

Children – Bringing Joy to Parents Proverbs

Introduction:

1. It is God's plan that children bring joy to their parents. Let's read Proverbs 23:24-25. Notice the phrases, "*rejoice*," "*have joy*," "*be glad*."
2. This is God's plan, but now let's talk reality! Children have the potential to bring unspeakable grief (10:1), shame (19:26), and reproach. 19:26
3. No parents look at their newborn baby and plan for their child to do atrocities, or to rebel, or to live in a destructive way. For many people, it is their dream to have a child (whether by pregnancy or adoption). When they do, their hearts are thrilled. Their dream has come true.
4. But reality is that the dream can become a nightmare once that child begins to grow, and walk, and talk, and make decisions, etc.
5. How do parents prevent this from happening? Did you know that the Bible has the answers? The Bible is a very practical book, and God's Word gives parents some divine, timeless principles that will work when implemented. God hasn't left us in the dark!
6. Let's look at some of these divine, timeless principles from the book of Proverbs.
7. How can children bring joy to their parents?

First, parents must have a plan and goal.

1. Please look at Proverbs 22:6. Did you notice the word, "*train*?" It comes from a word meaning "to narrow." What does that have to do with child-rearing? Let me illustrate.
 - **Illustration:** If a football team has an opponent, and they are preparing for the game, the coach doesn't just say, "I want you to run, pass, and catch the football, and stop them from doing it." That is too broad. He has to narrow the game plan to more specific plays, strategies, and goals.
2. Many parents have no real strategy, or well-defined plans, or goals in the training of their children.
3. They are like that football coach. They are way too broad. They are just trying to keep them from getting into trouble. "*Train*" indicates that you, as a parent, have an active and positive goal.
4. Christian parents have a plan and goal that involves helping their child to grow up to be godly, not just good. You are training them to love Jesus Christ and to walk in fellowship with Him.
5. Verse 26 says, "...*the way he should go*..." This means "a course of life; a road."
6. We are proactively training our children to follow a definite course. Therefore a wise parent carefully monitors what video games their child is playing, what music they are listening to, what movies they are watching, what friends they are hanging around with, etc.
 - As you look at these things, you ask, "Are these things helping and encouraging my children to follow the godly course I want them to take?"

Second, parents must apply consistent correction.

1. Let's examine Proverbs 22:15. Did you notice there is something within every child's heart that a parent needs to reach and then drive out? It is foolishness. It is a variant of the word "folly," which means "thickheadedness; senselessness; disobedience."
2. What are ways that we know our children are partaking in folly or foolishness?
 - They are deceitful and deceptive. Proverbs 14:8
 - They lack self-control, exhibiting angry outbursts. Proverbs 14:17, 29
 - They lack good decision making and won't listen to instruction. Proverbs 16:21-22
 - They exhibit an arrogant, know-it-all attitude. Proverbs 18:12-13
 - They cannot control their mouths. Proverbs 15:2, 14
3. Every child is capable of exhibiting these foolish traits. This is why God gave children parents – to correct this behavior and drive the foolishness out. If parents condone it, or excuse it, or tolerate it, or simply yell and warn, they will never drive the foolishness out.
4. If children are going to bring joy to our lives, they must be corrected when they act foolishly. Kids that are not corrected become brats. The result? Proverbs 30:11

Third, parents must replace foolishness with wisdom.

1. Our goal is not to simply drive out the foolishness. We want to replace it with wisdom. 29:15
 - It is not just about keeping out of the wrong places, but teaching them to love to go to the right places (church, youth group, etc.).
 - It is not enough for them to not look at the wrong things. Do they love God's Word and Truth?
 - It is not enough that they don't curse and swear. Have they learned to speak with grace and kindness?
2. Parents, we must instill wisdom in our children. 15:20-21
3. Kids need clear direction. They need boundaries (1:8). They need to know that there are consequences when they cross those boundaries. This will impart wisdom to them the rest of their lives.

Fourth, parents must provide godly instruction.

1. Let's read 31:1. Isn't this interesting? King Lemuel learned this from his mother.
2. God's design is that the parents be the primary source of influence and instruction in a child's life (the first five years are so crucial).
3. Trust me, there will be forces and influences competing with you, trying to instruct your child with the wisdom of this world. 19:26-27
4. Parents, it is our job to provide godly instruction for our children from God's Word. 1:8, 4:1, 6:23
5. Have you ever met a kid that won't listen to anybody? Why is this? It's because the parents never taught that child how to receive instruction. This is so crucial. 4:13, 19:20, 13:18

In Conclusion:

1. All of these principles that we have shared involved a key word – TIME!
2. Parents, we cannot pawn off the responsibility of raising our children to somebody else. It isn't the church's, youth group's, or school's job to raise our children.
3. It is our job, and thankfully God gives us the insight in how to do it the right way.