



## FATHERLY WISDOM

**Introduction:** We have all been deeply effected by our fathers, regardless of how well or poorly they showed up for their role. Fathers, like mothers, are hugely significant people in our lives, which is why the book of Proverbs has so much to say about them. Whether we are blessed enough to have good relationships with our own fathers or not, we all have one thing that we can do, and that is pray for our fathers, or for the fathers around us, that they would be the kind of fathers that this world needs. God has designed the father in the home to bear a responsibility to instruct his family, and in order for a family to flourish, the family needs to respond to the father's Biblical instruction.

**This Week's Primary Text: Proverbs 4:1-9**

### Sermon Points:

#### 1. Wise and Godly fathers nurture their families through instruction

By nature, we do not gravitate towards wisdom, but we lean effortlessly to what feels good in the moment, which is foolishness. Children need to be taught that that is not a wise way to live. Without being taught how to live a mature life, we would all be a mess. Biblical wisdom, is far superior to the wisdom of the world, because it comes directly from the Designer, himself.

Worldly dads can do a good job of teaching their children how to be decent people, responsible citizens and how to take care of others, which is good, and highly necessary. You can often identify people who have been parented well, because of the way that they view themselves and the world around them.

But, even good parenting, in the world, lacks the real wisdom that is needed from God. Only scripture can:

- shape how we are really meant to view the world, and how to respond to ourselves and our environment.
- deal with the sin in our hearts and lead us to repentance and faith
- lead us to living a life of absolute integrity, without any selfish motives or agendas attached to our choices.
- help instruct us on how to honour God in everything that we do.

Without scripture, we cannot live a God-honoring life, which is why one of the primary roles of a father is to instruct his family on how to live biblically. This means, that a father needs to create time and space to talk to his children, and to teach them, not just what scripture says, but what it means and how to apply it to their individual lives. This would require fathers to know their children, and to impart scripture to them at the age and level that is appropriate to them.

**Fathers:** your family should know that your voice brings wisdom, help and nurturing to them, through the scriptures.





## 2. Wise and Godly fathers nurture their families out of love

Parents want the best for their children because they love them. If the highest good for a child is to know God, and how to live a God-honoring life, then a father would want to give them that.

Pouring Godly wisdom into a family gives them two things: protection and honour. Through Godly and biblical instruction, Fathers can help their families to make wise decisions in every single area of their lives. Through their own understanding of the scriptures, their experiences, both good and bad, they will be able to help their families to live flourishing lives, through their wise instruction. The wisdom of the scriptures can be applied to every part of our lives; emotional, intellectual and physical. But the greatest need, is the spiritual. Fathers need to instruct their families on how much God loves them, and how they can treasure Christ in their hearts.

In order for a father to love his family in this way, he needs to have experienced the love of Father God himself, and to be in relationship with the Father. Fatherhood is a huge task and needs the power of the Holy Spirit to do it well. In addition to this, we need community to help fathers be better fathers. For those who are blessed to be married, part of being in a team with a spouse, is to learn how to be better parents, *together*. Husbands and wives can and should talk about how to develop and grow in their parenting decisions and goals, *together*. But that's not where the help ends. The body of Christ is full of people who have different strengths and weaknesses to ours. We should get together and learn from one another, as well as support one another in the parenting journey. Godly parenting can and should be far more community oriented than we naturally desire or allow. Mothers have a huge role to play in whether fathers succeed in the nurturing of their children or not. Encouragement and support go a very long way, and children pick up on respectful and supportive attitudes from parent towards each other, which directly impacts how they will receive and respond instruction.

Not everyone has got a good story about their fathers, and there are several people in our community, who have deep wounding from their fathers, for a variety of reasons. We cannot reverse the past, but we can find God's redemption in our present, through forgiveness and letting go of bitterness and unfulfilled expectations. We can also receive God's healing in these broken and wounded areas of our hearts.

For some of us, forgiveness may even allow for a new season or new type of relationship with our fathers, which would not have been possible without our forgiveness. We did not have the choice of who fathered us or how well they did, but we do have the choice to embrace God's forgiveness and to extend it to the fathers who have hurt and disappointed us.





## Discussion Questions:

1. Why is worldly wisdom for parenting insufficient to develop mature and truly wise children?
2. Why is the commitment to teach our families about God's love for them, and how they can treasure Christ in their hearts, an act of love itself?
3. How does the teaching of Godly wisdom from scripture, provide both protection and nurturing to our families?
4. If you, or someone else you know, has failed in being a nurturer to your family, through Biblical instruction, how can this message still help you? (I.e. What do you think God would want you to know, or how can you grow from this, even now?)
5. Let's share our experiences with one other. We may have had fathers who did this well, or seen other's fathers model this well. Or we may even be experiencing this done in our own families well. Some fathers have never seen this done and do not know where to start. What are some practical ways for fathers to start getting this form of nurturing started in their families?
6. Why is it impossible to lead a family in Godly wisdom unless the father, has himself, experienced the love of God, and is in an active relationship with him?

### *Personal Reflection Questions:*

7. For those who have been deeply wounded by their fathers, why is forgiveness an essential key to your healing?
8. If you have a father with whom you have very little relationship, is there any possible means of reconciliation and redemption between you? What do you think God is asking you to do here?
9. For those of you who are fathers, and know you have failed your children, what do you think God would want you to do, in response to this message? I.e. what do you think redemption could look like for your family?
10. Is there a way that God could use you in the fathering role, in the life of someone in our community? Who is God putting on your heart to come alongside?

