

# The Harvester



## Preparing Souls

## To Serve The Lord



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## Wise Parenting

By Brian R. Kenyon

There is a generation that curses its father, And does not bless its mother. <sup>12</sup>There is a generation that is pure in its own eyes, Yet is not washed from its filthiness. <sup>13</sup>There is a generation—oh, how lofty are their eyes! And their eyelids are lifted up. <sup>14</sup>There is a generation whose teeth are like swords, And whose fangs are like knives, To devour the poor from off the earth, And the needy from among men. (Pr. 30:11-14, NKJ)

Although this commentary was written nearly three thousand years ago, it is characteristic of many young people in this present generation. Unfortunately, this would also describe some who were “brought up” in the church of Christ. The fact that the church of Christ in this country is losing her youth once they leave home is attested by the numbers themselves. A church that cannot “hold its own” is a church that, among other things, is not retaining its young people after they are grown. The purpose of this article is to introduce wisdom’s instruction about parenting. We will focus upon the wisdom of God as revealed in the Book of Proverbs, which contains “down to earth” parental information. Contrary to popular thought, active youth groups, large congregations, etc. (though a blessing when available) are not an absolute necessity in order to have our children remain faithful. The number one factor is proper parenting!

### ***A Serious Obligation***

All parents, especially Christians, have a serious obligation to properly train their children. This training involves not only the proper verbal instruc-

tion, but even more importantly, it must involve the proper example. “My son, give me your heart, And let your eyes observe my ways” (Pr. 23:26).

The entire family is involved in the proper training of children (Pr. 14:1; 31:10-31). Fathers are obviously involved—many of the Proverbs are written from the perspective of a father teaching his son (Pr. 1:8, 10, 15; 2:1; 3:1, 11; etc.). Mothers are also involved (Pr. 14:1; 31:1, 10-31). Perhaps the most under estimated members of the family that can have a great impact on children, especially in our culture, are grandparents. They are certainly involved in training their grandchildren (Pr. 4:1-4). One way grandparents effect the training of their grandchildren is by having first properly trained their children before they became parents. Another way grandparents effect the training of their grandchildren is by teaching them directly (cf. 2 Tim. 1:5). This is especially needful in contemporary American culture because of the many broken homes in society. Many children have little or no stability at home; thus, positive family values are going to have to come from grandparents.

### ***Trust God’s Wisdom***

TRUST in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; <sup>6</sup>In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths. <sup>7</sup>Do not

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be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and depart from evil. <sup>8</sup>It will be health to your flesh, And strength to your bones. (Pr. 3:5-8)

Although this passage is often memorized by children in their Bible classes, it is the parents who must first put this passage to practice. How many parents “trust in the Lord” enough to diligently search His will and practice it, especially in the area of training children? Sometimes parents place more trust in the so called “experts” in child rearing rather than in God’s instruction. One’s entire being must be immersed in the wisdom of God (cf. Pr. 4:20-27). If parents are to teach their children to be immersed in God’s wisdom, and they are (Pr. 4:20-27), and if parents are to be a positive example to their children, and they are (Pr. 23:26), then parents must themselves be immersed in the wisdom of God so that they can successfully teach it to their children. When parents and grandparents fail to value God’s wisdom in the home, the children and grandchildren will most likely fail to value God’s wisdom.

### ***Properly Discipline Children***

There is tremendous value in discipline, even discipline which involves corporal punishment (i.e., spanking). Parents who truly love their children will lovingly correct them when they need correcting, even if it may involve spanking (Pr. 3:11-12). The Hebrews writer makes application to this proverb (Heb. 12:7-11). He says that just as administering chastise-

ment is an inherent part of being a loving father, so receiving chastisement is an inherent part of being a child in good standing with his or her father (Heb. 12:7-8); parents who properly chastise their children gain their children’s respect (Heb. 12:9); and properly administered chastisement promotes godly characteristics: “holiness” and “peaceable fruit of righteousness” (Heb. 12:10-11). All that it takes to see the failure of parents disciplining their children is an observance of society as a whole, and even some church services. It is important for children to receive the proper discipline while they are very young because it is possible that given too late, discipline will not have the most positive effect (Pr. 19:18).

Many parents truly love their children and want what is best for them, but they do not know God’s word on the subject of discipline. The following two extremes are seen today: (1) some parents think they are doing their children wrong if their children get upset and cry; and (2) others think that no discipline will make their children happier. Parents, however, must realize that God, who created humanity, knows what is best for humanity.

He who spares his rod hates his son, But he who loves him disciplines him promptly. (Pr. 13:24)

Do not withhold correction from a child, For if you beat him with a rod, he will not die. <sup>14</sup>You shall beat him with a rod, And deliver his soul from hell. (Pr. 23:13-14)

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## **The Harvester**

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## “Do You Understand Biblical Morality?”

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### MONDAY

9:00 Is There an Ultimate Lawgiver Jody Apple  
 9:40 The Supremacy of Biblical Ethics Kyle Butt  
 10:20 BREAK  
 10:50 Assessing the Command, Example, & Necessary Inference  
 Hermeneutic George F. Beals  
 11:30 LUNCH

#### Forum: Morality In Principle

1:30 Is the Conscience a Safe Guide? David Stearsman  
 2:00 What Role Does Motive and Intent Play? Jody Apple  
 2:30 Does “Moral Neutrality” Exist? George F. Beals  
 3:00 BREAK  
 3:30 Questions And Answers On Forum Topic  
 4:30 DINNER  
 6:30 Congregational Singing  
 7:00 Does Evil’s Existence Disprove God? Thomas Wise  
 7:45 Reconciling a Loving God with Eternal Punishment  
 Jackie M. Stearsman



Will Vann

### TUESDAY

9:00 Moral Implications of Romans 14 George F. Beals  
 9:40 “The Law Written in Their Hearts” (Rom. 2:15)  
 Jackie M. Stearsman

10:20 BREAK  
 10:50 Divorce in the Old Testament David South  
 11:30 LUNCH

#### Forum: Morality In Marriage

1:30 Polygamy Stephen Atnip  
 2:00 Divorce and Remarriage Johnie Scaggs  
 2:30 Submitting to Both Civil Law and to Moral Law  
 Nathan Franson



Jackie Stearsman



David Stearsman

3:00 BREAK  
 3:30 Questions And Answers On Forum Topic  
 4:30 DINNER  
 6:30 Congregational Singing  
 7:00 Cultivating the Fruit of the Spirit Wilken Roger  
 7:45 Jesus and the Samaritan Woman Jimmy Clark



Daniel Stearsman



David South



Johnie Scaggs

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### WEDNESDAY

9:00 What About Law Enforcement and War? Will Vann  
 9:40 Is Civil Disobedience Ever Justified? Bruce Daugherty  
 10:20 BREAK  
 10:50 Slavery in the Biblical World Jimmy Clark  
 11:30 LUNCH

#### Forum: Morality In Preaching

1:30 Are Differences of Opinion Immoral? Heath Johnson  
 2:00 Preachers and Prejudice Ulysses Richardson  
 2:30 Preachers and Family Responsibilities Nathan Kidwell  
 3:00 BREAK  
 3:30 Questions And Answers On Forum Topic  
 4:30 DINNER  
 6:30 Congregational Singing  
 7:00 Avoiding the Works of the Flesh Jeffrey McNeal  
 7:45 Moral Standards of Judgment Willie Nettle



Nathan Kidwell



Willie Nettle

### THURSDAY

9:00 Abortion and Euthanasia Ted Wheeler  
 9:40 Biblical Teaching on “Birth Control” Daniel Stearsman  
 10:20 BREAK  
 10:50 End of Life Decisions Melvin Otey  
 11:30 LUNCH

#### Forum: Morality In Biomedical Issues

1:30 Biblical Evaluation of the “Four Principles of Biomedical Ethics” Daniel Stearsman  
 2:00 Embryonic Stem Cell Research Rolland Pack  
 2:30 When Does the Use of Genetic Technologies Become Immoral? Brian R. Kenyon  
 3:00 BREAK  
 3:30 Questions And Answers On Forum Topic  
 4:30 DINNER  
 6:30 Congregational Singing  
 7:00 “Fear of the Lord” and Morality Rick Kenyon  
 7:45 Rewards of Living a Biblically Moral Life Melvin Otey



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### Train Children

Parents must properly train their children. God says, “Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it” (Pr. 22:6). This, of course, is not to say that every Scripturally trained child will always remain faithful. Not even God Himself could have that guarantee (Isa. 1:2). Proverbs are not meant to be “absolutized”—they are not 100% money back guarantees (Smith 470). They are generalizations of how things usually work in life. For example, a “soft answer” does not always “turn away wrath” (Pr. 15:1 cf. Mt. 26:62-65), though generally it does. Additionally, not everyone who “finds a wife” necessarily “finds a good thing” (Pr. 18:22 cf. Ahab who found Jezebel). Thus, a child, due to his or her free will, may choose not to follow godly instruction (cf. Adam and Eve; Ezk. 18:20). However, the fact that the Proverbs are general truths is no excuse—many par-

ents in the church of Christ are failing to properly train their children. Parents, let us take seriously our duty to properly train our children in the ways of God!

#### Works Cited

Smith, James E. *The Wisdom Literature and Psalms*. Old Testament Survey Series. Joplin, MO: College Press, 1996.



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