

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION
Proverbs: Topical Applications of Proverbs
III. The Proverbs Themselves, Proverbs 10:1-31:31
A. Proverbs On The Family
3. God's Wisdom For Rearing Children

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

Many parents today need wisdom on rearing their children:

(1) Jake Coyle's review of the new movie "Michael" about the career of the King of Pop Michael Jackson details the "father-son drama" where Michael's father "Joe Jackson . . . forcefully drills his children into becoming the Jackson 5 and whips young Michael . . . with his belt" to make him produce stellar performances. (Jake Coyle, "The King of Pop is resurrected, sans complications, in 'Michael,'" Republican-American, April 23, 2026, p. B8)

(2) Such harsh treatment of children by parents is a big concern today: our state senate is considering a bill from the state house that would require homeschooling parents to give some accountability to the Department of Children and Families due to the terrible mistreatment of two children who were removed from public schools under false claims that they would be homeschooled. (Dan Haar, "Homeschooling bill returns to House floor, stripped but still controversial," op. cit., April 24, 2026, p. A1) The fault really does not lie with homeschooling parents in general, but with the DCF for failing to follow up on problems to which it had been alerted in the cases of both children.

(3) However, the question still rises as to how parents should be rearing their children. The psychology.town website, November 11, 2025, posted the article, "The Impacts of Child Rearing Practices on Behavior Problems" noting problematical ways some parents approach child rearing: (a) Some parents try the "Authoritarian" model where the parent holds himself up as a domineering ruler over the child to make him fully comply with the parent's every wish. Though a child will initially be compliant such a model, in the long-term, this method of child rearing can lead to low self-esteem and higher reactionary aggressiveness or shyness in a child. (Ibid.) (b) Some parents try the "Permissive" style where the parent allows for full freedom of expression in the child. However, this model provides little structure and leads to a lack of self-control and a belief by the child that he is entitled by others around him to be well treated under all circumstances by everybody else throughout his life. (Ibid.) (c) Still other parents employ the "Uninvolved" model where the child is emotionally neglected as there is minimal engagement between the parent and child. However, this method produces serious developmental problems in the child. (Ibid.)

Need: So we ask, "Does God's 'wisdom' equip parents to rear their children well, and if so, how?"

I. Though God created the first man and woman without sin, when the first man Adam fell into sin in Genesis 3:1-6, that fall led to serious behavioral problems in Adam's offspring seen when Adam's eldest son Cain murdered his younger brother Abel in Genesis 4:1-8.

II. Thus, God's "wisdom," His *hokmah*, or fixed eternal moral order for success and blessing versus sinful failure applies to rearing children in proverbs that are scattered throughout the Book of Proverbs.

III. We have collected those proverbs and we view them and their applications for our insight (as follows):

A. The book of Proverbs provides guidance on parenting young children in the home (as follows):

1. A young child needs a good start in life where his parents discern his God-given bents in life so that they guide the child in the proper way for developing and using those God-given bents:

a. Proverbs 22:6a KJV reads, "Train up a child in the way he should go . . . ," but the literal translation for "Train up" is, "'Rub the palate' (of a new-born with a date poultice like a midwife to stress the natural tendency of the infant to suck so he can nurse vigorously for his health)." ["Train up" renders the Hebrew verb *hanok*, the imperative form of *hanak* (B. D. B., A Heb. and Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 335).]

b. The verse then teaches that a parent should stress the right way for a child to express his God-given bents in life at the earliest stages of life. If this occurs, even in old age, the child will still retain the behavior.

2. However, there is an evil bent in the child born to fallen Adam's race, the bent of his sin nature, and a parent must utilize discipline to punish the child in restricting his expression of that sin nature:

a. Proverbs 13:24 and 29:17 call the parent to discipline his child early if the parent loves the child, and the child will thus bring the parent peace and delight to his soul!

b. Proverbs 22:15 and 29:15 explain the need to discipline a child, for folly is bound up in the heart of a child and the rod of discipline will drive it far from him. Wisdom is imparted through discipline as well, but a child left to himself only disgraces his mother.

- c. Proverbs 19:18 and 23:13-14 add that disciplining a young child is necessary to prolong his life, for failing to curb the expression of his sin nature will lead to the child's early death!
- 3. The result of giving a child a good start in encouraging his God-given bents while also discouraging the expression of his sin nature is highly rewarding: Proverbs 20:11 states that even a youth makes himself known as being of pure and upright conduct!
- B. The book of Proverbs then provides guidance on parenting maturing children in the home (as follows):
 - 1. A series of proverbs have the parent warning his maturing son against not mistreating his parents:
 - a. Proverbs 17:21, 25 and 19:13 warn that failing to align with God's "wisdom," leaving oneself foolish, causes a son to bring grief and ruin to his parents.
 - b. Proverbs 23:22; 20:20 and 30:17 warn against despising one's parents as a sin that God will severely punish by an early and a tragic death.
 - c. Proverbs 19:26 and 28:24 warn a son not financially to harm his parents lest he suffer damaging shame.
 - d. Proverbs 29:3 and 23:26-28 warn against mixing with immoral people as it leads to poverty and ruin.
 - 2. Two proverbs direct maturing children to assume personal responsibility for themselves to succeed in life:
 - a. Proverbs 10:5 calls for a son to assume responsibility to take advantage of opportunities to make a living.
 - b. Proverbs 28:7 calls for a son to assume responsibility to control himself, adopting edifying behaviors.
 - 3. A series of proverbs (Proverbs 10:1; 15:20; 23:24-25; 27:11; 23:15-16 and 13:1) encourage maturing children to heed God's "wisdom" since doing so will bring their parents joy, delight and encouragement.

Lesson: *God's "wisdom" on childrearing directs that parents very early promote a child's God-given bents while curbing the expressions of his sin nature through discipline, and upon gaining the young child's respect, to voice adequate warnings, directives of personal responsibility and encouragement while the child is maturing.*

Application: *(1) May we trust in Christ Who died as our Atoning Sacrifice for sin that we might receive God's gift of eternal life, John 3:16; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11. (2) May we parents heed God's "wisdom" on childrearing.*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message and/or provide additional guidance . . .)

A great illustration of effective childrearing is presented by Scripture itself in Hannah's rearing of Samuel.

The woman Hannah had been childless for some years after she was married to Elkanah, what was viewed as a lack of blessing (1 Samuel 1:1-2). Oppressed over her barrenness, Hannah prayed to the Lord, asking Him for a son, promising that if God gave her a son, she would dedicate him to the Lord all the days of his life as a Nazirite who was dedicated to the Lord (1 Samuel 1:9-11 with Numbers 6:1-8; Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, fn. to 1 Samuel 1:11).

God answered her prayer and she gave birth to a son named "Samuel," meaning "name of God" that served "as a continual reminder of God's mercy toward those who call upon His name," *Ibid.*, fn. to 1 Samuel 1:20. When Hannah had weaned Samuel, she kept her vow and delivered him over to the High Priest Eli at the tabernacle, a great sacrifice for a woman with her only young little son, but one that she intended to keep, 1 Samuel 1:24-28.

Hannah had influenced Samuel during his earliest days, and even though she had given her son over to the High Priest to serve the Lord for the rest of his life, Hannah still worked to influence Samuel for the Lord. Every year when her family traveled to the tabernacle in Shiloh (1 Samuel 1:3; 2:18-19), she would bring her growing boy a little "coat" that fit him (1 Samuel 2:19), the word for "coat" being the Hebrew noun *me'il* (Kittel, Biblia Hebraica, p. 408; B. D. B., *op. cit.*, p. 591). This piece of clothing was like a shawl with a hole in its center that was pulled over the head, and the high priest would wear such a piece of clothing to cover his ephod. (H. A. W., Theol. Wrdbk. of the O. T., 1980, vol. I, p. 520) Hannah loved her son Samuel, and she desired to keep him focused on his need to remain committed to the Lord, so every year she made and brought him a new *me'il* throughout Samuel's growing years.

Years after Samuel had died of old age, Israel's king Saul asked the witch of Endor to call Samuel up from the dead, and God let Samuel return from the dead, shocking the witch (1 Samuel 28:3-13). When she cried out in fear, Saul asked her what she saw, and she said she saw "an old man . . . covered with a mantle." (1 Samuel 28:14a KJV) The Hebrew word for "mantle" is *me'il*, what Hannah used to make for Samuel in childhood (*Ibid.*), and the Hebrew word for "covered" is *'atah*, to "wrap oneself." (*Ibid.*, p. 741-742). This description caused Saul to recognize Samuel so that he bowed to the ground in respect to the elderly, deceased prophet. Saul identified Samuel by the clothing he had worn throughout his life even unto old age! Hannah's influence on her son continued throughout his life like Proverbs 22:6 states so that even in death, Samuel was identified by the *me'il* he wore that his mother used to make!

May we trust in Christ Who died as our Atoning Sacrifice for sin that we might receive God's gift of eternal life. May we parents heed God's "wisdom" like Hannah did in rearing our children.