

- **\*READ Psalm 127/PRAYER\*** Our focus of wisdom for this year has taken our minds to many different aspects of this life and how they relate to the wisdom that is from above, the wisdom of God. We have considered that wisdom is not just knowing, but it is doing. It is knowing the reality of the world we live in. It is understanding what this life is about, but it is also knowing how we ought to conduct ourselves in such realities. The godly wise man will understand the facts of life and will approach and deal with them in a godly manner. He will lean God's wisdom and instruction. However, the fool will do no such thing.
  - One such fact of life is that children are a gift from the Lord. Here in **Psalm 127**, the wise King Solomon announces that the one who has been rewarded by the fruit of the womb is a blessed person, and he is to be respected and honored as a great warrior. However, might I suggest to you that being able to raise children, either through natural means or adoption or foster care, is not simply a blessing, but it is a tremendous and awesome responsibility. The raising of children is not something that should or can be taken lightly. Being a parent is not a role that we ought to give no thought to.
  - As with all things, but especially in light of the immense responsibility of raising children, we ought to approach our job of parenting with godly wisdom. I believe that what separates godly parents from other parents in the world is that God's wisdom helps us to see the truth about different aspects of parenting that other people just don't grasp because they rely on their own wisdom or other men's wisdom to teach them how to parent. The reality is that there is no book that can help guide us in this job of parenting better than God's Word. He is our Heavenly Father. He cares for us deeply, and He wants to see us succeed...especially in our roles as parents.
  - This morning I want to consider the issue of parenting with godly wisdom. There are some things that God's wisdom teaches us that we must keep at the forefront of our minds as we seek to raise and bring up children in this world, and I hope this lesson will serve as a good teaching tool or even as a simply reminder to many of us concerning the role that so many have taken on as parents raising children in this life.
- I. **Wise Parents understand the true goal of parenting is to raise godly children.**
- A. Would you look back with me at **Psalm 127** again and be impressed again with the fact that children are a gift from the Lord. We know that every good gift is from God and we ought to glorify God with every blessing He gives us. What a blessing our children are, so shouldn't we then turn around and do everything we can to teach them and lead them towards the God who gave them to us?
  - B. Our families are like houses. The foundation but be build upon God if we want to have a truly strong and enduring house that can withstand the storms of this life. Earlier in **Psalm 127**, Solomon says that the houses we are building, could we say that our families must be built with God as our contractor. Solomon says that a house built without God will be built in vain. So it is true about our families. If we build our families to do anything besides seek God then we have failed according to the Scriptures.
  - C. Does the name Lamech ring a bell to you? Hopefully it does from our Daily Bible Reading last year. In actuality, there are two Lamechs, and I want us to consider their offspring. Which one do you think most people would be most proud of today? In **Genesis 4:18-22**, we read that Lamech had three sons: Jabal, Jubal, and Tubal-cain. Jabal was known as the father of all who dwelt in tents and had livestock. Jubal was known as the father of all those who played the lyre and pipe. Tubal-cain was known as the man who forged all implements of bronze and iron. By just about anyone's standards, Lamech was a success because he produced children that seemed to be really beneficial for all of humanity.
  - D. But might I then submit to you the other man named Lamech and we are only old about one of his sons specifically, and his name was Noah. Now, you definitely might be familiar with that name, but here's the thing...we don't ever read about Noah contributing any type of impressive innovation for humanity...but we do read about him being a righteous and blameless man. (**Genesis 6:9**) We don't read that about Jabal, Jubal, and Tubal-cain. Which Lamech would we say succeeded better at being a father? I would suggest to you that the father of Noah accomplished more through his son than the other.
  - E. Now let's bring this down to us. What are we pushing our children towards in this life? What are their hearts focused on? Sure there are lots of things that we want our kids to enjoy or be good at. We want them to excel at baseball, softball, soccer, basketball, theater, academics and the like...but at what point do our children excel at this to the detriment of their spirituality? I so hope and pray that we are "raising our children to be God's children" first and foremost and not just to be great at these other things. (**Ephesians 6:4**) Wise parents keep first things first and push their kids towards excellence in their faith.

## II. Wise Parents recognize that children are not programmable robots.

- A. Let's be mindful again of the fact that wisdom allows us as parents to be in touch with reality and act accordingly. One of the important things that wisdom helps us to see in child raising is that our children are not programmable robots. They have minds of their own and will make their own decisions.
- B. I fear that when we see a Christian's child rebel that we automatically lay the blame at the parent's feet because don't you know that **Proverbs 22:6** says, *"Train up a child in the way he should go, even when he is old he will not depart from it."* Obviously the parents failed if a person doesn't grow up to be a Christian. However, we must recognize that this type of verse isn't an absolute, but it is a truism.
- C. Generally it is true that a child raised in a certain way will stay on that way throughout life, but that just isn't always true. Again, each of us has free will and we will decide whether or not we will follow Jesus in this life regardless of how we were raised. Would we rebuke God when the children of Israel rebelled against Him after all He had done to lead and bring them to Himself? Of course not!
- D. We must remember that **Ephesians 6:4** says that we are to "bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord." It doesn't say that we must make our children to be Christians. Instead, we are to raise them in such a way that they see the better way that is Jesus. Through teaching and disciplining we are hopefully and prayerfully setting them up for success in Jesus. Our job is to lead them toward the Lord and hope they exercise their free will in giving their lives to Him.

## III. Wise Parents recognize that children are all different.

- A. This point is made in reference to each parent and their own children, but also to parents and other people's children. Firstly, let's consider our own children, and recognize that the only way you're going to escape having different children is if you only have one and even at that if you have a girl you'll probably recognize that she can be three totally different people in the span of just one day. All kidding aside though, this is something that wisdom teaches us and it is important to note.
- B. Would you consider some Biblical examples of parents who had completely different children? What about Adam and Eve. We know of Abel, Cain, and Seth. (**Genesis 5:1-3**) Between Abel and Cain, one was a shepherd and the other are gardener. And even beyond that one was a godly man and one was a murderer. Pretty different children to a single set of parents. What about Issac and Rebekah? Again their sons Esau and Jacob were polar opposites. One was an outdoorsman and the other was a homebody. Same parents, but vastly different children.
- C. So why does this matter? It matters because wise parents recognize that different kinds of children require different types of parenting at times. One child might learn differently than the other. One might express emotions differently. One might respond to discipline differently. All of these factors lead to the necessity of parents being wise and patient and learning how to raise them in the instruction and disciple of the Lord. (**Ephesians 6:4**)
- D. It also means that we are careful when giving parenting advice to others because your kids and another person's kids might be completely different and what works for you might not work at all for them. That's just how it is sometimes. So we need to be careful that we listen and understand before throwing out advice that really just wouldn't do any good. (*"He who gives an answer before he hears, it is folly and shame to him."* **Proverbs 18:13**)
- E. However, regardless of how differently our children might be from one another or from other people's kids, the truth remains the same that God demands that they obey and respect their parents. That isn't up for discussion. Sure kids are different and wisdom helps us to recognize this and adjust accordingly, but God still expects for all children, regardless of differences to obey their parents. (**Ephesians 6:1,2**)

## IV. Wise Parents recognize the need to work together.

- A. In speaking of the marriage relationship, both Adam and Jesus speak of the man and woman becoming husband and wife and becoming "one flesh." (**Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:5**) Most often when discussing this idea, we comment on how this means that they are joined in an intimate way physically, emotionally, and in purpose. One of those greatest purposes that husband and wife ought to be joined together in is when they also become dad and mom. God's wisdom teaches us that we are most effective in our parenting when we work together as a single unified unity.

- B. What does this look like? I think it simply looks like moms and dads who are on the same page. Their approach to parenting and raising children are lined up with one another. Their goals and purpose are in sync with one another. They are not a house divided, which we know never brings about success, *"And knowing their thoughts Jesus said to them, "Any kingdom divided against itself is laid waste; and any city or house divided against itself will not stand." (Matthew 12:25)*
- C. Instead, moms and dads need to be united in their parenting efforts, and something that can greatly aid such a thing is for moms and dads to give great efforts in their communication with one another. We have probably all been there either as children or parents. We have either asked or kids or been asked as parents something and either our parents or we give two different answers. That just isn't a great look on the part of parents and it can send mixed signals to parents. Communication and being unified in our goals and actions will help our kids to see what truly matters and will make bringing them up in the Lord much easier. This concept of working together ties in very well with the next thing that God's wisdom helps us to understand about parenting...

#### **V. Wise Parents do much of their teaching through the way they live their lives.**

- A. While it is true that we must verbally teach our children what they ought and ought not do, we must understand that our children probably pay far more attention to what we do than what we say. We are well aware that words are easy, but actions just mean more. Remember what Jesus said to the people about the Scribes and the Pharisees? *"Therefore all that they tell you, do and observe, but do not do according to their deeds; for they say things and do not do them." (Matthew 23:3)* We will do nothing but lose credibility if we say but do not do.
- B. Furthermore, in living and doing what is right, our children ought to come to learn a lot about Christ and His church. Using marriage to help others understand the church is exactly what Paul was trying to do in **Ephesians 5:22ff.** *"This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church." (Eph. 5:32)* But what is he using to teach? He's using the roles of husbands and wives to show how Christ and the church relate to one another. Jesus is shown to righteously and faithfully lead His church as the husband ought to. The church is to faithfully submit and follow Christ just as the wife ought to follow the husband. If our children can see that in us first, then they concept of the church will be all the more clearer as they grow older and mature.
- C. The bottom line to this point is that our teaching through our actions can either deter or strengthen the faith of our children. Yes, we have established that children are not robots, but they can be and quite often are influenced by what they see in the faiths of their parents. Our lack of faith can easily lead to their lack of faith, and our conviction can easily help them to be convicted of the Christ and His will for them as well. Wisdom tells us to keep in mind always that our actions send a message. Wisdom tells us that we can have impact and influence on others, especially our children. **(Matthew 5:13-16)** Let's be sure to send the right messages.

#### **VI. Wise Parents pray continuously.**

- A. Finally, wisdom tells us as parents that we must be a praying sort of people. I'll strongly suggest to you that it is impossible for parents to lead a child to God without involving God in the process. It must be our goal as parents who are disciples of Jesus that we allow our Lord to co-parent with us. We must seek His wisdom to know how it is that we ought to lead our children.
- B. How can this be done? We know well from our studies in James this year that James teaches us that if we need wisdom then we need to pray and ask for it from God. **(James 1:5)** Let me ask? Will any of us ever become experts in parenting? Thankfully, we don't have to think about this very long because we all know that we will always be in need of additional wisdom from God. We will always need to be a people who are seeking wisdom, guidance, strength, and endurance that can only be supplied by God. We know that we will need God to help us and strengthen to be aware and to act upon the things we have discussed this morning. Wisdom teaches us that parents seeking to raise their children in the Lord must be a continuously prayerful people.

We have talked a lot about parents this morning, but the truth is that not all people here are parents or those days of hands on training are behind you, so what can you do? Let me suggest that you can pray for all of us. Seriously, we covet your prayers that we will do what is good, proper, and right in raising our children to seek and love the Lord as so many here do. On top of that, we're ready to give sound advice when we need it. Share your experiences with us and help us to always be growing and improving. Finally, help us by also living your lives as godly examples for our children to look up to. I am confident that through all of our efforts and parents and supporting members, God's wisdom will aid us to lead our children to Him, and may they desire themselves to seek Him and His will in all things. May God be glorified as we strive to parent with His wisdom from above.