



Teaching Wisdom To Our Children

Part Four

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Introduction

We've addressed this before in our series, but I want to revisit the importance of "friends" in a child's life - ***Children are influenced powerfully by other children.***

The influence becomes stronger as children enter adolescence and the teen years. They begin to question adult standards and the guidance of their parents, teachers and other adult authority in their lives. That questioning leads many children to grow closer to children their own age or a little older. They often do what their friends suggest rather than their parent's advice or direct orders. It's called "peer pressure."

Many teenagers tell counselors they feel closer to their friends than they do to their parents. Arguments between children and their parents often increase during these years and it can be a difficult time for families. God understands the power of human influence and gives Christians clear direction about how to deal with it.

Wisdom About Friends

Lesson One

The **first** lesson in selecting friends is to never allow them to come between you and your walk with God. You will never have a more important friendship than the one you have with God through Jesus Christ His Son. A true friend will want you to have the deepest, best relationship possible with God. They will support you and encourage you in your walk with God. They will not be a hindrance in your Christian growth. Instead, they will stimulate your growth and look out for your spiritual health.

God wants us to love Him, worship Him and obey Him. He is so serious about this point that He gave Israel strict instructions about what to do if a family member or even their closest friend tried to turn them away from their relationship with God.

“If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, which is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which thou hast not known, thou, nor thy fathers; Namely, of the gods of the people which are round about you, nigh unto thee, or far off from thee, from the one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth; Thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him; neither shall thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal

him: But thou shalt surely kill him; thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people. And thou shalt stone him with stones, that he die; because he hath sought to thrust thee away from the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. And all Israel shall hear, and fear, and shall do no more any such wickedness as this is among you.”
Deuteronomy 13:6-11

The people of Israel often did not obey God and they were led away by friends and even family members to serve other gods. It was Israel's downfall many times through centuries of history. It is the downfall of many people today. Though we wouldn't stone people today for leading our children away from worshipping God, we understand the seriousness of this offense and should do everything we can to protect children and teens from these spiritual, emotional and physical dangers.

Friendship with God and friendship with the world are two drastically opposing forces. Israel had a choice to make thousands of years ago and we have a similar choice to make today. Jesus explained it clearly to His disciples.

“Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples. As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. These

things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you. Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you. These things I command you, that ye love one another. If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.” John 15:8-

19

Most of Christ’s disciples chose to follow Him and bear spiritual fruit, but one chose the world (Judas) and we know what kind of friend he was (traitor) and what kind of fruit he bore (bad). Children should be careful as they select friends. If they can’t see the dangers, their parents and teachers should point them out as clearly as possible.

“From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not.

Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts. Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.” James 4:1-4

Lesson Two

The **second** lesson in selecting friends is that a good friend is loyal. They will not desert you, especially during tough times. They will always stay close to you and care for you. They will find ways to share your burden and lighten it whenever and wherever possible. They will encourage and support you.

*“A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.”
Proverbs 17:17*

The writer to Hebrews tells us about God’s promise of loyalty to His children.

“Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” Hebrews 13:5

That is a quote from the Old Testament when Moses spoke about God taking Joshua and the people of Israel into the promised land.

“Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he

will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. And Moses called unto Joshua, and said unto him in the sight of all Israel, Be strong and of a good courage: for thou must go with this people unto the land which the LORD hath sworn unto their fathers to give them; and thou shalt cause them to inherit it. And the LORD, he it is that doth go before thee; he will be with thee, he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed.”
Deuteronomy 31:6-8

When Jesus spoke with His disciples after His resurrection, He sent them out to preach the life-changing message of His Gospel. He promised them He would be with them as they ministered.

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.” Matthew 28:19-20

God’s people can face anything and accomplish anything God wants because God will always be with us. He will never turn away, He will never change, He will never leave us alone.

“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.” James 1:17

A true friend loves at all times. That means today, tomorrow, next week, next month, next year, year after year.

Love does not mean a friend will always agree with us or give in to our selfish, harmful desires. A true friend will love us the way God loves us. They will care about our wellbeing and speak truthfully for our benefit. They will not be silent while we make major blunders in our lives. They will open their mouths and speak the truth to us in the way only a true friend can speak. Their friendship will make us better than what we may have been without their friendship. That's the kind of friend we want to have.

“Open rebuke is better than secret love. Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful ... Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart: so doth the sweetness of a man's friend by hearty counsel. Thine own friend, and thy father's friend, forsake not; neither go into thy brother's house in the day of thy calamity: for better is a neighbour that is near than a brother far off ... Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.” Proverbs 27:5-6, 9-10, 17

The greatest example of true friendship is Jesus Christ. No one loved us the way Jesus loves us. Many have given their lives to help a friend or save people from harm, but no one has died for the remission of people's sins to give them the gift of eternal life except for Jesus Christ. He gave His Body and His Blood freely so we could live with God forever.

“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in

him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.” John 3:14-17

“And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins ... Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall, and gathered unto him the whole band of soldiers. And they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe. And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews! And they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head. And after that they had mocked him, they took the robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify him. And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name: him they compelled to bear his cross. And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull, They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink. And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots. And sitting down they watched him there;

And set up over his head his accusation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS. Then were there two thieves crucified with him, one on the right hand, and another on the left. And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, And saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. Likewise also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God. The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth. Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Some of them that stood there, when they heard that, said, This man calleth for Elias. And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink. The rest said, Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him. Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.” Matthew 26:26-28; 27:27-50

One of the wonderful examples of true friendship in the Bible is the story of Ruth. Even though her husband was dead and her mother-in-law was returning to Israel, Ruth was loyal to her friend.

“And she said, Behold, thy sister in law is gone back unto her people, and unto her gods: return thou after thy sister in law. And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the LORD do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me.” Ruth 1:15-17

Ruth was a good friend to her mother-in-law and God blessed her greatly. Ruth became the wife of Boaz and was the great-grandmother of King David of Israel.

Another example of loyal friendship is David and Jonathan.

“And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. And Saul took him that day, and would let him go no more home to his father’s house. Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul. And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle.”

1 Samuel 18:1-4

Jonathan proved his love for David many times, especially in trying to keep his father, King Saul, from killing David. Jonathan was loyal to David until the day he died.

A good friend will support you in your personal walk with Christ and will stand with you at all times.

Lesson Three

The **third** lesson in selecting friends is to know what a bad friend looks like and not let them influence you to do wrong.

A bad friend is someone who uses people for their own advantage. They love things and use people. They are selfish and want what they want no matter who gets hurt. It's all about them and no one else. A bad friend will turn on their "friends" in a heartbeat if it serves their purpose. They will double-cross and desert others to gain an advantage or get out of trouble. They will also do everything they can to turn a Christian away from following after God.

We find a sad story of bad friends in 1 Kings 12. King Solomon died and his son Rehoboam became king. Look at how Rehoboam's longtime friends advised him and what happened because he followed their advice.

"And king Rehoboam consulted with the old men, that stood before Solomon his father while he yet lived, and said, How do ye advise that I may answer this people? And they spake unto him, saying, If thou wilt be a servant unto this people this day, and wilt serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be thy servants for ever. But he forsook the counsel of the old men, which they had given him, and

consulted with the young men that were grown up with him, and which stood before him: And he said unto them, What counsel give ye that we may answer this people, who have spoken to me, saying, Make the yoke which thy father did put upon us lighter? And the young men that were grown up with him spake unto him, saying, Thus shalt thou speak unto this people that spake unto thee, saying, Thy father made our yoke heavy, but make thou it lighter unto us; thus shalt thou say unto them, My little finger shall be thicker than my father's loins. And now whereas my father did lade you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke: my father hath chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions. So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam the third day, as the king had appointed, saying, Come to me again the third day. And the king answered the people roughly, and forsook the old men's counsel that they gave him; And spake to them after the counsel of the young men, saying, My father made your yoke heavy, and I will add to your yoke: my father also chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions. Wherefore the king hearkened not unto the people; for the cause was from the LORD, that he might perform his saying, which the LORD spake by Ahijah the Shilonite unto Jeroboam the son of Nebat. So when all Israel saw that the king hearkened not unto them, the people answered the king, saying, What portion have we in David? neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: to your tents, O Israel: now see to thine own house, David. So Israel departed unto their tents. But as for the children of Israel which dwelt in

the cities of Judah, Rehoboam reigned over them. Then king Rehoboam sent Adoram, who was over the tribute; and all Israel stoned him with stones, that he died. Therefore king Rehoboam made speed to get him up to his chariot, to flee to Jerusalem. So Israel rebelled against the house of David unto this day.” 1 Kings 12:6-19

Rehoboam’s friends wanted to take a more prominent place in the kingdom and get more things from the people, so they gave the king unwise, selfish advice. They advised the king to use the people of Israel to get things for themselves. That advice led to a rebellion that affected Israel for centuries. Bad advice from bad friends can affect a child’s life for many years, even for a lifetime and through many generations.

A bad friend will use division as a method of control in relationships. They will lie about other people in order to get ahead. They divide to conquer. Bad friends want to be first. They want their way about everything. They will do anything to get what they want. Their anger, deception and lies destroy lives.

“A froward man soweth strife: and a whisperer separateth chief friends.” Proverbs 16:28

“He that covereth a transgression seeketh love; but he that repeateth a matter separateth very friends.” Proverbs 17:9

“The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly.” Proverbs 26:22

An angry person does not make a good friend. They can have such an impact within a friendship that good people change and become something they weren't.

“Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go: Lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul.” Proverbs 22:24-25

Anger and rage are bad character qualities. A person who is angry and expresses rage needs help. They also need to be watched carefully for the possibility of affecting others negatively. Choose friends wisely. Look for people who are slow to get angry and careful in their actions toward others.

“A wrathful man stirreth up strife: but he that is slow to anger appeaseth strife.” Proverbs 15:18

“As coals are to burning coals, and wood to fire; so is a contentious man to kindle strife.” Proverbs 26:21

Notice the part pride can play in anger.

“He that is of a proud heart stirreth up strife: but he that putteth his trust in the LORD shall be made fat.” Proverbs 28:25

“An angry man stirreth up strife, and a furious man aboundeth in transgression. A man's pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit.” Proverbs 29:22-23

“Surely the churning of milk bringeth forth butter, and the wringing of the nose bringeth forth blood: so the forcing of wrath bringeth forth strife.” Proverbs 30:33

Angry people are often hateful people. Hatred is rooted deep in their heart. That is a dangerous character flaw and one that can take a child down a dangerous path to destruction. Teach your children to be cautious around people who hate. It is not easy to confront hate, but unless we do it will grow and become an evil vine that chokes the life out of a child, a church or a nation.

“Burning lips and a wicked heart are like a potsherd covered with silver dross. He that hateth dissembleth with his lips, and layeth up deceit within him; When he speaketh fair, believe him not: for there are seven abominations in his heart. Whose hatred is covered by deceit, his wickedness shall be shewed before the whole congregation. Whoso diggeth a pit shall fall therein: and he that rolleth a stone, it will return upon him. A lying tongue hateth those that are afflicted by it; and a flattering mouth worketh ruin.” Proverbs 26:23-28

Your child will probably have scores of friends during their lifetime. What their friends do and say will impact your child’s life in some way. Will it be positive or negative? Will your child’s friends lead them toward or away from commitment to God? These are serious questions that will have a big impact on your child and on you.

The Apostle Paul warns Christians about the danger of anger and strife. Notice that strife is mentioned in the same breath with rioting, drunkenness, chambering, wantonness and envying. He goes on to say those bad character qualities are fulfilling the lusts of the flesh.

“Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.” Romans 13:13-14

“For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?” 1 Corinthians 3:3

Look at other bad character qualities Paul mentions along with strife in this powerful verse from his second letter to the Corinthians. This is important spiritual business.

“For I fear, lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I would, and that I shall be found unto you such as ye would not: lest there be debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults: And lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and that I shall bewail many which have sinned already, and have not repented of the uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness which they have committed.” 2 Corinthians 12:20-21

Here's another tough list from the Apostle Paul.

“Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.” Galatians 5:19-21

God does not tell us what not to be without telling us what He wants us to be. He inspired the Apostle Paul to write these amazing words of encouragement toward Christian character.

“If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” Philippians 2:1-8

Christ is our highest example of righteous behavior. We should continually point our children toward Him for wisdom in every aspect of their lives.

One more note about choosing friends wisely. A bad friend is usually interested most in what people can do for them. They look for friends who can give them things they can't afford on their own. A bad friend will dump a poor friend for a rich one without hesitation. Beware of that person.

“The poor is hated even of his own neighbour: but the rich hath many friends.” Proverbs 14:20

“Wealth maketh many friends; but the poor is separated from his neighbour. A false witness shall not be unpunished, and he that speaketh lies shall not escape. Many will intreat the favour of the prince: and every man is a friend to him that giveth gifts.” Proverbs 19:4-6

Character makes the man or woman and that begins when they're a child. Know the people who are having the greatest influence on your children. Teach your young people to know good character and bad character. Make that an important part of your teaching ministry with them. Show them what God says is good and what He says is bad. Help them see good character in themselves and others. Remind them what God says about good friendships and bad friendships. Encourage them to have the strength to say no to bad friends. Support them in their decision. Help them make good friendships that will benefit them for the rest of their life and for eternity.

As for the bad friend, they need to know Jesus Christ as their personal savior, or if saved, they need to obey God's Word and do what He says is right. By no means does God want us to turn away from unsaved sinners or disobedient Christians. Christ called us to preach His Gospel to the lost and teach truth to His people. We need to know and teach our children to understand the difference between friends we can trust and people we can't trust yet because of their spiritual condition. We are called to be ambassadors for Christ, ministers of reconciliation, servants of God's Love. We are not to be proud and think more highly of ourselves than we should. We need to reach out to a dying world while also protecting ourselves from the dangers of that world. Our children need to know the difference.

Wisdom About Sexual Relationships

Another powerful relational influence on children and teenagers is sex. The sexual urges often become stronger than the influence of parents and other adults who care for the wellbeing of the child. God understands the power and addresses it powerfully and clearly in His Word.

We live in an extremely sexually-permissive society. Television, movies, magazines, books for young people, social media, Internet ... half-naked people in sexually-suggestive embrace ... it is literally everywhere. What is a parent to do trying to raise a child today to understand the importance of sexual morality?

First, let's be clear about the issue of sexual relations. Any type of sexual relationships outside of marriage is wrong. One of the primary words in the Bible for sinful sexual relations is "fornication." It is the Greek word *porneia* (the word pornography comes from it).

Here's what Jesus told His disciples about things that defile a person. Notice that fornication is in the list and Jesus said it was one of the things that defile a person.

"And Jesus said, Are ye also yet without understanding? Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught? But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil

thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man.” Matthew 15:16-20

Here’s what the Apostle James had to say about the behavior of Gentile believers. Notice that fornication is one of the behaviors he wanted them to stop doing.

“Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God: But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood.” Acts 15:19-20

Paul included illicit sexual relations as one of many things wicked people do.

“And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same,

but have pleasure in them that do them.” Romans 1:28-32

” Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God ... Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body ... Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that commiteth fornication sinneth against his own body. What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.” 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, 13, 18-20

Paul used the ancient Jews wandering in the desert as an example of what not to do. Notice that fornication is part of that.

“Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand.” 1 Corinthians 10:6-8

Paul wrote the Galatians about right and wrong ways to behave. Fornication is wrong. It's a work of the flesh and not what God wants for His children to do.

“Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.” Galatians 5:19-21

Paul also warned believers about sex outside marriage in other letters to the early churches.

“But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them.” Ephesians 5:3-7

“Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: For which things’ sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them.” Colossians 3:5-7

“For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour; Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God: That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified.” 1 Thessalonians 4:3-6

We should be able to agree, based on God’s Word, that sexual relations before marriage are wrong. The question now is how to teach that to children and teenagers so they understand the dangers to their bodies and minds and help them deal with sexual temptations that will surely come their way as they mature.

Lessons From the Proverbs

We turn again to the **Book of Proverbs** for insights into how to teach the wisdom of sexual purity to children. God tells children what other people will do to entice them to have sex outside of marriage. Here are several examples we can share with our children and young

people. It's also a good reminder for those of us who have been married many years.

Take a look at each of these verses from Proverbs and we'll build a list of the advice from the wisest human who ever lived. Keep in mind that Solomon's advice concerns the sexuality of Jews .. God's chosen and covenant people .. not pagan Gentiles.

It should be obvious to Christian parents that allowing their children to date non-Christian young people can lead to sexual immorality. What's not as obvious is that even Christians dating Christians has its own dangers.

“Discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee: To deliver thee from the way of the evil man, from the man that speaketh froward things; Who leave the paths of uprightness, to walk in the ways of darkness; Who rejoice to do evil, and delight in the frowardness of the wicked; Whose ways are crooked, and they froward in their paths: To deliver thee from the strange woman, even from the stranger which flattereth with her words; Which forsaketh the guide of her youth, and forgetteth the covenant of her God. For her house inclineth unto death, and her paths unto the dead. None that go unto her return again, neither take they hold of the paths of life. That thou mayest walk in the way of good men, and keep the paths of the righteous.” Proverbs 2:11-20

“My son, attend unto my wisdom, and bow thine ear to my understanding: That thou mayest regard discretion, and that thy lips may keep knowledge. For the lips of a strange woman drop as an honeycomb, and her mouth is smoother than oil: But her end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a twoedged sword. Her feet go down to death; her steps take hold on hell. Lest thou shouldest ponder the path of life, her ways are moveable, that thou canst not know them. Hear me now therefore, O ye children, and depart not from the words of my mouth. Remove thy way far from her, and come not nigh the door of her house: Lest thou give thine honour unto others, and thy years unto the cruel: Lest strangers be filled with thy wealth; and thy labours be in the house of a stranger; And thou mourn at the last, when thy flesh and thy body are consumed, And say, How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof; And have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me! I was almost in all evil in the midst of the congregation and assembly. Drink waters out of thine own cistern, and running waters out of thine own well. Let thy fountains be dispersed abroad, and rivers of waters in the streets. Let them be only thine own, and not strangers’ with thee. Let thy fountain be blessed: and rejoice with the wife of thy youth. Let her be as the loving hind and pleasant roe; let her breasts satisfy thee at all times; and be thou ravished always with her love. And why wilt thou, my son, be ravished with a strange woman, and embrace the bosom of a stranger? For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD, and he

pondereth all his goings. His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins. He shall die without instruction; and in the greatness of his folly he shall go astray.” Proverbs 5:1-23

“For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life: To keep thee from the evil woman, from the flattery of the tongue of a strange woman. Lust not after her beauty in thine heart; neither let her take thee with her eyelids. For by means of a whorish woman a man is brought to a piece of bread: and the adulteress will hunt for the precious life. Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned? Can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burned? So he that goeth in to his neighbour’s wife; whosoever toucheth her shall not be innocent. Men do not despise a thief, if he steal to satisfy his soul when he is hungry; But if he be found, he shall restore sevenfold; he shall give all the substance of his house. But whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding: he that doeth it destroyeth his own soul. A wound and dishonour shall he get; and his reproach shall not be wiped away. For jealousy is the rage of a man: therefore he will not spare in the day of vengeance. He will not regard any ransom; neither will he rest content, though thou givest many gifts.” Proverbs 6:23-35

“Say unto wisdom, Thou art my sister; and call understanding thy kinswoman: That they may keep thee from the strange woman, from the stranger which flattereth with her words. For at the window of my house I looked through my casement, And beheld among the simple ones, I discerned among the youths, a young man void of understanding, Passing through the street near her corner; and he went the way to her house, In the twilight, in the evening, in the black and dark night: And, behold, there met him a woman with the attire of an harlot, and subtil of heart. (She is loud and stubborn; her feet abide not in her house: Now is she without, now in the streets, and lieth in wait at every corner.) So she caught him, and kissed him, and with an impudent face said unto him, I have peace offerings with me; this day have I payed my vows. Therefore came I forth to meet thee, diligently to seek thy face, and I have found thee. I have decked my bed with coverings of tapestry, with carved works, with fine linen of Egypt. I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon. Come, let us take our fill of love until the morning: let us solace ourselves with loves. For the goodman is not at home, he is gone a long journey: He hath taken a bag of money with him, and will come home at the day appointed. With her much fair speech she caused him to yield, with the flattering of her lips she forced him. He goeth after her straightway, as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks; Till a dart strike through his liver; as a bird hasteth to the snare, and knoweth not that it is for his life. Harken unto me now therefore, O ye children, and attend to

the words of my mouth. Let not thine heart decline to her ways, go not astray in her paths. For she hath cast down many wounded: yea, many strong men have been slain by her. Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death.”
Proverbs 7:4-27

“My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways. For a whore is a deep ditch; and a strange woman is a narrow pit. She also lieth in wait as for a prey, and increaseth the transgressors among men. Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine. Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder. Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things. Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast. They have stricken me, shalt thou say, and I was not sick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not: when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again.”
Proverbs 23:26-35

Lessons From King Solomon

These are just some of the examples of sexual advice from King Solomon. Let's look at what he taught his children and what we can teach our sons and daughters about sexuality.

- Discretion can preserve our daughters from boys/men who have left the paths of uprightness to walk in the ways of darkness and love to do evil.
- Discretion can also preserve our sons from girls/women who flatter them with their words and have forgotten the advice of wise Christians from their youth and the Word of God concerning sexuality. The impact of boys and young men having sexual relations can last a lifetime (“For her house inclineth unto death, and her paths unto the dead. None that go unto her return again, neither take they hold of the paths of life” ... “But her end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a twoedged sword. Her feet go down to death; her steps take hold on hell. Lest thou shouldest ponder the path of life, her ways are moveable, that thou canst not know them. Hear me now therefore, O ye children, and depart not from the words of my mouth. Remove thy way far from her, and come not nigh the door of her house: Lest thou give thine honour unto others, and thy years unto the cruel.”)
- Marriage is between one man and one woman and the relationship should continue for a lifetime. Teach your sons not to be drawn away by another woman. God is watching and

- sexual sin leads to great folly and a bad end to one's life. (Drink waters out of thine own cistern, and running waters out of thine own well. Let thy fountains be dispersed abroad, and rivers of waters in the streets. Let them be only thine own, and not strangers' with thee. Let thy fountain be blessed: and rejoice with the wife of thy youth. Let her be as the loving hind and pleasant roe; let her breasts satisfy thee at all times; and be thou ravished always with her love. And why wilt thou, my son, be ravished with a strange woman, and embrace the bosom of a stranger? For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD, and he pondereth all his goings. His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins. He shall die without instruction; and in the greatness of his folly he shall go astray.”)
- Teach your children about the dangers of adultery. It can literally save their life. (To keep thee from the evil woman, from the flattery of the tongue of a strange woman. Lust not after her beauty in thine heart; neither let her take thee with her eyelids. For by means of a whorish woman a man is brought to a piece of bread: and the adulteress will hunt for the precious life. Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned? Can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burned? So he that goeth in to his neighbour's wife; whosoever toucheth her shall not be innocent. Men do not despise a thief, if he steal to satisfy his soul when he is hungry; But if he be found, he shall restore sevenfold; he shall give all the substance of his house.

- But whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding: he that doeth it destroyeth his own soul. A wound and dishonour shall he get; and his reproach shall not be wiped away. For jealousy is the rage of a man: therefore he will not spare in the day of vengeance. He will not regard any ransom; neither will he rest content, though thou givest many gifts” ... “With her much fair speech she caused him to yield, with the flattering of her lips she forced him. He goeth after her straightway, as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks; Till a dart strike through his liver; as a bird hasteth to the snare, and knoweth not that it is for his life.”)
- Teach your children that mixing alcohol and sexuality is dangerous. That’s also true about mixing drugs with dating. (“Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine. Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder. Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things. Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast. They have stricken me, shalt thou say, and I was not sick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not: when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again.”)

Lessons From the Apostle Paul

Even if we teach our children and grandchildren just these five truths about sexuality, we can help save them from the terrible results of unwise relationships and evil behavior. The key is to do it and do it now. Don't wait to teach your children wisdom.

“All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. Foods for the stomach and the stomach for foods, but God will destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. And God both raised up the Lord and will also raise us up by His power. Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a harlot? Certainly not! Or do you not know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body with her? For ‘the two,’ He says, ‘shall become one flesh.’ But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him. Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.” 1 Corinthians 6:12-20

Children from Christian homes will generally agree with their parents about sexual standards until they reach the early to middle teen years. If they are part of a strong youth group or other Christian influence (like Christian martial arts), their commitment to Christian standards about sex may continue through their teen years and into adulthood. However, the combination of peer pressure, hormones and what the world tells our young people about sex may lead some Christian young people to experiment with sex.

In addition to telling children about why God does not want them to have sex before marriage, we can also tell them about the positive aspects of waiting until marriage. God has called us to holiness and He knows a person committed to holiness will be healthier, happier and often live longer. Those are all positive aspects. It's also such a blessing for young people when they save themselves sexually for their husband or wife.

“Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more. For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour; Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God: That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified. For God

*hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.” 1
Thessalonians 4:1-7*

Paul wrote about both the benefits of sex within marriage and remaining single and celibate in his letter to the Corinthians. It has a lot of great wisdom for us and our children. The main points here are sex within marriage and no sex outside of marriage.

“Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency ... I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I. But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn. And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband: But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife ... Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord: yet I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord

to be faithful. I suppose therefore that this is good for the present distress, I say, that it is good for a man so to be. Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife. But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned. Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh: but I spare you ... There is difference also between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit: but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband. And this I speak for your own profit; not that I may cast a snare upon you, but for that which is comely, and that ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction. But if any man think that he behaveth himself uncomely toward his virgin, if she pass the flower of her age, and need so require, let him do what he will, he sinneth not: let them marry. Nevertheless he that standeth stedfast in his heart, having no necessity, but hath power over his own will, and hath so decreed in his heart that he will keep his virgin, doeth well. So then he that giveth her in marriage doeth well; but he that giveth her not in marriage doeth better. The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord. But she is happier if she so abide, after my judgment: and I think also that I have the Spirit of God.” 1 Corinthians 7:1-5, 8-11, 25-28, 34-

Sexually transmitted diseases are injuring and killing millions of people every year. Teaching our children the wisdom of sexual relations within marriage will keep them from harm in many aspects of their lives: spiritual, physical, mental, emotional and social.

This is so important to the lives of our children. Please know our prayers are with you as you teach them wisdom about friendships and sexual relationships

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