

# THE ADVICE OF A GODLY FATHER

1997 by Mark Beard

## **Text: Proverbs 4:1-9**

Every father should want to lead his children in the right direction. Yet, many fathers fail to see what is really important. Many are like the young ensign in the story I read.

A young ensign, after nearly completing his first overseas cruise, was given an opportunity to display his capabilities at getting the ship under way. With a stream of commands, he had the decks buzzing with men, and soon the ship was steaming out the channel en route to the states.

His efficiency established a new record for getting a destroyer under way, and he was not surprised when a seaman approached him with a message from the captain. He was a bit surprised though, to find that it was a radio message and even more surprised to read: "My personal congratulations upon completing your underway preparation exercise according to the book and with amazing speed. In your haste, however, you have overlooked one of the unwritten rules—make sure the captain is aboard before getting under way." (Hewett, 487)

Is the captain "aboard" in your life? Isn't that the really important question that needs to be answered, since we do have others in our care? In all your working, hurrying and playing, have you stopped to think about the direction God wants you to take? Look with me at several principles concerning wisdom and understanding. We are advised to do the following:

1. Listen to instruction (vv.1-4).
2. Seek wisdom (vv.5-7).
3. Live a life of honor (vv.8-9).

## **I. LISTEN TO INSTRUCTION (vv.1-4).**

### **A. Understanding comes from listening (vv.1-2).**

Someone said, "It's impossible for a worthwhile thought to enter your mind through an open mouth." (Hewett, 318)

### **B. Understanding should first be gained by the father (vv.3-4).**

C.H. Spurgeon wrote, "Train your child in the way in which you know you should have gone yourself."

## **II. SEEK AFTER WISDOM (vv.5-7).**

### **A. Seeking wisdom begins with seeking to know God (vv.5-7).**

Proverbs 9:10 says, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding."

To know and fear (reverence) God is the beginning of wisdom. It's the right application of knowledge. In other words, to seek a right relationship with God is the wise decision to make.

### **B. We should seek wisdom for its protection (vv.5-6).**

A young man was being interviewed to be a pilot for a steamboat on the Mississippi River. The interviewer, doubtful that the young man could know the dangers of the river, asked if he knew where all the rocks were. To this he replied, "No, sir, I do not know where all the rocks are, but I know where they aren't." He got the job. (Hewett, 489)

### **C. We should seek wisdom for its value (v.7).**

Someone has said that, "Wisdom is the right application of knowledge."

What value does wisdom have? Its value is found in being able to act or respond in a way that will benefit you and glorify God. Living with wisdom is living without many of the regrets that we would have because of rash and immature decisions. Wisdom will help you and I to look ahead and see the pitfalls of life before we fall into them. Wisdom leads to forethought.

And as someone wrote, "Forethought is better than repentance." (DeJong, 299)

## **III. LIVE A LIFE OF HONOR (vv.8-9).**

### **A. Embrace wisdom and it will bring you honor (v.8).**

HONOR is all about the respect, esteem and favor bestowed upon us by others. In many cases we earn it. In some cases we do not. With God it is a little of both. We must live for His glory if we are to be exalted by Him. We choose to conform our lives to His word and through His grace He give us a place of honor.

### **B. Embrace wisdom and it will exalt you (v.9).**

There is nothing wrong with exaltation if God is the One exalting you. It is wisdom will cause you to be lifted up above the norm—the average—the mundane.

## CONCLUSION

Listening to instruction, seeking wisdom and living a life of honor; these are ideals worthy of being taught. It will be these and other principles from God's word that will make a difference in the lives of our children. The question is, "What are we teaching our children today?" The answer will be evident one day.

**A grown man awaiting surgery in the hospital was talking with his father. "Dad," he said, "I sure hope I can be home for Father's Day. I felt awful years ago when I was 10, because I never gave you a gift that year."**

The father replied, "Mark, I remember that Saturday before Father's Day. I saw you in the store. I watched as you picked up the cigars and stuffed them in your pocket. I knew you had no money, and I was sad because I thought you were going to run out of the store without paying. But as soon as you hid the cigars, you pulled them out and put them back.

"When you stayed out playing all the next day because you had no present, you probably thought I was hurt. You're wrong. When you put the cigars back and decided not to break the law, Mark, you gave me the best present I ever received." (Larson, 84)

### References

- DeJong, Benjamin R. (1994). *The speaker's quotebook*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.  
Hewett, James S. (Ed.). (1988). *Illustrations unlimited*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale.  
Larson, Craig B. (Ed.). (1993). *Illustrations for preaching and teaching*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.