

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION
Proverbs: Topical Applications of Proverbs
III. The Proverbs Themselves, Proverbs 10:1-31:31
G. God's Advice On Teachability

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

Parents as well as schoolteachers want their children to be teachable, but many adults are not very teachable:

(1) A lack of teachability afflicts the state's school system: "Decades ago . . . the Associated Press gathered . . . data about the state's schools and found that the academic performance of students correlated only with the property wealth of their parents – not with school spending, teacher salaries, or teacher experience . . . (E)ducational success was . . . mainly what it has always been, a matter of *parenting* . . . Since most children in the impoverished cities and inner suburbs are growing up with only one parent and thus with only half the parenting that, within living memory, was the natural order of things, the collapse of the family would seem to deserve urgent review." (Chris Powell, "State will never get to education if it keeps detouring to poverty," Republican-American, June 9, 2026, p. A6)

(2) The lack of teachability afflicts our national politics: "(A) revealing political" development in "recent years has been the Democratic Party's growing concern about its declining support among male voters . . . (The party is) . . . struggling to connect with a demographic they increasingly seem not to understand . . . (L)eft-wing politics often emphasizes individual rights and personal autonomy, while traditional concepts of masculinity emphasize obligations and responsibilities. If politics increasingly focuses on liberation from duties, it becomes more difficult to speak meaningfully to people who view duty itself as a virtue." (Ben Shapiro, "Democrats' struggle with men reflects deeper cultural disconnect," Republican-American, June 13, 2026, p. A6)

(3) Failure to be teachable afflicts the social realm: "Nothing shatters the myth that chronic homelessness is an economic issue more than the dysfunctional and often violent behavior of the people who are allowed to occupy public spaces in makeshift tent cities. This myth is perpetuated by self-interested non-profit workers and activists whose careers depend on homelessness going unsolved . . . By refusing to institutionalize mentally ill drug addicts, allowing public encampments, and failing to keep the most dangerous individuals among us behind bars, the government bears not just responsibility, but culpability." ("Danger on the streets," op. cit., June 15, 2026, p. A6)

(4) A lack of teachability afflicts the moral realm: "Euthanasia – often euphemized as 'assisted suicide' . . . is becoming a Western norm . . . Connecticut legislators have introduced bills to legalize the practice seven times . . . (I)t's a shame so many politicians and pro-euthanasia advocates are blind – or, perhaps more accurately, numb – to" the high "stakes" involved, for "despite what activists claim, the risks are massive. 'Everywhere assisted suicide has gained legal status,' it has produced 'deadly, improper diagnoses,' we noted in February. In some countries, euthanasia accounts for about one in 20 deaths." ("Creeping culture of death," op. cit., June 12, 2026, p. A6)

Need: *So we ask, "What does God advise on the issue of being teachable, and why?"*

I. God's "wisdom," His *hokmah*, or fixed eternal moral order for success and blessing, applies to many issues of human concern including the need to know what God advises on teachability.

II. We thus view proverbs translated from the Hebrew Biblical text (Kittel, Biblia Hebraica) in the Book of Proverbs on God's advice on being teachable (as follows):

- A. According to the Book of Proverbs, failure to be teachable leaves one in a dangerous position in life:
1. Failing to be teachable leaves one straying from the words of protective knowledge, for Proverbs 19:27 states, "Cease, my son, from hearing instruction, and you will stray from the words of knowledge."
 2. Failure to be teachable can leave one vulnerable to being deceived: "The first to present his case seems righteous until another comes forward and questions him," Proverbs 18:17.
 3. Failing to be teachable produces damaging ignorance:
 - a. "He who answers before listening – that itself is his folly and his shame," Proverbs 18:13.
 - b. "Yea, it is not wholesome to have passion without knowledge . . .," Proverbs 19:2a.
 - c. "...nor to be hasty with one's feet and miss the way," Prov. 19:2b. (To 'miss the way' is to make mistakes, so haste in being passionate without knowledge leads to costly mistakes; Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 945)
 - d. "He who relies on his own heart, he is a fool, but he who walks in wisdom, he is kept safe," Prov. 28:26.
 - e. "There is a way that seems right to a man, but afterwards (it is) the way of death," Proverbs 16:25.
 4. Failing to be teachable eventually leads to devastating punishment:
 - a. "A whip for the horse, a halter for the donkey, and a rod for the backs of fools," Proverbs 26:3.

- b. “Moral correction is for those who forsake the path (of righteousness); he who hates correction will die,” Proverbs 15:10; *Ibid.*, p. 937. (i) This is true of subordinates (Proverbs 29:21 – “If a man pampers his servant from his youth, he will bring grief in the end.”) (ii) and overseers (Proverbs 29:1 – “A nobleman who remains stiff-necked after many rebukes will suddenly be destroyed – and that without remedy.”)
- B. Consequently, the Book of Proverbs also reveals how one can become safely and productively teachable:
1. **[Note: 2 Timothy 3:13-17 predicted that people would go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived, that the solution to this problem was to test all concepts by Scripture. Thus, the advice and instruction mentioned in this section refer to Biblically sanctioned advice and instruction!]**
 2. Therefore, the proverbs that teach us how to be safely and productively teachable are as follows:
 - a. We must humbly accept Biblically sanctioned good advice: Proverbs 13:10 asserts, “Pride only breeds quarrels, but wisdom is found in those who take advice.”
 - b. We must accept good instruction: (i) “He who scorns instruction will pay for it, but he who respects a command – he is rewarded,” Pr. 13:13. (ii) “When a mocker is punished, the naïve gain wisdom, and when a wise man is instructed, he acquires knowledge,” Pr. 21:11. (iii) He who hears orders guards his life principle (*nepesh*, physical, spiritual, emotional and mental life; Kittel, *op. cit.*, p. 1177; Robert B. Girdlestone, *Syns. of the O. T.*, 1973, p. 56-59), but he who shows contempt toward his way will die,” Pr. 19:16. (iv) “The wise of heart accept commands, but one talking folly will be thrust down,” Pr. 10:8.
 - c. We must heed good discipline: (i) “A rebuke impresses a man of discernment more than a hundred lashes a fool,” Pr. 17:10. (ii) “He who loves corrective discipline loves knowledge, but he who hates reproof is unreasoning,” Pr. 12:1. (iii) “A fool spurns his father’s discipline, but whoever heeds correction shows prudence,” Pr. 15:5. (iv) “He who ignores discipline hates his own life principle (*nepesh* again), but he who heeds correction gains understanding,” Pr. 15:32. (v) “Flog a mocker, and the naïve will become shrewd; rebuke a discerning man, and he will gain knowledge,” Pr. 19:25.
- C. The Book of Proverbs then provides motivating blessings from being teachable (as follows):
1. Being teachable produces edifying wisdom:
 - a. “Hearken to counsel and receive instruction that in your latter end you will become wise,” Proverbs 19:20.
 - b. “He who listens to a life-giving rebuke will be at home among the wise,” Proverbs 15:31.
 2. Being teachable leads to material prosperity:
 - a. “He who acquires common sense loves his own life principle (*nepesh* again); he who preserves discernment will attain prosperity,” Proverbs 19:8.
 - b. “He who ignores discipline comes to poverty and shame, but he who heeds correction is honored,” 13:18.
 3. Being teachable causes one to influence others positively: “The path to life is heeding corrective discipline, but whoever forsakes reproof leads others astray,” Proverbs 10:17.
 4. Being teachable leads to a wholesome life and God’s blessing: “Whoever gives heed unto instruction finds good and blessed is he who relies on Yahweh [the Lord],” Proverbs 16:20.

Lesson: *Failing to be teachable leaves one vulnerable to harmful dangers, but accepting good advice, instruction and discipline produces wisdom, prosperity, good influence with others and a wholesome life with God’s blessing.*

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 rely on the Holy Spirit for the behavior control (Galatians 5:16, 22-23) to be teachable to avoid harmfully dangerous troubles and have a wholesome, blessed life.*

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

Heeding Scripture would effectively address each issue of concern in our sermon introduction (as follows):

- (1) Since children with both parents fare far better academically than those with one parent, Scripture’s call for a monogamous, heterosexual, permanent marriage (Gen. 2:24; Matt. 19:1-6) would solve many educational problems.
- (2) Scripture directs men to be responsible and to fulfill their duties to others (1 Timothy 5:8 et al.), what male voters typically believe, so heeding this directive would cause any political party to relate well with male voters.
- (3) Since homelessness is to be countered by one’s responsibly earning his own livelihood (cf. 1 Timothy 5:8 and 6:8 [in the Greek text] with 2 Thessalonians 3:10), obeying this order would end many homelessness problems.
- (4) Genesis 9:6 prohibits euthanasia, so if this directive were obeyed, the abuses of euthanasia would cease!

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 rely on the Holy Spirit for the behavior control to be teachable for God’s blessing.