

LISTEN TO YOUR PARENTS, THEY'RE NOT AS STUPID AS YOU THINK

Proverbs 1:8-33

"When I was a boy of 14, my father was so ignorant I could hardly stand to have the old man around. But when I got to be 21, I was astonished at how much the old man had learned in seven years."

– Mark Twain

The irony of Mark Twain's quote is that between 14 and 21 is exactly the time you need your father's wisdom! Decisions made in these years will put you on a path of wisdom for a life of blessing or they will put you on a path of foolishness for a life of struggle. At this age you are most vulnerable to peer pressure because you want to be accepted and you want excitement and pleasure. Your lack of experience and these desires set you up to make choices that will affect you for the rest of your life.

All of us went through this critical time in life. What I'm saying about you was true of us when we were your age. I'm not hammering you because something is wrong with you; this is just the way life is as a teenager. It's an exciting time, but it is also an incredibly important time because of the choices you will make.

God loves you. Jesus loves you. Your parents love you. I/we at Grace love you. We long for you to follow the wisdom of God. We long for you to follow the wisdom of your parents. We long for you to have a blessed and fruitful life; the abundant life God has for you. It's a life full of love, joy, peace and purpose. Following the world does not lead to the good life. Following Jesus is the only way to experience the good life.

I am speaking to those of you who are 14 to 21 years old because God is speaking to you in Proverbs 1:8-9.

PROVERBS 1:8-9 (ESV)

8 Hear, my son, your father's instruction, and forsake not your mother's teaching, **9** for they are a graceful garland for your head and pendants for your neck.

As Solomon's son set out on his own, Solomon gave his son one last word of advice: "Son, remember what your mother and I taught you."

That is wise counsel to all of you who are in your teenage years getting close to leaving home. The wisest thing you can do now is to build your life on the wisdom of your parents.

BUILD YOUR LIFE ON YOUR PARENTS' WISDOM

If your life is like building a house, let your parents' wisdom be the foundation. Be humble enough to admit that your parents are wiser than you. Be thoughtful enough to recognize that nobody loves you more or is more concerned for your well-being than your parents. Build on their foundation with the wisdom God will show you from His Word and with the wisdom you will gain through experience.

The worst thing you could do right now is to listen to anybody who disrespects your parents and makes fun of the morals they have taught you. If somebody makes fun of you for being a "goody two shoes", don't listen to them and cut off that relationship. That person is what Proverbs calls a "scoffer"; a scoffer thinks doing good to others, loving others, obeying the rules are all "stupid". They're the person making fun of everybody who's trying to do the right thing. A person who seeks to drive a wedge between you and your parents is no friend. The people who disrespect and reject the wisdom of your parents are not living the good life though they want you to think they are. They are miserable and they want to drag you down with them. *Misery loves company.*

Be wise and choose to build your life on the wisdom of your parents, not your peers.

Solomon knew what awaited his son.

PROVERBS 1:10-19 (ESV)

¹⁰ My son, if sinners entice you,

do not consent.

¹¹ If they say, "Come with us, let us lie in wait for blood;

let us ambush the innocent without reason;

¹² like Sheol let us swallow them alive,

and whole, like those who go down to the pit;

¹³ we shall find all precious goods,

- we shall fill our houses with plunder;
14 throw in your lot among us;
we will all have one purse”—
15 my son, do not walk in the way with them;
hold back your foot from their paths,
16 for their feet run to evil,
and they make haste to shed blood.
17 For in vain is a net spread
in the sight of any bird,
18 but these men lie in wait for their own blood;
they set an ambush for their own lives.
19 Such are the ways of everyone who is greedy for unjust gain;

What is this gang offering that would entice Solomon's son to join them?

Acceptance

Excitement

Money (pleasure)

Between 14-21, the desires for acceptance, excitement and fun are super strong, but they're super dangerous. If you do not rule over those desires they'll lead you to make bad choices with potentially lifelong consequences.

DON'T LET YOUR DESIRES RULE YOU

If you allow your desires to drive you, you will be intimidated into believing things that are false and destructive. Peer pressure will rule you. You will turn away from God because you will be ridiculed for believing there is a God and that He created all things. You will embrace the world's view of sex because you don't want to be labeled intolerant and a hater. You will drift away from the Church because you'll buy into the criticism that the Church is full of self-righteous hypocrites and the Church just wants to control you and get your money.

If the most important thing to you is to be accepted by your peers, you'll be pressured to do things you know are wrong. You'll be pressured to drink, to do

drugs, to have sex. These things might be exciting for a moment, but the excitement and fun evaporates. Hopefully at that point guilt will kick in and you'll repent and come back to your parents' wisdom. If not, you'll try drowning the guilt by rejecting your Christian beliefs or by drinking more or doing more drugs. It will be exactly like Solomon warns: the things your friends said would be exciting and fun will ambush you.

How do you rule over your desires so that they don't rule over you and ruin your life?

You rule over your desires by filtering what you're being told or pressured to do through the filter of what your parents taught you and what you've learned from the Word of God. You have to choose who you're going to believe. And you know what? You will never regret following your parents' wisdom and God's wisdom. You will never regret not becoming an alcoholic or a drug addict. You will never regret being a virgin on the day of your wedding. As a husband, you will never regret loving your wife as Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for her. As a wife, you will never regret respecting your husband. You will never regret raising your children in Christ. You will never regret managing your money wisely. You will never regret doing good to others. You will never regret using your spiritual gifts to build up the Church family. You will never regret following Jesus and experiencing His love and acceptance and being used of Him to touch people's lives for eternity. You will never regret following your parents' wisdom and the wisdom of God.

But following your peers and this world will fill your life with nothing but regret. So again, don't let your desires rule you. Build your life on your parents' wisdom.

God is the God of second chances. If in the future you play the fool, reject your parents' wisdom and follow your friends instead, remember you will have a chance to come back to wisdom, but it's not open ended.

It seems Solomon anticipated his son would not heed his plea. All is not lost. Wisdom is available to the simple, the scornful and even the fool who will repent and seek wisdom.

PROVERBS 1:20-33 (ESV)

²⁰ Wisdom cries aloud in the street,

in the markets she raises her voice;

²¹ at the head of the noisy streets she cries out;

at the entrance of the city gates she speaks:

22 “How long, O simple ones, will you love being simple¹?

How long will scoffers delight in their scoffing
and fools hate knowledge?

23 If you turn at my reproof,
behold, I will pour out my spirit to you;
I will make my words known to you.

24 Because I have called and you refused to listen,
have stretched out my hand and no one has heeded,

25 because you have ignored all my counsel
and would have none of my reproof,

26 I also will laugh at your calamity;
I will mock when terror strikes you,

27 when terror strikes you like a storm
and your calamity comes like a whirlwind,
when distress and anguish come upon you.

28 Then they will call upon me, but I will not answer;
they will seek me diligently but will not find me.

29 Because they hated knowledge
and did not choose the fear of the LORD,

30 would have none of my counsel
and despised all my reproof,

31 therefore they shall eat the fruit of their way,
and have their fill of their own devices.

32 For the simple are killed by their turning away,
and the complacency of fools destroys them;

33 but whoever listens to me will dwell secure

¹ Warren Wiersbe: The *simple* are naive people who believe anything but examine nothing. They're gullible and easily led astray. *Scorners* think they know everything and laugh at the things that are really important. While the simple one has a blank look on his face, the scorner wears a sneer. *Fools* are people who are ignorant of truth because they're dull and stubborn. Their problem isn't a low IQ or poor education; their problem is a lack of spiritual desire to seek and find God's wisdom. Fools... hate knowledge and have no interest in things eternal.

and will be at ease, without dread of disaster.”

If you play the fool in these early years of your life, remember, you can repent and get back on the road of wisdom.

WHEN CLARITY COMES, TURN BACK TO GOD AND THE WISDOM OF YOUR PARENTS

The moment of clarity that you're on the wrong path following the wrong people may come to you through a conversation, something you read in a book, at a really low moment of loneliness and despair. However it comes, it is a mercy and it is the Spirit of God calling you out of your foolishness back into God's wisdom. Respond to the call. Get help from your parents. Get help from the Elders and Pastors of your church. Become diligent students and practitioners of God's Word, specifically the book of Proverbs. Your life can be turned around if you will heed wisdom's call.

But if in the moment of clarity you harden your heart, know this, a moment of clarity may never come again. You may never get another chance to turn things around. I'm not saying you will never get another chance, but the general way of life is once you start hardening your heart against truth and wisdom you just get harder.

My brothers and sisters, we love you and want you to have the best lives you can possibly have and that life can only be found in following Jesus. Please, please trust that God your heavenly Father wants only what is best for you. All His Words and commands in the Bible are for your good! As much as your parents love you, God loves you infinitely more. Be wise and obey what God is saying to you in this passage:

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