

Father's Advice

I remember what my father said to me on the many occasions I left home:

“Everywhere you go the dogs are barefoot.”

My dad had spent 5 years in the Navy, and everywhere he went, people were about the same; and yes, dogs were barefoot.

Where in the Bible do we find fatherly advice? Proverbs.

Proverbs was written by a father primarily as a collection of sayings and writings to guide his son into the way of wisdom. William Arnot said it contained “Laws from heaven for Life on earth.” The Holy Spirit inspired Solomon and a few others to collaborate on a book - *‘Wise Advice from a Father’s Words.’*

Solomon wrote,

¹My son, **do not forget** my teaching,

but let your heart keep my commandments;

²For length of days and years of life and peace they will add to you.

³Do not let **kindness and truth** leave you;

Bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart,

⁴So you will find favor and good repute in the sight of God and man.

⁵**Trust in the Lord with all your heart**

and do not lean on your own understanding.

⁶In all your ways acknowledge Him,

and He will make your paths straight.

⁷Do not be **wise in your own eyes;**

fear the Lord and turn away from **evil.**

⁸It will be healing to your body and refreshment to your bones.

⁹**Honor the Lord** from your wealth and from the first of all your produce;

¹⁰so your barns will be filled with plenty

and your vats will overflow with new wine.

¹¹My son, do not reject the **discipline of the lord** or loathe His reproof,

¹²for whom the Lord loves He reproves,

even as a father corrects the son in whom he delights.” (Pr. 3:1-12)

These verses contain six points of advice,

each of which also has an accompanying promise for obedience.

1. Always obey from the heart.

“¹My son, do not forget my teaching,

but let your heart keep my commandments”

The first key to obedience is remembering.

Since God has revealed His general will in His Word,
our obedience is crucial in order to discover His specific will for our lives.

James writes

“But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does” (James 1:22-25).

Why should obedience from the heart be so important to us?

Heart-felt Obedience comes from a heart of genuine faith.

Ezekiel prophesies:

“I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone [dead unresponsive heart] from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh [a living, responsive heart].”

(Ezek. 36:26)

The promise of a peaceful and long life is connected to our obedience.

²For length of days and years of life and peace they will add to you.

God wants to bless us but doesn't want to hold His nose when He does.

2. Be truthful and kind

³Do not let kindness and truth leave you;

Bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart,

⁴So you will find favor and good repute in the sight of God and man.

If we are all kindness without truth, we will lack discernment.

If we are all truth and unkind, we brutalize people with angry, judgmental words, leaving a thoughtless witness.

In conversations about faith you can win an argument and not win the person.

Remember Jesus –He was full of grace and truth.

Paul wrote, “...speaking the truth in love, (Eph. 4:15).

Solomon said, “Sweetness of speech increases persuasiveness.”

There will always be balance when we speak the truth kindly.

Though we need the truth, a little sugar helps the medicine go down,
especially when it's hard to swallow.

3. Trust in the Lord Completely.

⁵Trust in the Lord with all your heart
and do not lean on your own understanding.

⁶In all your ways acknowledge Him,
and He will make your paths straight.

This verse seems to broaden the concept of trust.

First, **Trust the Lord entirely** – with all your heart.

Second, **Trust the Lord exclusively** – apart from any natural inclination.

Third, **Trust the Lord extensively** – in all your ways acknowledge Him.

Isaiah wrote, “All we like sheep have gone astray,
each of us has turned to his own way” (Is. 53:6)

Are we basing life's decisions on our feelings, or on God's word?

“There is a way that seems right to a man but its end is the way of death.”
(Pr. 14:12)

Hymn writer:

1 When we walk with the Lord
in the light of his word,
what a glory he sheds on our way!
While we do his good will,
he abides with us still,
and with all who will trust and obey.

Refrain:

Trust and obey, for there's no other way
to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.

4. Fear God enough to avoid evil

⁷Do not be wise in your own eyes;
fear the Lord and turn away from evil.

⁸It will be healing to your body and refreshment to your bones.

The opposite of fearing the Lord is being wise in our own eyes.

Our own reasoning is tainted by sin:
 We've been wrong before and will probably be wrong again.
 Therefore, we should always be teachable...

Pattern:

Fall on your face >learn humility > listen to God
 an all-knowing, all-powerful, all-wise ruler of the universe.

Refusing to listen and change is being *wise in your own eyes*.

Sin is cosmic treason.

No one ever benefits from going against His ways.

A sinner destroys himself.

Jesus' death gave us life; He defeated evil to free us from us from sin's power.

Spurgeon wrote,

Our Redeemer's glorious cry of "It is finished" was the death-knell of all the adversaries of His people, the breaking of "the weapons of war." Behold the hero of Golgotha using His cross as an anvil, and His wounds as a hammer, dashing to pieces bundle after bundle of our sins, those poisoned "flashing arrows," trampling on every indictment and destroying every accusation. What glorious blows the mighty Breaker gives with a hammer far more powerful than the fabled weapon of Thor! How the diabolical darts break in pieces, and the infernal swords are broken like old clay pots! Consider how He draws from its sheath of hellish workmanship the dreadful sword of satanic power! He snaps it across His knee as a man breaks dry sticks and throws it into the fire.

Nothing gives the believer greater health, inner peace than freedom from guilt and shame. Staying away from evil and all its destructive consequences extends our life, our sense of freedom, and gives bone-deep refreshment.

The promise of fearing God and fleeing evil is healing and newness of life.

5. Be Faithful with Finances

There's nothing better than having a good credit score with the Bank of Heaven.

⁹Honor the Lord from your wealth
 and from the first of all your produce;

¹⁰so your barns will be filled with plenty
 and your vats will overflow with new wine.

G. K. Chesterton wrote,

To be clever enough to get a great deal of money,
one must be stupid enough to want it.

Everything we have here is on loan – our bodies, time, talents, and treasures.
True riches are eternal and do not pass away with time.
Honoring God with our wealth begins with acknowledging His faithfulness.

Jesus gave 37 parables; 17 of the dealt with property and man’s responsibility of using it wisely. Since God has been so faithful to us, shouldn’t we be trustworthy?

Jesus is our example:

“For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor,
so that you through His poverty might become rich.” (2 Cor. 8:9)

Our attitude towards money should be to honor God with it by the way we make it, spend it, and invest it for eternity.

6. Accept Discipline

¹¹My son, do not reject the discipline of the lord or loathe His reproof,
¹²for whom the Lord loves He reproveth,
even as a father corrects the son in whom he delights.”

(Pr. 3:11-12)

A man with a heart after God isn’t perfect, but is open to God’s discipline.

This verse is one of the verses used in Hebrews 12 in a longer section on the Lord’s discipline of His children, in which it states that discipline is a way of life because we are sons and daughters of God. –*The badge of sonship*.

First of all, God’s discipline is proof that we are sons. The writer begins with a question: What son is there that his father does not discipline,
otherwise you are illegitimate children and not sons.

Second, His discipline gives us life – that we may share in His holiness.

Though painful, it produces His character in us.

The author writes,

“All discipline for the moment seem not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.” (Heb. 12:11)

God's reproofs mean that He loves us, delights in us, and wants what is best for us. Jesus learned obedience from the things which he suffered (Heb. 5:8). Some lessons can only be learned through hardship and suffering. God is so committed to our good that He is willing to bring suffering into our lives so we might gain wisdom and good character.

Discipline trains us, improves us, refines us, and defines us.

Tozer writes on God's work in the believer,

“The devil, things and people being what they are, it is necessary for God to use the hammer, the file and the furnace in His holy work of preparing a saint for true sainthood. It is doubtful whether God can bless a man greatly until He has hurt him deeply... Strange as it may sound, it is yet true that much of the suffering we are called upon to endure on the highway of holiness is an inward suffering for which scarcely an external cause can be found. For our journey is an inward journey, and our real foes are invisible to the eyes of men....”¹

The promise is fulfilled in that we are corrected from evils within.

We are forgiven and given a new righteousness the moment we believe.

But our character needs to mature- as we grow in Christ.

We will never see perfect holiness until we see Christ, and are transformed into His likeness. Discipline is God's tool to accomplish this process.

It has been said,

‘He will melt you in his furnace that he may stamp you with His image.’

The Psalmist states,

“Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I keep your word.” (Ps. 119:67)

A Father's Advice is meant to give us a boost,
a starting direction for our lives,
and guidance for future decisions.

Wisdom is perspective.

If you could have coffee with yourself from the future what would you ask?

¹ A. W. Tozer, *The Root of the Righteous*, (Camp Hill, PA: Christian Publications, 1986), p. 137.