

Sermon outline and notes:

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## Proverbs 23:22-26 “How to Bring Joy to Your Mother”

Introduction - In v.24 of our text, Solomon speaks of fathers who greatly rejoice and mothers who delight in their children. This is certainly the way God intends for it to be. Children should be a source of joy and satisfaction to the parents who brought them into the world, and have sacrificed so much time and energy to raise them in the right way. But too often, parents have had very unpleasant experiences with their children. As someone has said, “When children are young, they step on your toes. And when they become teenagers, they step on your heart.” Many a mother has gone to bed weeping or worrying over a wayward child. Many homes tend to be more like war zones of conflict rather than safe havens of harmony. Back in the 70’s, Ann Landers did a survey of 10,000 respondents, & she was shocked to learn that 70% indicated that if they had it to do over again, they would not have children.<sup>1</sup> I’m sure that figure is higher than a more scientific survey would reveal, but the point is, a significant number of parents have found more heartache than joy in their role as a parent.

But this bleak picture that I have been painting for you is certainly not God’s plan or will. This is the result of the work of sin in the hearts and the homes of people. Here in my text we have God’s pattern that we should follow. Notice in vv.24-25 the way it *should* be, “The father of the righteous will greatly rejoice, and he who begets a wise child will delight in him. Let your father and your mother be glad, And let her who bore you rejoice.” As we see in v.25, children have a duty to God to bring joy and gladness to their parents. You should not do so only on Mother’s Day or Father’s Day, but everyday, especially if you are still living at home with your parents. And so this morning I want us to consider *how* to bring joy to your mother and your father. And much of what I will share today relates to grown children in their relationship to their aging parents. I will conclude the message by sharing some of the responsibilities that parents have toward their children.

So I hope we will all listen this morning and follow the path that God has set before us. If we do, we will certainly be a blessing to our parents and you can be sure that your parents will be a blessing to you. So let’s see from this text how to bring joy to your parents. I’m not talking about how to make your parents laugh. That is no substitute for what I’m going to share today. However, one of the joys of parenting is hearing your kids say & do some funny things. I remember when my mom attempted to cook a Mexican meal for the first, & I think, only time. I was used to Southern cooking, and it was way different from what we were used to. After attempting to eat some of the spicy food, I announced, “I sure am glad I wasn’t born in Mexico”! I wasn’t trying to be funny, but my parents got a kick out of what I said. Well, kids can bring a quick laugh to their parents, but v.24 tells us how a child can bring lasting joy to their parents. First of all:

### I. ATTAIN RIGHTEOUSNESS

In v.24 Solomon says, “The father of the righteous will greatly rejoice....” In the Bible righteousness is used in two ways. First, in the New Testament in particular, righteousness refers to

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<sup>1</sup> <http://happilychildfree.com/ann.htm>.

our standing in Christ. Only when we trust in Christ as our Savior do we become right with God. In Christ we are declared righteous. So one of the best things that you could do to bring joy to your mother, especially a Christian mother, is to give your heart and life to Jesus, & thus become right with God. There are some children here today who have never made a profession of your faith. Some have never followed Jesus in baptism. That is the most important thing you can do to help make sure that your life will be a blessing to your mother.

Secondly, righteousness is used in the sense of our daily conduct. The righteous person lives right in his relationship to God and in his relationship to his fellow man. A parent will certainly rejoice in a child who lives right in obedience to God. But a child who lives a disobedient, unrighteous, rebellious life will be a grief to his parents. Live by God's standards of righteousness, and you will bring joy to your parents.

One of the most important ways that you obtain moral righteousness is by learning the Word of God. Psa. 119:9 says, "How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word." Then v.11 says, "Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You!" You cannot determine right from wrong on your own. Look to God's Word to give you the objective standards of righteousness.

Now one of the best ways to attain moral righteousness is seen in the next way to bring joy to your parents:

## II. ATTAIN WISDOM & UNDERSTANDING

The last of v.24 says, "he who begets a wise child will delight in him." V.15 says, "My son, if your heart is wise, My heart will rejoice—indeed, I myself." Proverbs 10:1 says something similar, "A wise son makes a glad father...." But on the other hand, Proverbs 17:21b says, "The father of a fool has no joy." In v.25 of that chapter Solomon says, "A foolish son is a grief to his father and bitterness to her who bore him." What a contrast we see here between a wise child and a foolish child in terms of their impact upon the joy and well being of their parents.

Then in v.23 Solomon says, "Buy the truth, and do not sell it, also wisdom and instruction and understanding." In addition to wisdom, here we see that you should do what it takes to obtain truth, instruction, & understanding. Children, if you do well in school, that will certainly bring joy to your parents, but v.23 certainly relates to more than the type of education you would get in school. It refers also to moral education in obtaining truth & wise guidance from the Word of God. Moral education is largely missing from the public school, and the Word of God is certainly not used as a basis of what little moral education they teach.

And so, young man or young lady, will you seek wisdom? Will you be that wise son or daughter who brings joy to their parents, or will you walk down the path of fools and bring grief and sadness to your parents? Let me show you how to obtain wisdom. One way you obtain wisdom is by asking God for wisdom. James 1:5 says, "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him." Secondly, you obtain wisdom by learning the Word of God. It contains the wisdom of God, and the wisdom of the ages. It will guide you in making wise choices in your life, and your parents will be delighted in the results that they see in your life. Thirdly, notice what v.23 says, "Buy the truth, and do not sell it, also wisdom and instruction and understanding." "Buy" suggests that life is a series of transactions in which we exchange time, energy, and devotion for something we consider valuable. He is saying that you should obtain wisdom & understanding at just about any cost. In fact, Psalm 119:72 says, "The law of Your mouth is better to me Than thousands of coins of gold and silver." Will you

exchange some free time to learn the wisdom of God's Word? Will you study hard while you are in school? "Buy ... wisdom and instruction and understanding." Furthermore, obtaining truth often involves the expenditure of funds. That is certainly true of a college education. Your parents should also consider the advantages of a Christian School or home school education for you, though it will cost you more.

Another important way you can gain wisdom is my next way to bring joy to your parents:

### III. LISTEN TO YOUR PARENTS

Solomon says in v.22, "Listen to your father who begot you." Proverbs 1:8 also says "My son, hear the instruction of your father." Proverbs 13:1 says, "A wise son heeds his father's instruction..." Children, you have a responsibility to listen to your father, & give heed to what he says. But too often, children do not listen to their parents.

A business owner had developed what he considered to be a good relationship with a younger employee. However, the younger employee began on a downward spiral and his job was on the line. The business man brought in the young man and said to him, "You're just like a son to me." "Oh really?" replied the employee. "Yes, you don't listen to anything I say either," said the employer.<sup>2</sup>

Now notice the last of v.22, "And do not despise your mother when she is old." Based on Hebrew poetic parallelism, there is probably a parallel relationship between listening to your father, and not despising your mother. The word translated "despise" also means to "hold in contempt, hold as insignificant." You can be sure that your mother will give you advice & guidance. I believe that God must have made them that way! After all, God says in His Word that you are not to treat her advice as insignificant, even when she is old. Proverbs 15:20 says, "a foolish man despises his mother."

Why is it that you should listen to your parents? Who is it that has your best interest at heart? Who is it that loves & cares for you more than anyone else on earth? It is your parents. That is why they want to teach you wisdom, truth, and understanding. That is why they want to teach you right from wrong. That is why they want to guide you in making the right decisions in life. That is why they correct you when you do wrong. So listen to them! Furthermore, you should listen to them because they have many more years of experience. They have already traveled the road you are on. There is no substitute for the wisdom that comes with age and experience. And then a parent who knows the Word of God not only has the wisdom of experience but also the wisdom of God's Word. They especially have wisdom to share. You should listen to them.

So we see from v.22 that children are responsible to God to listen to what their parents have to say. However, there are two wrong attitudes that will hinder you from following this command:

1. I already know; I don't need your advice - Don't shrug off their advice and their teaching with an independent, know-it-all attitude. Teenagers, as well as anyone else, will not learn if you think that you already know it all. Acknowledge that you have more to learn, and that you can learn something from your parents.

2. My parents are old-fashioned and out of touch - I believe the last of v.22 addresses the age old problem of the generation gap. Solomon says, "Do not despise your mother when she is old." That word "despise" means to regard with contempt. By the way, how old is "old" to a 16 year-old? Probably anyone over 40! Don't think to yourself that your mother is too old to give good advice & guidance; that because she doesn't know as much about electronics and pop culture, she

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<sup>2</sup> J. Michael Shannon in *Preaching* (March-April, 2007), 70 [Illus.#C-1737].

is old-fashioned & just can't relate to the "real world." Don't give her that disrespectful look that says, "Your dumb! You're out of the stone age." I can assure you that most of what she says is not dumb and it is wrong to regard her advice as dumb or out-of-date. The "generation gap" must not be allowed to break the relationship between parent and child. When we are teenagers, we tend to think that our parents are not too bright. But it is amazing how smart they get by the time we reach the age of 25 or 30!

#### IV. LOVE YOUR PARENTS

Notice the appeal of Solomon to his son in v.26, "My son, give me your heart." I believe that if you love your mother, if you love your father, everything else will fall into place. For example, if you love your mother, you will listen to her and obey her. Jesus said in John 14:15, "If you love Me, [you will] keep My commandments." If you love your father & mother, you will obey them, honor them, & respect them.

One way you will respond to your parents with love is by reflecting upon all that they have done for you. Your mother went through the valley of the shadow of death to bring you into the world. She has spent countless hours caring for you, serving you, & loving you. She will stand by you when no one else will. When you consider all the love and devotion of your mother to you, how can you not love her in return? So give her your heart, & do not withhold your love from her.

Finally, another way to bring joy to your mother is this:

#### V. FOLLOW THEIR EXAMPLE

Solomon says in the last of v.26, "And let your eyes observe my ways." Parents, are you living in such a way that you can you say to your children? Well the main point that I want to make is this: Godly parents want you to follow them in the faith. They want you to follow the positive aspects of their conduct. If you do, that will bring joy to their hearts.

Finally, another way to bring joy to your mother is this:

#### VI. HONOR YOUR MOTHER WHEN SHE IS OLD

Again, the last of v.22 says, "And do not despise your mother when she is old<sup>3</sup>." I have already talked about the primary meaning of this verse, but I want to focus on a different aspect of its meaning. It is true that as people get elderly, they get to where they can't do for themselves like they used to. And they not only have physical impairment, but also mental impairment, especially when it comes to memory. And if we are not careful, we will despise them in such a condition. That is wrong and in direct disobedience to this verse of Scripture. God bless those of you who have not forsaken and despised aging parents, but have loved and cared for them. It is tragic to visit in a nursing home and see those who have been despised and forsaken by their families, but this should not be so among God's people! Your mother spent years of time and energy taking care of you when you were young. So you should be willing to go that extra mile and help take care of your parents when they need you in their old age.

Conclusion: Children & young people, how will you respond to the message today? Perhaps you will repent of your sins & trust in Jesus as your Savior. I will be happy to lead you in a prayer to

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<sup>3</sup> This is actually a verb in the perfect tense, "has become old."

receive Christ as Savior if you come forward during the invitation. Ask your mom or dad to come with you. They will be glad to come with you. Or will you make a commitment to follow these steps to bring joy to your mom & dad?

Sources: Stephen Felker, *Devotional & Explanatory Notes on the Entire Bible* (Col. Hghts, VA: Published by Author), 2010; Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1961); L. D. Johnson, *Layman's Bible Book Commentary*, Vol. 9 (Nashville: Broadman, 1982); Larry Pierce, *Online Bible* [CD-ROM] (Ontario: Timnathserah Inc., 1996); cross references from *Online Bible*; Marvin E. Tate, Jr., *The Broadman Bible Commentary: Proverbs - Isaiah*, Vol. 5 (Nashville: Broadman, 1971); Other sources listed in the footnotes. Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from *The New King James Version* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1982).