

Lesson 3: The Steps to Independence

Review

Only two verses in the New Testament on parenting.

The Old Testament is presupposed—according to Proverbs, training begins with the fear of the Lord.

How is that fear produced?

Proverbs 2 is programmatic.

Consider the structure of the argument:

If... (v. 1)

For if... (v. 3)

If... (v. 4)

Then you will discern... (v. 5)

For... (v. 6)

Then you will discern... (v. 9)

For... (v. 10)

To deliver you from... (v. 12)

To deliver you from... (v. 16)

So you will walk... (v. 20)

For... (v. 21)

Personal Pursuit (vv. 1-4)

Three Facial Features: Ear, Mouth, Eye—these imply *active* initiative and effort (memory, questions, research)

John Milton Gregory, *The Seven Laws of Teaching* – a teacher must inspire active learning

Illus. Baseball Catcher

Parenting can only go so far – after motivation and instruction, it is the children’s responsibility to learn.

Personal Worship (vv. 5-8)

In general, active learning is blessed with discerning the fear of the Lord—God’s authority comes home to the heart.

Note: Is “the fear of the LORD” both a subjective attitude and objective content (cf. Ps. 34:9-14)?

Explanation: The sole source of wisdom is the word of God, learned in active learning (v. 6).

This verse implies that parental instruction (vv. 1-4) came from God’s words.

Again, parenting should move from “do this, because I say so” to “do this, because *God* says so.”

Personal Wisdom (vv. 9-11)

Hebrew Taxonomy of Learning:

Knowledge – bare facts

Understanding – discernment *between* good and evil, right and wrong, wise and foolish

Wisdom – the character to successfully apply what has been learned and discerned to real life

Decisions in life are often not *self-evident*, but require discernment between the options.

Illus. *A Wasp Is Not a Bee*

Key Factor: Wisdom involves a changed character, when “knowledge will be *pleasant* to your soul” (v. 10).

Do you welcome “the *love* of the truth so as to be saved” (2 Thess. 2:10)?

Truly, God’s word is “sweeter also than honey” (Ps. 19:10; cf. 119:103), but do you have a taste for it yet?

If not, you lack wisdom—a character (James 3:17)—and should ask God to give you wisdom (James 1:5).

If you ask in faith, believing that God gives graciously and mercifully, then you will receive wisdom too.

Personal Protection (vv. 12-22)

Internalized wisdom from God’s word will protect you from the two common problems of youth:

(1) Peer pressure: “to deliver you from evil men” (the bad crowds).

(2) Sexual sin: “to deliver you from the evil woman” (bad relationships).

Positively, you will persevere in holiness, which leads to eternal life (v. 21 – dwelling in the land, cf. Rom. 6:22).

If you have children someday, may the Lord grant you His word to speak and grant them to be active learners!