

**The Wisdom of Proverbs: Honoring Family**  
Based on *Wisdom: Making Life Work* by Bill Hybels

I. Honor Within Our Families

- a. The significance of honor to building and sustaining strong relationships and families.
- b. Lifelong marriage and the significance of working out our problems.
- c. Good times, great times, bad times, boring times.
- d. “The only kind of marriage the writer of Proverbs understands is a lifelong marriage. He would patiently listen to all the current banter about no-fault divorces and serial marriages, and then he would say again, ‘Rejoice in the spouse of your youth. When you get married, stay married. Make compromises. Get help. Work it out. Fast, pray, try and try and try again. Do whatever you have to do to stay together. Make the most out of your marriage. There is no other way. Strong marriages are the foundation for strong families.’”
- e. “The greater security between mates, the greater the security children will have in their relationships with their parents, with their siblings, with themselves, and with God.” Strong relationships beget strong relationships.
- f. The myth of the perfect family.

II. Some preliminary questions

- a. What are two of the best family memories you can recall?
  
  
  
- b. What makes these memories stick out in your mind?
  
  
  
- c. What is the earliest family memory that you can recall?

III. Study Proverbs 15:17 and 17:1 and answer the following questions:

<sup>17</sup>Better a meal of vegetables where there is love  
than a fattened calf with hatred.

<sup>1</sup>Better a dry crust with peace and quiet  
than a house full of feasting, with strife

- a. How would you paraphrase the message of these two verses?
  
  
  
- b. Many of the “rich and famous” go through multiple marriages and spend little time with their own children. Why do you think they remain the objects of so many people’s envy?

IV. Study Proverbs 21:9 and 21:19 and answer the following questions:

<sup>9</sup>Better to live on the corner of the roof  
than share a house with a quarrelsome wife.

<sup>19</sup>Better to live in a desert  
than with a quarrelsome and ill-tempered wife.

- a. Briefly describe what you think it would be like to live on the corner of a flat rooftop or in a desert (minus an air-conditioned house and a lawn with a sprinkler system!).

- b. How would the above living situations be better than living with a quarrelsome and ill-tempered spouse?
- c. Why is it so easy to be quarrelsome and ill-tempered with the people we are closest to? (*Some editorializing from Wes: This strikes me as a very important question.*)

V. Reflect on Proverbs 19:18 and answer the following questions:

<sup>18</sup>Discipline your son, for in that there is hope; do not be a willing party to his death.

- a. Recall a time as a child when you were disciplined in a loving way, if not by a parent then by a teacher or other adult. What were the long-term results?
- b. How does disciplining children offer them hope?
- c. Consider the discipline of God when we do wrong. How does God's discipline offer us hope rather than death?

VI. Reflect on Proverbs 17:6 and answer the following questions:

<sup>6</sup>Children's children are a crown to the aged, and parents are the pride of their children.

- a. Describe this proverb's picture of the mutual attitude parents and children should have toward one another.
- b. Do you know a family that has this kind of mutual love between parents and children? If so, what are these families like?
- c. How could you express your appreciation to your parents for what they have done for you?

VII. Some points to consider for application:

- a. Consider whether or not you might tend to blame other family members for problems. Search your heart for what that you might contribute to problems through your actions, words, or attitudes. Commit yourself to improvement and ask for God's help in the process.
- b. Resolve to be a godly family member, whether or not you think you have a godly family.
- c. Thank God for the gift of family, even if your own family experience has been scarred by mistakes, sin, and harsh words. Pray for God's blessings of peace and mutual understanding on your family as you seek to improve each day.

VIII. Next Week: Proverbs and Managing Anger