



Lively Stones | PETER 2:5

Holding forth the word of life

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Crucial Lessons For A **Wise** Father

The following is extracted from John MacArthur's "Crucial Lessons For A Wise Father". In his sermon, John MacArthur teaches fathers how to plant God's wisdom into the hearts of children so as to prepare them for lives of joy by making wise, godly choices.

John MacArthur exhorts from the Book of Proverbs, chapters 1-10, and stresses that fathers must teach their sons to ensure a righteous generation which in turn ensures a generation of godly leaders. To achieve this, fathers have to teach holy living to their sons, i.e., they must instruct their sons to pursue spiritual wisdom. This will equip their sons to lead by example and precept.

John MacArthur highlights 10 lessons a faithful father must teach his son. These form the component parts of wisdom.

1. Fear Your God

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction (Prov 1:7).

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding (Prov 9:10).

The pursuit of wisdom starts with fearing God, so fathers ought to teach their sons to fear God. On one hand, fathers should instruct their sons to reverence the greatness of God. Here, the attributes of God (His holy character) should be taught. When sons are taught who God is, they can worship Him. On the other hand, fathers should also instruct their sons to fear God's displeasure. Sons must know that God has a right to punish, chasten and judge. Thus, sons will develop a healthy sense of apprehension. When God is feared, so is sin,

2. Guard Your Mind

Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about your neck; write them upon the table of thine heart (Prov 3:3).

Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life (Prov 4:23).

In the verses above, reference is made to the 'heart' which is the seat of all thought, emotion and will. Fathers are to be responsible for the minds of their sons. As guardians of their sons' minds, fathers must ensure that what fills their minds is godly. Sons must be taught the Word of God. Fathers must also protect their sons from

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Dear Readers,

Last month, on Mothers' Day, we published an article on the godly exemplary mother in Hannah. Today, being Fathers' Day, the editorial team would like to also exhort the fathers among us. Fathers' Day is not celebrated as much but it does not downplay the importance of the paternal role in the family. In fact, it is just as important as the maternal figure in the home.

The article is a summary of Dr John MacArthur's sermon "Crucial Lessons for a Wise Father". Sister Soon Choo has painstakingly transcribed the message for us. This message does not just apply to the fathers only. Mothers should also strive to apply the points mentioned to teach their children. The pointers mentioned are also a good yardstick for us to monitor our daily walk with God.

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what they are exposed to as the assault on the mind today is tremendous.

3. Obey Your Parents

My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother (Prov 1:8).

My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; neither be weary of his correction: for whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth (Prov 3:11-12).

Fathers ought to teach their sons to obey what they say. This means discipline, as discipline is part of obedience. If fathers love their sons, they should discipline them by rebuke or reproof when they err. The purpose of discipline is to break self-will and remove foolishness so that there is conforming to wisdom and deliverance from spiritual death. Proverbs 10:13 mentions the 'rod'. In teaching to obey, the rod is used to reinforce. Physical punishment done in love, and not anger, is a strong corrective. When sons obey parental authority, they learn also to submit to the law of God and in turn, to submit to societal authority. The end result is that not only is spiritual disaster averted, but often, anti-social personality and criminal behaviour.

- **Fear Your God**
- **Guard Your Mind**
- **Obey Your Parents**
- **Select Your Companions**
- **Control Your Body**
- **Enjoy Your Wife**
- **Watch Your Words**
- **Pursue Your Work**
- **Manage Your Money**
- **Love Your Neighbour**

4. Select Your Companions

My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not. If they say, Come with us, let us lay wait for blood, let us lurk privily for the innocent without cause: Let us swallow them up alive as the grave; and whole, as those that go down into the pit: We shall find all precious substance, we shall fill our houses with spoil: Cast in thy lot among us; let us all have one purse: My son, walk not thou in the way with them; refrain thy foot from their path (Prov 1:10-15).

Fathers should get on the offensive and instruct their sons how to choose their friends. In 1 Cor 15:33, the apostle Paul warns that evil communications corrupt good manners. It is easy for sons to be drawn into bad company, to be thrilled by senseless violence and to seek after fleeting moments of pleasure. Therefore, fathers ought to select and help their sons to select their friends, and not have their sons' friends select them. Indeed, the enticements around them are strong and the pressure to conform is strong. Sons need to be taught to select, and not be selected and intimidated into conforming to the standards of the people around them. It is also wise for fathers to instruct their sons to have few friends who are loyal, honest and uplifting than many who are of the wrong kind (Prov 18:24)

5. Control Your Body

To deliver them from strange women, even from the stranger which flattereth with her words.....For her house inclineth unto death, and her paths unto the dead (Prov 2:16-18).

Young men develop passions that lead to tragedy unless they are able to control their bodily desires. Therefore, fathers ought to teach their sons sexual control and purity. Throughout Proverbs chapters 5-7, and 9, the tactics of seduction and the dire consequences of sexual impurity are highlighted. Fathers should instruct their sons to beware such tactics of seduction and not get caught in compromising situations, i.e., they should be taught to guard their feet, their eyes and ears, and to flee from temptation. They should be warned that the punishment

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could be as severe as disease and destruction of life and family.

6. Enjoy Your Wife

Drink waters out of thine own cistern, and running waters out of thine own well.... Let thy fountain be blessed: and rejoice with the wife of thy youth (Prov 5:15-18).

This is taught as a balance to point 5. While sex is forbidden prior to marriage, it is exalted afterwards in marriage, so fathers ought to instruct their sons to appreciate and enjoy their wives. Fathers should, by word and deed, teach their sons to find satisfaction with their own wives. Their wives are a gift from God, more precious than jewels and they are their best friends and companions.

7. Watch Your Words

Put away from thee a forward mouth, and perverse lips put far from thee (Prov 4:24).

Fathers should teach their sons to be careful what they speak so that what comes out of their mouths is of the righteous. They are to be the mouthpieces for the Lord. In Prov 10:11, it is said that “the mouth of the righteous man is a well of life: but violence covereth the mouth of the wicked”. Sons ought to be taught to always speak the truth and not lie or slander, and to shun the use of curse words. They should also be instructed that “he that refraineth his lips is wise” (Prov 10:19) and not always talk.

8. Pursue Your Work

Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways and be wise: which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest (Prov 6:6-8).

By word and example, fathers should teach their sons to pursue their work. Sons ought to be taught to work independently and to plan ahead, just like the ant, so that they do not suffer hunger, failure or poverty (Prov 6:11; 10:4) but be rewarded for their efforts. They will earn a good living and be respected (Prov 22:29).

9. Manage Your Money

Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine (Prov 3:9-10).

Fathers should teach their sons to honour God with all their money so that in turn, God will honour them. They ought to be instructed to give generously to the Lord and not to be part-time givers. As stewards, they should use their money wisely and taught not to be drawn into quick-get-rich schemes (Prov 28:20). By being involved in the latter, they yield their stewardship to someone for whom they cannot be accountable. If sons become trapped in such schemes, they should try all means to get out of such schemes immediately.

10. Love Your Neighbour

Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do itDevise not evil against thy neighbour, seeing he dwelleth securely by thee (Prov 3:27-29).

Fathers ought also to teach their sons to give generously to the poor and needy around them, especially when they have the resources. Such is sacrificial love and honours God. In loving their neighbour, they should also not harm their neighbour or be vengeful (Prov 3:30-31).



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John MacArthur ends his sermon on a solemn note emphasizing that the duty of fathers is to teach their sons. He states emphatically that

**If fathers fail to teach their sons how to fear God,
the devil will teach them to hate God.**

**If fathers fail to teach their sons to guard their minds,
the devil will teach them to have an open mind.**

**If fathers fail to teach their sons to obey their parents,
the devil will teach them to rebel and break their parents' hearts.**

**If fathers fail to teach their sons how to select their companions,
the devil will choose their companions for them.**

**If fathers fail to teach their sons to control their bodies,
the devil will teach them to give it over completely to lust.**

**If fathers fail to teach their sons to enjoy their marriage partner,
the devil will teach them to destroy their marriage.**

**If fathers fail to teach their sons to watch their words,
the devil will teach them to fill their mouths with filth.**

**If fathers fail to teach their sons to pursue their work,
the devil will make their laziness a tool of hell.**

**If fathers fail to teach their sons to manage their money,
the devil will teach them to waste it on riotous living.**

**If fathers fail to teach their sons to love their neighbours,
the devil will teach them to love only themselves.**

Next Issue.....

*Read all about the Adults Department of our Sunday School as they have their
promotional Sunday on 25th June
plus...a Sensitive issue..*

Announcement

The Sunday School Ex-co will be having their next meeting on 9th July