

***Families in the Family of God***  
***Wise Words For Families***

Lesson #6 for February 11, 2006

Scriptures: Prov. 5:3-14; 13:22; 14:26; 17:22; 23:13; 31:10-31; Matt. 19:5; 1 Cor. 7:3, 4.

1. This lesson is based primarily on the book of Proverbs. Who wrote Proverbs? Read 1 Kings 4:29-34. Many of the proverbs were composed by King Solomon. If you were advising your children about marriage is King Solomon the first one that you would think to go to for good advice?
2. According to this passage King Solomon composed 3000 proverbs and 1005 songs. How many of them do we have preserved for us? What happened to the rest? Were some of his proverbs inspired and some not? How could you tell the difference? Have some perhaps just been lost? We know of only three of Solomon's songs. (Psalms 72, 127; Song of Solomon) What happened to the rest?
3. Proverbs are generally short pithy statements full of wisdom. They are supposed to include clear appropriate bits of wisdom learned from the personal experiences of individuals or their friends. They are generally put together by people who carefully observe what is happening to themselves and their friends in life and then derive principles or standards by which we should guide our lives.
4. Proverbs is a book that is a part of the Bible known as wisdom literature. There are no proverbs about worship in the sanctuary. But there are numerous proverbs about education, family life, home life, promiscuity and adultery, relations to parents, the best ways to conduct business, and proper behavior in society. **Many proverbs are based on the idea that if you're good you will be blessed and if you're bad you will be cursed. This is called retributive justice. Do we accept this as a norm for our lives?** (Proverbs 3:31-35; 12:7,14; 17:5; 24:12; 28:20).
5. What do you think of Proverbs 11:31: "those who are good are rewarded here on earth, so you can be sure that wicked and sinful people will be punished." Compare 1 Peter 4:18: "As the scripture says: "It is difficult for good people to be saved; what, then, will become of godless sinners?" (*GNB*) Do we believe these words? Did the Pharisees base some of their teachings on these ideas? Considering the book of Job and Ecclesiastes and similar stories is this a principle that is always true?
6. The book of Proverbs is divided into seven sections or collections and an appendix.
  - a. Collection one: Proverbs 1-9 are called "the proverbs of Solomon."
  - b. Collection two: Proverbs 10-22 also are "the sayings of Solomon."
  - c. Collection three: Proverbs 22 to 24:22 are called "sayings of the wise ones" and may have been collected from other wise men of ancient times.
  - d. Collection Four: Proverbs 24:23-34 and includes "sayings of the wise ones" again.
  - e. Collection five: Many years after Solomon's death, apparently there were still proverbs left over from his writings that were collected and put together by the scribes in the court of King Hezekiah and five more chapters were added: Proverbs 25 to 29.
  - f. Collection six: called "the sayings of Agur" in Proverbs 30, and finally,

- g. Collection seven: “the sayings of King Lemuel’s mother”: Proverbs 31:1-9.
  - h. Appendix: (which may have been also the words of King Lemuel’s mother) which describes the perfect wife: from Proverbs 31:10-31.
7. Many of the proverbs are posed as advice from parents to children. (See for example: Proverbs 1:8).
  8. Read Proverbs 5:3-14; 6:20-35; and 7:1-27. These are Solomon’s advice regarding promiscuous and adulterous relationships. Were these words that Solomon taught his sons? Were any of his sons involved?
  9. “Casual sexual liaisons lack commitment and, therefore, fall far short of true intimacy.” (Sunday, February 5, 2006) What do you think is implied by this statement?
  10. David basically destroyed much of his influence in the latter half of his reign by sexual indiscretions. Solomon—who himself was born because of the relationship between David and Bathsheba—had 700 wives and 300 concubines. How well do you think his sons listened to his advice about marriage? Is this a case of “do as I say, and not as I do?”
  11. What is implied by Proverbs 5:18: “So be happy with your wife and find your joy with the woman you married—pretty and graceful as a deer. Let her charms keep you happy; let her surround you with her love?”
  12. If you were to look in the Bible for the ideal place for marital advice where would you go? To Solomon with his 1000 wives? To Jesus who never married? To Paul who presumably was married but then was single during his entire ministry? Should we follow the example of Hosea? (Hosea 1-3). Why don’t we have good marital advice from biblical writers who were happily married?
  13. **Ellen White came from a Victorian New England background. Did this background affect her attitudes toward marriage?**
  14. **Would it be appropriate to look back to the Garden of Eden for the ideal? How much do we know about their experience?**
  15. How does reverence for God and including God as an essential part of your marriage affect your emotional and sexual relationship? The teacher’s summary suggests “reverence for God will strengthen the marriage and the family. Through Divine intervention a couple can guard their marital vows and have loving relationships with each other and their children.” How does this actually work?
  16. How would you understand the following passage: “Few have correct views of the marriage relation. Many seem to think that it is the attainment of perfect bliss; but if they could know one quarter of the heart-aches of men and women that are bound by the marriage vow in chains that they cannot and dare not break, they would not be surprised that I trace these lines. **Marriage, in a majority of cases, is a most galling yoke.** There are thousands that are mated but not matched. The books of heaven are burdened with the woes, the wickedness, and the abuse, that lie hidden under the marriage mantle. This is why I would warn the young who are of a marriageable age, to make haste slowly in the choice of a

companion. The path of married life may appear beautiful and full of happiness; but why may not you be disappointed as thousands of others have been?" {RH, February 2, 1886 par. 1; AH 44}.

17. What should we do if we discover after getting married that we are not well matched? Proverbs has quite a lot to say about the challenges of living with an unhappy spouse! (Proverbs 21:9,19; 27:15,16.) What is the wise man advising us by these verses?
18. "If your dispositions are not congenial, would it not be for the glory of God for you to change these dispositions? A husband and wife should cultivate respect and affection for each other. They should guard the spirit, the words and the action so that nothing will be said or done to irritate or annoy. Each is to have a care for the other, doing all in their power to strengthen their mutual affection." *Letter 168*, 1901, pp. 1,2; *1MR* 161.6; *AH* 345.3} This kind of home life, which is very rare, illustrates the life-beautifying effects of the gospel.
19. The latter part of our lesson deals with the relationship between parents and their children. We should begin by noting a very important principle in this respect: **the most important thing a father can do for his children is to love their mother. Would this be true of the mother also?**
20. The work responsibilities of fathers, particularly, often compete with their commitment to their families. How often do we allow our work to take priority over our families? What kind of legacy is this passing to our children? Numerous Hollywood films have been made on the subject of children who despise their parents or are undisciplined because the parents are too busy to give them adequate attention. How can we be sure we're not allowing this to happen in our Christian homes? Is a father's first responsibility to his family to provide them with material things?
21. **Children learn about God from their parents. Is there a way to get our children to copy the good and set aside the bad that they see in our lives?**
22. The father should not excuse himself from his part in the work of educating his children for life and immortality. He must share in the responsibility. There is obligation for both father and mother. **There must be love and respect manifested by the parents for one another, if they would see these qualities developed in their children.** {*ST*, July 22, 1889 par. 8; *AH* 216.2}  
Those who are contemplating marriage should consider what will be the character and influence of the home they are founding. As they become parents, a sacred trust is committed to them. Upon them depends in a great measure the well-being of their children in this world, and their happiness in the world to come. **To a great extent they determine both the physical and the moral stamp that the little ones receive. And upon the character of the home depends the condition of society; the weight of each family's influence will tell in the upward or the downward scale.** {*MH* 357.1; *AH* 44.2}
23. **The Bible also speaks about discipline. Parents must learn how to discipline their children in a way that is educational. Discipline should never be done in anger. This just gives the child permission to be angry back! (Proverbs 10:17; 23:13,14; 29:1; 29:15.)** If a child feels truly loved he will be able to learn from discipline. Discipline is to be corrective and redemptive. (Proverbs 13:24).

24. **What is the role of humor in a Christian family?** From a human standpoint we often suggest that good times are full of laughter and mirth. Is this true also of the Christian family? How do you understand Proverbs 17:22? What should we learn from proverbs such as Proverbs 25:20 “Singing to a person who is depressed is like taking off a person’s clothes on a cold day or like rubbing salt in a wound.” (GNB)
25. Proverbs 6:9-11: <sup>9</sup>How long is the lazy man going to lie in bed? When is he ever going to get up? <sup>10</sup>“I’ll just take a short nap,” he says; “I’ll fold my hands and rest a while.” <sup>11</sup> But while he sleeps, poverty will attack him like an armed robber.”  
 27:14: You might as well curse your friends as wake them up early in the morning with a loud greeting.” (GNB) **What should we do with proverbs that seem to be contradictory?**
26. A basic fundamental principle of all of Solomon’s proverbs seems to be: “Trust in the Lord with all your heart. Never rely on what you think you know. Remember the Lord in everything you do, and he will show you the right way.” Proverbs 3:5,6 (GNB) **How can we trust the relationships in our families to God?**
27. What should we learn from Proverbs 31? Is this proverb intended to make every wife feel inadequate? Who wrote this passage? It’s interesting to note that this passage is an acrostic. Each verse begins with the next letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Why do you suppose it was written like this? What was this woman’s husband doing? Would the capabilities and strengths of this woman be appropriate for a man as well?
28. So much of our lives are colored by our family relationships. Our characters are molded and disciplined by our parents and then we in turn seek to help our own children. With the potential of enormous benefit to us through this process, if it’s done correctly in the love of God, is it any wonder that Satan has done his very best to attack the institution of marriage and family? Why do you think truly loving compassionate marriages are so rare in our society? What could we do to improve the odds?

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