

SERMON GUIDE

Get Wisdom: Wisdom on Family

Proverbs 2:1-5



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SERMON NOTES

My wife and I celebrated nineteen years of marriage a month ago. Something that she probably deserves an award for. She is honestly my favorite person in the whole world. While our marriage isn't perfect, I can tell you that it is great. It is healthy. We love each other deeply. We live as if we are *for* one another. We've learned some things over the years about marriage. And every single principle that has stood the test of time in our relationship, every principle that has yielded genuine results, has been those that are grounded in scripture. These principles don't come with headings in our Bibles that say things like, "5 steps to a stellar marriage" or even "3 tips to showing your wife that you are indeed always right." They have to be absorbed from regular consumption of the Word of God so that they can be extrapolated and applied by the Holy Spirit when the time arises. That's how Biblical wisdom works. Wisdom isn't just knowing the right answer. It's knowing the right answer to apply to the right situation, at the right time, and in the right way. That takes work. It takes storing up the Word in your heart and then yielding to the Spirit of God when He brings to mind what He wants you to obey. Let me show you what I mean. When Britt and I were early in our marriage, we fought all the time. It was really, really bad. There were lots of things contributing to that, but one of those things was my unwillingness to let a fight go if I was convinced that I was right. It didn't matter how small the issue was. If I was sure that I was right, I'd drag an argument on for days or weeks. Then one day, the Lord used a verse from a totally different context to teach me that most of these arguments weren't even worth having, let alone winning at the expense of our relationship.

In 1 Cor. 6, Paul is dealing with Christians who are taking each other to court and suing one another in front of unbelievers, and he is appalled by this. In his correction of them, there is a phrase in one translation that says, "Are you not willing to be wronged?" That hit me like a ton of bricks. In most of our fights, the result of who won was truly inconsequential. What the Spirit was using that passage to teach me was wisdom. He was saying, in effect, "There's a time to take the loss and move on." The

relationship is more important than whether or not I'm the one who keeps forgetting to turn the garage light off. That little phrase "are you not willing to be wronged?" became a nugget of wisdom that I've come back to time and time again. It became a principle to live by and as small of a thing as that seems, it's made my marriage better. To get to that place, though, the truths of scripture had to be sought out, stored up, and trusted enough for me to yield to them when the Spirit applied them. Then, after they were applied, I held onto them as general principles to lead me in tons of other situations where they were relevant. That's how wisdom works. There are no shortcuts to wisdom. It takes intentional time in God's Word. Proverbs 2 will give us more on that.

Exegesis

Proverbs 2:1-5 – My son, if you receive my words and treasure up my commandments with you, ² making your ear attentive to wisdom and inclining your heart to understanding; ³ yes, if you call out for insight and raise your voice for understanding, ⁴ if you seek it like silver and search for it as for hidden treasures, ⁵ then you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God.

As we wrap up our series on wisdom from the book of Proverbs today, we're going to look at wisdom in the family. What kind of wisdom does Scripture offer for all the different relationships and seasons of family life? As fathers and mothers, as children, as husbands and wives, as singles not yet married, what do we need to know in dealing with parents, siblings, in-laws, and extended family? The Bible, especially the book of Proverbs, gives us principles to help us grow in wisdom for all of these areas. And we certainly need wisdom here. We've all wrestled with questions like these:

- How do I handle conflict in my marriage?
- What's the best way to discipline my kids and lead them to Christ?
- How do I deal with in-laws who compete for influence over my spouse?
- As a husband or father or mother how do I lead or submit in a way that honors God?
- As a child still at home, how do I obey my parents if I disagree with them?
- How do I relate to unbelieving family members or family members professing Christ while living in sin?

Today, we're diving into biblical wisdom for family life and how to apply it faithfully in our own homes and relationships. But I want to manage your expectations up front. I'm not just giving you a list of tips

and tricks. In fact, I'm only going to give you a handful of actual wisdom principles towards the end of the sermon. First, I want to convince you of your need for wisdom in your family, regardless of what stage of life you're in. Then I want to show you how to do the work to get that wisdom. Lastly, I'll give you some select principles that I've learned, mostly the hard way.

1. We need wisdom in our families.

All relationships are difficult in a fallen world. The closest ones are often the most difficult. Not only that, but the biggest and most important impact you will likely ever make on other people will be on the people you share a home with. The stakes are high, especially for parents. Societies rise and fall on the success and failure of families. Choices made in a family can have ripple effects that last for generations.

Think of the scenario where some middle class investor takes a chance on a startup company that ends up monopolizing an industry and just a couple generations later, you have a family that was given such a financial headstart that they have the ability to start new business ventures of their own, which then succeed and compound the wealth, and then that positive cycle repeats. If that can happen financially, how much more can it happen morally?

Not everyone has that opportunity financially, but everyone does have that opportunity morally. There's a common statistic that says that a father's religious practice is the strongest predictor of a child's future faith. There's another one that says the influence of a religious grandmother has the power to transmit moral values that often persist across three generations. Yet another study shows that mothers are often the first source from whom children learn the things of God. We need wisdom, not just for our current circumstances. We need God's wisdom in the family, whatever stage of life we're in, because whether you're a parent, grandparent, or adult child, or sibling, the Great Commission, and thus the growth of the Kingdom of God, flows through families.

Families rise or fall on wise vs. foolish living.

We need wisdom from the Word of God in our families for our present flourishing and for our future impact. You don't need a silver-bullet strategy on the best way to discipline your kids so that they'll be the best behaved kids in the neighborhood. You need godly wisdom in how to discipline your kids so

that they will grow to know, love, and follow Christ. So often we miss because we're aiming at the wrong target. We want the Kingdom of God reigning in our homes, in our family relationships, and for that, we need the wisdom of God in every situation.

2. How to get wisdom for our families.

Seek - We have to pursue it. We pursue it by living in God's Word, storing it in our hearts, and yielding to it when the Spirit applies it. Acquiring wisdom is not a passive process. Notice the emphasis present in these phrases in Proverbs 2:

- receive my words
- treasure up my commandments
- making your ear attentive
- inclining your heart
- call out
- raise your voice
- seek it like silver
- search for it as for hidden treasures
- then you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God

That search for wisdom can come through other people too but that counsel is only as good as it is committed to pointing you back to the Word. That's the first point in this section on how to get this wisdom: we have to seek it from reverent hearts. Next, we have to store it and then yield to it.

Store - We have to store His Word in our hearts. That is the treasury that the Spirit will draw from when wisdom needs to be put into action. In v. 1 it says "treasure up my commandments."

Yield - James 1:22-25 *But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.* ²³ *For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror.* ²⁴ *For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like.* ²⁵ *But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.*

Jesus said something similar in Matthew 7:24: Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock.

Wisdom is not just knowing, but knowing and doing. That's what I mean by "yield."

For instance, if you want wisdom in your family, you must yield within His parameters. God has a design for the family. You cannot gain wisdom from God for your family, outside of His design for the family. It's like looking for a coach to teach you how to become a better football player, but you refuse to play by the rules of football. What good will it do you to run faster or throw a football further if you're not really playing the game? So often, we want God to help us fix problems that exist because we are operating outside of His design. The wisdom we need in that situation is to stop going outside of the design. Maybe you're trying to get wisdom on handling a wayward teenager, meanwhile, you, as a husband, are not leading your home, or as a wife, you are not submitting to your husband. Or perhaps you're a teenager following Christ, and you want wisdom on how to get your parents to trust you more, meanwhile you're not living a life that is characterized by honor and obedience to your parents. You have to get back in the design before wisdom will do you any good. We need wisdom for our families now, and for the future impact, it will make. To gain that wisdom, whether it's in parenting or dealing with adult siblings, or whatever else, we must seek, store, and yield to the Word of God.

3. A few practical bits of wisdom to add to:

This is not exhaustive by any means. This is a sampling of examples to show you how it works. Learning these and practicing them will be of benefit to you, but growing in wisdom requires the first two points more than anything. It's like someone who wants to learn a language. I can't teach you Spanish in one sitting. I can teach you *how to learn Spanish* and then give you some phrases. Think of this like that. I'll give you some scriptures to ground these; some will be from Proverbs and some from other books of the Bible. I'm going to move through these quickly and give you some passages to jot down for further study.

Know the design and operate within the design. God has a design for the family. Many of you have heard me say this before, but Everything works better when we operate according to the Designer's design. In God's design, fathers and husbands lovingly and self-sacrificially lead. Mothers and wives trustingly submit to that leadership. Fathers and husbands provide and protect. Mothers nurture and

support. Fathers and mothers are to teach the Word of God to their children. Children honor and obey their parents, even when they think they know better. You can read more on that in Ephesians 5-6, Proverbs 31, Deuteronomy 6, and Titus 2.

Husbands and wives are one flesh; live like it. One of the most common bits of advice that I give to married couples that are struggling is that they have to change the way they think about each other. Husbands, it is never you vs. your wife. Wives, it is never you vs. your husband. His problems are her problems, and her problems are his problems. Complaining about your spouse to other people is like complaining about yourself. Just stop doing it. You are one flesh. The Bible says that the man who loves his wife loves his own body. The point is that you have to align your mind with this reality. I'm telling you, this is one of the biggest game-changers in a marriage. As soon as you resolve in your own heart, "It's me and her against the world, no matter what," everything changes. You can read more in Ephesians 5 again, Gen. 2, Matt. 19:6, and Proverbs 12:4.

You left your parents when you married your spouse. The Bible says "Leave" and "Cleave" but many people have a problem with the leaving part. You can still have a close relationship with your parents. They can still give you counsel and speak into your life, but their role of leading you has run its course. My girls will always be my girls, and my boy will always be my boy, but life isn't some sentimental country song. I'm raising daughters to be future wives. Lord willing, they'll be amazing wives and then mothers. I don't want them to be perpetual children. I want them to grow up following Christ and then take their part in fulfilling the mandate that He gave them to fill the earth and subdue it. That means I have to let them go at some point, and in a sense, they have to let me go. I'll always be their father, but I have to let their husbands be the primary man in their lives. The same goes with mothers and sons. Some of you parents of married adults are wreaking havoc on your kids' marriages right now because you'd rather hold onto some sentimental view of perpetual childhood than obey God. I'd advise you to stop. More on that in these texts we've already mentioned: Gen. 2, Matt. 19, and Eph. 5.

Discipline is not "one size fits all." Part of wisdom in parenting is realizing that your kids are not carbon copies and therefore, the same style of parenting doesn't work on all of them. That's why parenting books, blogs, and everything else are a black hole of tips, tricks, and methods. Don't fall for it when some social media ad tells you they've finally cracked the parenting code. They haven't. But it's actually easier and more grace-filled than we make it. You get to know your kids. You actively love,

teach, and lead your kids. And then when your kids need discipline, you discipline them from a relationship. You discipline them based on who they are, where they are in their development, and what you know they need to get to the next step in development. And you mess up, and you miss it, and then you adapt. This is the process. You walk with Christ. You pay attention to how He fathers you and you emulate Him as best you can in your parenting of them. They might not be the most polished and polite kids, but remember to shoot at the right target. What you're aiming for is kids who know who God is, what He expects of them, and who helps them to follow Him in that way. More on that in Pr. 22:6, Eph. 6:4, Heb. 12:10-11, and Pr. 25:11-12.

Honor your family, seek their good, but keep God first. If you're an adult who's not yet married, you're still part of a family, and the call to live with wisdom applies to you just as much. The Bible commands you to honor your parents, and that doesn't expire when you turn 18. You should listen to their counsel, care about their well-being, and treat them with respect, even if you disagree with them. 18 is a magic number in our culture that says, "Now you're an adult and you can do whatever you want." But the Bible doesn't see it that way. If you are a young adult still living in your parents' home, you might be an adult but you are still under the jurisdiction of your parents. You are to continue honoring and obeying them as such. When you leave or get married, you begin a transition. Of course, there are all kinds of caveats and exceptions to this, but this is a general principle. If you are an unmarried adult outside of your parents' home, the call to honor them never expires. You are responsible before God for your own decisions first and foremost, and sometimes honoring your family means lovingly holding your ground when they're not honoring God. Don't let guilt or fear of disapproval rule you. You're also called to live at peace with siblings and extended family as far as it depends on you (even when politics comes up at Thanksgiving), which often means learning to forgive quickly, set healthy boundaries, and pursue unity even when it's hard. Basically, as an adult, all the ways God commands you to interact with people in general, believers and unbelievers, become the same way you are to interact with your adult family. You can read more about this in: Pr. 23:22, Rom. 12:18, and Gal. 1:10.

Closing

We need wisdom for our families. We need it for the present and for the future impacts that it will have on the generations to come. We acquire that wisdom through seeking it out in God's Word, storing it up in our hearts, and yielding to it when the Spirit applies it to our circumstances. It's a process that we have to stay continually engaged in from a posture of reverent faith and submission to the Lord. All of

this, and the examples that I gave you of the wisdom principles for family that I have learned, assume that it's your desire to obey God in the first place. That's what wisdom is when you reduce it all the way down: obeying God in practical circumstances. This only makes sense and is only possible if your chief desire is to obey and please Him. Not to have a good family. Not to have a good marriage. Not to have a good legacy. If you put any of those things before your desire to please Him, you'll never gain the true wisdom you are seeking. And of course, to have a heart that desires to please Him above all else, you must be born again. As we close this morning, let me finish by asking you to do that self-examination. Have you been born again?



LOOK BACK

- How was your week? What is one thing you're grateful for and one thing that challenged you?
- How did you grow in obedience to Christ over the last week?
- Where did you go to share the gospel or have a spiritual conversation with someone?
- What is a sin you have been struggling with that you need to repent of?



LOOK UP

- **REVIEW**

- Read Proverbs 25:28 and then have someone else in the group read it again, preferably from a different translation.
- Additional Scripture
 - Proverbs 9:10
 - Proverbs 14:1
 - Proverbs 24:3–4

- **DISCUSS**

- What does the phrase “Are you not willing to be wronged?” teach us about conflict in relationships?
- Why is seeking wisdom described as an active pursuit in Proverbs 2?
- How does storing God's Word in your heart contribute to growing in wisdom?
- What does it mean to “yield” to wisdom in the context of family life?
- Why is God's design for the family foundational to applying wisdom effectively?
- How does the one flesh union challenge how spouses handle conflict?
- What warning is given to parents who don't “let go” when their children marry?
- How should single adults or adult children apply wisdom in family relationships?
- What is a practical step you can take as a result of this sermon?



LOOK AHEAD

- **BUILD UP | SEND OUT**

- **How are you making yourself known at church this week?**
- **How are you growing to know Christ better this week?**
- **How are you making Christ known this week?**

- **PRAYER**

- **Pray over any request from your group members.**
- **Pray for our team:** Jeff Long (For the City Director)
- **Pray for our replanters:** Christ's Fellowship
- **Pray for our short-term teams:**
 - Indonesia Team departing on August 10, 2025
 - Rome Team departing on November 15, 2025
 - Nashville Team departing on November 17, 2025
- **Pray for our long-term units on the mission field:**
 - The Wilsons
 - The Grays
 - The Starks
- **Pray for the unreached.** Want to keep up with Unreached People Groups? Download the Unreached of the Day App <https://joshuaproject.net/pray/unreachedoftheday/app>