attention to the lives, work, dignity, and importance of women, making her part of a rare but growing movement championing the beauty, normalcy, and importance of motherhood.”
 - ii. Pics – *Young Mother Sewing, Reine Lefebvre and Margot before a window*
 - b. **Proverbs 14:1** The wise woman builds her house, But the foolish tears it down with her own hands.
 - i. Not building the brick and mortar, but shaping the environment, building into her children, encouraging and respecting her husband, setting a tone for conflict resolution, modeling trust in the Lord in hardship. As she pursues wisdom, her family benefits.
 - 1. Spend time with wise women, learn from an older generation, be proactive.
 - 2. Even if your husband doesn’t share the same goals or spiritual perspective that you have, you can have tremendous influence on your children.
 - ii. On the other hand, it is possible for a woman to tear down her home through anger that snaps like a mouse trap, harsh speech, or lack of self-control.
 - iii. Is she trying to tear it down? Very rarely.
 - c. **Proverbs 21:9** It is better to live in a corner of a roof Than in a house shared with a contentious woman. (repeated in Proverbs 25:24)
 - d. **Proverbs 21:19** It is better to live in a desert land Than with a contentious and vexing woman.
 - e. **Proverbs 27:15** A constant dripping on a day of steady rain And a contentious woman are alike;
 - i. The point of the roof or desert land is the same for both – better to be isolated, alone, and exposed to the weather than to be cooped up with a contentious wife.
 - ii. What does contentiousness look like?
 - 1. It’s not merely having an opinion that is different than his. You are welcome to hold different opinions and to express them.
 - 2. It is a persistent pattern of correcting him on big and small things. And it may seem subtle.
 - a. “Let’s get white bread.” No, wheat’s better for you.
 - b. “I think we should wash the car.” No, it might rain.
 - c. He disciplines a child, and get’s disciplined by you
 - 3. Those examples on their own are trivial – you can have different opinions on bread, car washing, and parenting. But it’s the persistent dripping.
 - iii. Who’s the target of this?

1. Not men who are married to a contentious woman – not given them strategies for dealing with her contentiousness – move to the roof, take a hunting trip to the desert. Certainly isn't justifying divorce in that circumstance.
2. Unmarried men to know what they should avoid in a wife
3. Married women to see that contentiousness – continually arguing – can have a negative effect on her husband. That should motivate them to change their behavior.
 - a. You are the most important person in your husband's life, and when you speak disrespectfully to him, your words cut and worm their way into his heart. They bury themselves there, slowly eroding his ability to cherish you as you really want. Even when you're joking, it's risky business." -Karen Haught

4. Parental discipline demonstrates **love**; lack of discipline demonstrates **indifference**.

- a. **Proverbs 3:11-12** My son, do not reject the discipline of the LORD Or loathe His reproof, 12 For whom the LORD loves He reproves, Even as a father corrects the son in whom he delights.
- b. **Proverbs 13:24** He who withholds his rod hates his son, But he who loves him disciplines him diligently.
 - i. To not discipline a son is to allow him to go his own way, even to the way of destruction.
 - ii. It demonstrates a lack of concern on the parent's part if they aren't willing to discipline a wayward child. It also demonstrates laziness if they are unwilling to put forth the effort that it takes.
 - iii. "Diligently" rightly describes correct discipline. It must be purposeful, patient, and consistent if it is to have the desired result. A loving parent will discipline diligently even though it is difficult and requires much of their time and energy.
- c. **Proverbs 19:18** Discipline your son while there is hope, And do not desire his death.
 - i. A son is only under the parent's watchful, authoritative eye as long as he is under their roof. In our modern culture that is about 18 years. After that it is difficult if not impossible to discipline a child.
 - ii. Moreover, after a son reaches a certain age he will probably have established lifelong habits that are difficult to break. Failing to discipline a son is likened to desiring his death because it demonstrates a lack of loving concern on the parent's part.
 - iii. To say that a parent who won't discipline is desiring his child's death is illustrative of the seriousness of discipline and the consequences of failing to discipline.
- d. **Proverbs 13:1** A wise son accepts his father's discipline, but a scoffer does not listen to rebuke.
 - i. A wise son understands that a father disciplines a son because that is in the son's best interest. A wise son sets aside his pride and is willing to be corrected because he wants to gain more wisdom. Accepting discipline can best be understood contrasted to the scoffer's response of not listening to rebuke. To accept discipline then is to listen to the words of his father, with the implication of giving head to them and applying those words to his life. Discipline and rebuke appear to be synonymous because they are contrasted and because the Hebrew words have similar meanings.

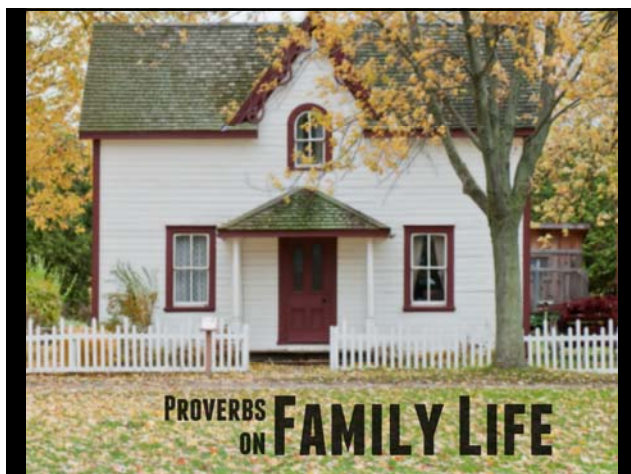
5. The greatest gift a father could give his children is a **godly** life of integrity.

- a. **Proverbs 20:7** A righteous man who walks in his integrity-- How blessed are his sons after him.

- i. **Deuteronomy 6:6-7a** ⁶ "These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. ⁷ You shall teach them diligently to your sons. . .
- ii. You can't pass on that which you don't possess.
 - 1. Pursue Christ on your own.
- iii. Integrity – has the idea of completeness, wholeness, consistency.
 - 1. If they see a consistency in your life when you are at home, at church, around friends, around work friends, your example will be significant for them.
 - 2. This passage says they are blessed. Why?
 - a. Because they know you are trustworthy and dependable.
 - b. Because they will learn from your example.
 - c. Because, humanly speaking, they are less likely to jettison the faith after they leave your house. Of course, still no guarantees.
- b. **Proverbs 23:26** Give me your heart, my son, And let your eyes delight in my ways.
 - i. What must be true of a father for him to be able to say this to his son?
 - 1. He must be trustworthy with his heart
 - 2. His life must be worth emulating, even delighting in; he should be able to see the goodness of the father's way
 - 3. Do your kids see from you that not only is Christianity true, it is good? Are you so shaped by grace that you give grace and your home is a pleasant place to be?

6. Key truths to take home:

- a. Because **Christ** meets your needs, you are free to love your family without crushing them with demands.
 - i. **Romans 8:31-32** What then shall we say to these things? If God *is* for us, who *is* against us? ³² He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?
 - ii. Appropriate love and value of family can drift into idolizing and worshiping family.
 - 1. That will crush them and frustrate you.
 - iii. That's also a healing balm for those whose family life isn't what they desire.
 - 1. Single long past the time they expected to be, childless, shattered home
 - 2. Let those waves of adversity cast you upon the rock Christ Jesus.
- b. Honor your **mother** today.
 - i. **Exodus 20:12** "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the LORD your God gives you.
 - ii. **Proverbs 31:28-29** Her children rise up and bless her; Her husband *also*, and he praises her, *saying*:
²⁹ "Many daughters have done nobly, But you excel them all."
 - 1. But you say, "you don't know my mother!" Look for things to affirm. That doesn't deny the very real failings.



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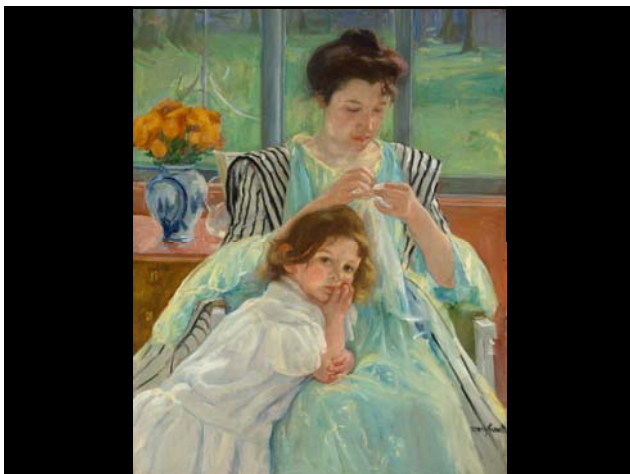
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