

Wisdom For the Family

Proverbs 24:11-12

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It's probably not appropriate for a Packers fan to bring up the "double doink" field goal missed by Bears kicker Cody Parkey in the closing seconds of their game with the Eagles a couple weeks ago...but I'm going to anyway. Some fans were so upset they sent him death threats.

In contrast to this, I was struck by the words of life spoken by his teammate Kyle Long: *"I just told him, 'Dude, you had half our points today.' At the end of the day, it's a team thing. We lost as a team. We win as a team...we could have done better in a lot of areas."*

Another example of the power of words took place this past Sunday when the Eagles were driving against the Saints late in the fourth quarter. It looked like they were going to retake the lead when Nick Foles, the Eagles' quarterback threw a bullet to one of his favorite targets, Alshon Jeffery. Jeffery, who hadn't dropped a pass all game, had the ball sail through his hands and into the arms of an Eagle, the interception sealing the game.

Jeffery dropped to the ground, devastated and humiliated. Nick Foles went up to him right away and launched life into him. According to Jeffery, Foles *"told me he loved playing with me and we wouldn't have won a Super Bowl without me."*

I suspect some of you have missed the goal or dropped the ball in your family relationships and responsibilities. I pray this message will contain words of life to help each of us get up off the ground and in the process, that we would help those around us.

Two weeks ago we learned *to be wise in God's eyes, we must revere and draw near in the New Year*. Last week we discovered our words have the power to lacerate a life or to give grace to people. What comes out of our mouths either assassinates or encourages. We were challenged to make this commitment: *I will use my tongue to launch life instead of delivering death*.

As we continue in our series on Proverbs, our focus is on discovering practical wisdom for the family.

Anthropologist John Unwin conducted an in-depth study of 80 civilizations that have come and gone over the last 4,000 years. He discovered each started with strong moral values and a heavy emphasis on the family, but these values eventually declined and the family began to fracture. Because the home hemorrhaged, all 80 nations imploded and eventually collapsed.

The Book of Proverbs is both a marriage manual and a parenting primer. We're going to look at several passages and give a synopsis for each of the key roles on the family team: husbands, wives, parents, grandparents, and children. We'll conclude by focusing on how we can protect the smallest family members, the preborn.

I recognize this topic may be difficult for some of you. Perhaps you've been deeply hurt by a spouse. Some of you are divorced or widowed, and others of you have never been married. Maybe you've not been able to have children or your kids have gone astray, and in some cases, your parents did some pretty bad things to you. My intent is not to make you feel guilty. I simply want to share what Proverbs teaches on the family so those who are currently married will treasure their spouses more, so grandparents and parents will take it up a notch, and so children and young adults will develop greater respect and honor for those God has put in authority over them.

Wisdom For Husbands

Proverbs provides at least three key challenges for husbands:

1. Rejoice in your wife. One of the best ways to honor your bride is to find joy in your relationship with her. Proverbs 5:18: *“Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice in the wife of your youth.”* Husbands, when was the last time you thanked God for your wife? Proverbs 18:22 says divine delight is poured out on a husband who recognizes God's goodness in the gift of a wife: *“He who finds a wife finds a good thing and obtains favor from the Lord.”* I included this verse in my vows to Beth over 33 years ago.

2. Value your bride. Proverbs 31:10: *“An excellent wife who can find? She is far more precious than jewels.”* Don't take your gift for granted. Value her by spending time with her. Proverbs 31:28 says, *“Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her.”* Guys, does your wife know she is more important to you than anything else in your life? That's a challenge during the playoffs, isn't it?

3. Pursue purity and faithfulness. The Book of Proverbs provides some graphic warnings against adultery in Proverbs 5:22: *“The iniquities of the wicked ensnare him, and he is held fast in the cords of his sin.”* If you're starting to stray from your marriage, don't be fooled by the allure of someone else. One of the best ways to maintain your faithfulness is to be captivated by your wife's beauty as you rejoice in her and value her for who God has made her to be. Proverbs 5:15: *“Drink water from your own cistern, flowing water from your own well.”*

Wisdom for Wives

1. Focus on faithfulness. Not surprisingly, wives are to work at maintaining faithfulness as well. Proverbs 2:17-18 warns a wife *“Who forsakes the companion of her youth and forgets the covenant of her God; for her house sinks down to death, and her paths to the departed.”* God's plan is for monogamous marathon marriages between one man and one woman that last a lifetime.

2. Cultivate your character. Proverbs 12:4: *“An excellent wife is the crown of her husband, but she who brings shame is like rotteness in his bones.”* One of the best things you can do for your marriage is to cultivate your character by giving attention to your spiritual development. You certainly don't want to drive your husband away by constant quarreling, or even nagging.

Proverbs 21:9 in one paraphrase paints a vivid picture: ***“It is better to live in the corner of an attic than with a crabby woman in a lovely home.”***

3. Bring good to your husband. The third way to reinforce your husband’s significance is by following the example found in Proverbs 31. We don’t have time to study this chapter in-depth, but verse 12 provides a good summary of a godly wife’s desire: ***“She does him good, and not harm, all the days of her life.”*** Do you think the best of your man by encouraging and building him up? Or, are you more like the woman in 27:15: ***“A continual dripping on a rainy day and a quarrelsome wife are alike.”***

Wisdom For Parents

Proverbs gives several admonitions for parents. Let’s focus on just three.

1. Revere God. Fearing God is not only the way to wisdom, it’s the prerequisite for parenting. Proverbs 14:26: ***“In the fear of the Lord one has strong confidence, and his children will have a refuge.”*** When God is our number one priority, our kids will find our reverence to be a place of refuge.

2. Provide instruction. One of the most significant parenting jobs is to teach and train our kids. Proverbs 1:8: ***“Hear, my son, your father’s instruction, and forsake not your mother’s teaching.”*** As we learned last week, our words have a tremendous impact on people, especially those in our family. Proverbs 16:21: ***“Sweetness of speech increases persuasiveness.”*** If we want our children to learn, we must use winsome words of life with them.

3. Deliver discipline. God has positioned parents strategically in order to provide discipline and correction for children. Proverbs 29:15: ***“The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child left to himself brings shame to his mother.”*** When we correct our children, it’s important to do so out of love. Proverbs 3:12: ***“For the Lord reproofs him whom he loves, as a father the son in whom he delights.”*** If you delight in your kids, you will discipline them. In other words, we’re really doing our kids a favor when we discipline them. Someone has said, *“The parent who is afraid to put his foot down will have children who step on their toes.”*

Wisdom for Grandparents

Proverbs also has words of wisdom for grandparents. One grandparent told me, *“If I had known how wonderful grandchildren are, I would have had them before I had kids!”*

For two solid hours a grandma talked about her grandchildren to a man sitting next to her on a plane. She showed him pictures of all eight grandkids and described each one to him. After talking for so long she suddenly realized she had dominated the whole conversation. As the plane was preparing to land, she said, *“Oh, I’ve done all the talking, and I’m so sorry. I know you probably have some things you want to say. Please, tell me...what do you think of my grandchildren?”*

1. Make a difference in the lives of the next generation. Proverbs 17:6: “*Grandchildren are the crown of the aged, and the glory of children is their fathers.*” Your children may have kept you poor, but their children will make you rich.

2. Leave an inheritance of wisdom, knowledge and faith. Proverbs 13:22 says, “*A good man leaves an inheritance to his children’s children...*” Live your life now in order to that will continue long after you die.

3. Before passing on, make sure you pass it on by leaving a legacy. Psalm 78:4: “*We will not hide them from their children, but tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the LORD, and his might, and the wonders that he has done.*” As a grandparent, you are designed with a grand purpose to make a grand impact. Some of you are bridging the gap between parents and children and God is using you mightily. You are “grand” in my eyes! Keep it up.

Edgewood member and new grandma Beth Cullett wrote a post this week called, “The Incredible Weightless Weight of my Child’s Child.” We included a link on Sermon Extras on our website if you’d like a copy. I love how she captures the wonder and weight of grandparenting...

I won’t be around forever.

Someday I will be nothing more than a handful of memories shared on holidays, a dozen stories passed around the dinner table, and a hundred bedside prayers providing protection for years to come.

But when I’m gone, there will be people in this world who will remember what my house smelled like and how good my pumpkin cookies tasted fresh from the oven.

Especially one tiny scrap of a boy that has only just arrived.

He doesn’t know this yet, but he is my replacement. And not just mine, but that of all his grandparents who love him till it hurts, but who will be long gone before he reaches the age I am as I sit here writing this blog.

This does not make me sad.

This makes my heart grow heavy and my eyes get watery, but it’s not from sadness.

It’s from some kind of strange and sacred happiness I’ve never known before. I thought I felt it as a young mother, but there were burdens and questions and uncertainty tangled up with the joy, and I’m no longer sure it’s the same.

Now I’m a generation removed from the sleepless nights and lingering self-doubt.

Now I rest here quietly with my arms full, figuratively and literally, with the incredible weightless weight of my child’s child.

I would move mountains for him. I would cross deserts for him. I would (and I will) stand against the powers of Hell for him.

And one day he'll make something of himself while I'll move on to meet my Maker.

But this burden is not heavy at all. He nestles in my arms as naturally as breath fills my lungs. He gives me the strength of ten men (or should I say women) as he hiccups and breathes and makes scrunched-up faces in his sleep.

He's lighter than a gallon of milk,

but he carries a lot of weight

in this world.

Wisdom for Children

Proverbs also provides practical principles for children, teenagers, and young adults.

1. Grow in wisdom. Much of the Book of Proverbs is arranged as words of wisdom from a father to his growing son. Proverbs 2 challenges children to accept wisdom and apply understanding. Proverbs 10:1: ***“A wise son makes a glad father, but a foolish son is a sorrow to his mother.”***

I attended Mainspring, our ministry to college and 20s this past Sunday night and heard Pastor Kyle challenge young adults not to ruin their lives. Here were his three main points.

- Believe this life is all about you
- Do whatever you want
- Live for immediate gratification

To learn more about how young adults can ruin their lives, go to Sermon Extras on our website.

2. Choose friends wisely. Some of you are struggling spiritually because of the friends you hang out with. Listen to Proverbs 28:7 in the Amplified paraphrase: ***“Whoever keeps the law of God and man is a wise son, but he who is a companion of gluttons and the carousing, self-indulgent and extravagant, shames his father.”***

3. Listen to instruction. When I was younger I often blew off what my parents told me. Can I encourage you to listen to what your mom or dad are trying to tell you? 19:27: ***“Cease to hear instruction, my son, and you will stray from the words of knowledge.”*** I know many of you don't believe this, but even the discipline you receive when you mess up is a good thing. Proverbs 15:5: ***“A fool despises his father's instruction, but whoever heeds reproof is prudent.”***

4. Respect your parents. Some of you may feel like your parents are out to lunch, and sometimes we are, but it's important to respect them. That sure beats the alternative graphically

presented in Proverbs 30:17: *“The eye that mocks a father and scorns to obey a mother will be picked out by the ravens of the valley and eaten by the vultures.”*

Let’s summarize.

- Husbands, work at affirming your wife’s need for *security*.
- Wives, strive to make your husband know he is *significant*.
- Parents, provide an atmosphere in the home where your children feel *supported*.
- Grandparents, focus on making your grandkids feel *special*.
- And children and young adults; follow God’s ways in order to be *successful*.

Truth and Grace

There’s another group of often forgotten family members – the *preborn children*. On this Sanctity of Life weekend, we affirm, along with thousands of other churches, every family member, from conception on, is an image bearer of God, stamped with divine dignity and worthy of protection.

Incidentally, abortion is the leading cause of death in the world today. Worldwide in the past year, nearly 42 million lost their lives through abortion, 8.2 million due to cancer, 5 million from smoking and 1.7 million from HIV/AIDS.

So today we commemorate Roe v. Wade, or more accurately we commiserate, the landmark Supreme Court decision handed down on January 22, 1973. Since this deadly decision nearly 61 million children in America have lost their lives through abortion – that’s the combined population of 26 states. Can you imagine every single inhabitant of *Illinois, Iowa, Kentucky, Oregon, Oklahoma, Connecticut, Mississippi, Arkansas, Kansas, Utah, Nevada, New Mexico, West Virginia, Nebraska, Idaho, Maine, New Hampshire, Hawaii, Rhode Island, Montana, Delaware, South Dakota, Alaska, North Dakota, Vermont, and Wyoming* being wiped out?

Rick Ezell writes: *“Not since the controversial issue of slavery ripped America apart at the seams has one subject troubled the country like abortion.”*

Let me quickly say three things.

1. Many churches have caved on biblical truth. We won’t do that at Edgewood. Our aim is not to be politically correct, but to be biblically correct. Because we stand on the Bible, we strive to communicate what the Bible says on all topics – the exclusivity of Christ, God as the Creator, the definition of marriage as one man and one woman for life, and life begins at conception. It’s time for churches to speak out... and to reach out to those who are confused and ensnared. Too many pastors and churches have gone silent or have been swayed to the other side.

2. Some churches clobber sinners. We must always remember the gospel is for sinners, which means it’s for each one of us. It’s ok to be incensed about evil, but we’re to extend love to people.

3. Our model is Jesus Christ. We won't cave into sin or clobber sinners but instead we're committed to follow Christ as our example. John 1:14 says Jesus is "**full of grace and truth.**" When a woman was caught in adultery in John 8:11, Jesus ministered grace to her: "**Neither do I condemn you...**" and He told her truth: "**...go and sin no more.**" Likewise, we're called to minister *the* truth and to do so *with* grace.

We are committed as a church to be gracious and compassionate to women who find themselves in crisis because of a pregnancy. It's not our aim to extend shame or ostracize anyone. We are a place of grace and our desire is to offer hope and healing to anyone who is hurting.

Truth spoken in love actually leads to forgiveness and freedom. Jesus said in John 8:32: "**And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.**" Proverbs 14:25 says: "**A truthful witness saves lives, but one who breathes out lies is deceitful.**"

Let's consider two brief passages in Proverbs that give principles and parameters to help us respond to this topic.

Speak and Stand

Turn to Proverbs 31:8-9: "**Open your mouth for the mute, for the rights of all who are destitute. Open your mouth, judge righteously, defend the rights of the poor and needy.**"

I see four actions we're called to take in these verses.

1. Speak for those who can't speak. Verse 8 and verse 9 begin, "**Open your mouth...**" The idea is to loosen our lips by letting words of life flow out. The personal pronoun "**your**" is emphatic. Each of us must speak as an advocate for those who can't speak for themselves.

Scott Klusendorf, the author of *The Case for Life*, suggests we make an objective, not an emotional case for life.

- a. It's wrong to intentionally kill innocent human beings
- b. Abortion intentionally kills innocent human beings
- c. Therefore, abortion is wrong

2. Stand up for the rights of those who are wronged. The word "**rights**" refers to justice and the "**destitute**" are those who are "*passing away*" or literally, "*on their last legs.*" It also speaks of the vanishing. The most dangerous place to be today is not in the inner city but inside a mother's womb where babies only have a 1 in 5 chance of making it out alive.

3. Do what's right. To "**judge righteously**" refers to having a right relation to ethical standards and encompasses all facets and functions of government. Unfortunately, in regard to abortion, our courts and laws have not always judged righteously.

4. Defend the defenseless. Verse 9 ends with this charge: *“defend the rights of the poor and needy.”* To *“defend”* means, *“to contend or plead a cause.”* The *“poor”* speaks of the *“unfortunate, the suffering, and the afflicted”* and the *“needy”* refers to those *“in want, people needing help.”* We’re called to help the helpless. I’m reminded of Psalm 9:12: *“He does not forget the cry of the afflicted.”*

While some say access to abortion is a human rights issue; on the basis of this passage and many others, the extermination of nearly 61 million preborn babies is *the ultimate* human rights issue. It’s *the* social justice cause of our day. We must speak up, stand up, do what’s right and defend the defenseless. And we must do so with care, courage and compassion. Martin Luther once said, *“If I profess with the loudest and clearest exposition every portion of the truth of God except precisely that point which the world and the devil are at that moment attacking, I am not confessing Christ.”*

Rescue and Restrain

Proverbs 31:8-9 tells us to speak up and stand up while Proverbs 24:11-12 urges us to rescue and restrain: *“Rescue those who are being taken away to death; hold back those who are stumbling to the slaughter.”*

- **Rescue.** The word *“rescue”* means we’re to deliver those who are headed to death.
- **Restrain.** To *“hold back”* means, *“to spare and to keep from happening.”* The word *“stumbling”* graphically refers to those *“slipping, shaking, wobbling and wavering.”*

This verse is urging us to attempt some kind of intervention on behalf of those who are unable to help themselves. Psalm 82:4 says, *“Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked.”*

Verse 12 anticipates an objection that some people could raise: *“If you say, ‘Behold, we did not know this,’ does not he who weighs the heart perceive it? Does not he who keeps watch over your soul know it, and will he not repay man according to his work?”* This is literally translated, *“Lo! We know it not!”* Solomon has in mind the possibility the slaughter may be done in secret, that it would be concealed for what it really is. As a result, some may plead they didn’t really know what was going on.

Scott Cox points out the first thing any society does if it is going to mistreat a particular class of people is *“to dehumanize them.”* Some theologians in the 19th Century espoused the idea blacks had no souls in order to justify slavery. How much easier it is for today’s society to do this *“when the voice and even the form of those who are being dehumanized and mistreated cannot be heard or seen because their cries are silent.”*

We’re given three reasons why this excuse will not hold up.

- **God weighs our motives.** He not only knows what’s in our heads, He knows what’s in our hearts. God knows we know. Proverbs 21:2: *“Every way of a man is right in his own eyes but the Lord weighs the heart.”*

- **God watches our actions.** He sees what we do. Complacency is complicity.
- **God will repay.** God holds us responsible for our sins of omission and our sins of commission. James 4:17: “*So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.*” Proverbs 5:21: “*For a man’s ways are before the eyes of the Lord and He ponders all his paths.*”

God sees into our heads, into our hearts and He sees what we do with our hands. What does He see when He looks at you and at me? God weighs, He watches and He will repay.

Sometimes I hear people say a woman should be able to do what she wants with her body. I like Matt Chandler’s insight when he argues a woman cannot do whatever she wants with her body. For example, if she were to prostitute herself she could be arrested. In addition, a baby might be *in* a woman’s body, but the baby is *not* the woman’s body. The baby has its own DNA, genetic code, blood type, functioning brain, kidneys, lungs and its own dreams.

One of the most effective ways to express the biblical value of life is to take a look at what is happening inside the womb. The science of embryology shows from the earliest stage of development how every child is a distinct and unique human being from conception on. We posted a link to these images on Sermon Extras.

[Show Slides](#)

Ways to Respond

Moses urges us to choose life in Deuteronomy 30:19: “*...I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live.*” Edmund Burke once said, “*The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.*”

Before I list some possible action steps, it’s important to start with a couple attitude adjustments we may need to make.

1. Repent and confess our indifference. Christians didn’t stand against racism like we should have in the 60s and now I wonder if our grandkids will question why we were so quiet when abortion was allowed in our land. Take some time now to confess any complacency you see in your heart and then repent right now.

2. Adjust our attitudes. Satan is the enemy of life, not doctors, not people who are in favor of abortions, or politicians. It’s way too easy for us to become self-righteous, smug and condemning.

As a way to prepare us to consider some action steps, please raise your hand if you were born after January 22, 1973. If you raised your hand you are an abortion survivor! Historically, those who have endured an atrocity have always labored in earnest to end acts of injustice.

- Volunteer at Pregnancy Resources. The next volunteer training begins the first week in April.

- Provide diapers, formula, blankets, and clothes to Pregnancy Resources.
- If you are struggling with the after-effects of abortion, know no one is cut off from the cleansing power of the Cross. No sin is too big to be forgiven by the grace of God. A post-abortion healing group will begin in February at Pregnancy Resources.
- Offer to baby-sit for a single parent.
- Serve in the Edgewood Nursery. Suzie Crosby provides incredible leadership for this ministry and shared some amazing stats from 2018:

Saturday nights – over 150 children were served

Sundays at 8:00 – over 250

Sundays at 9:30 – over 500

Sundays at 10:45 – over 540

For a total of 1,440!

- Be an extended family to a young woman in need through Safe Families
- Consider adopting.
- Talk to your children about sexual purity and practice purity yourself.
- Be consistently pro-life. We need to be pro-life and “whole life,” valuing *all* human life – the preborn, orphans, widows, the autistic, refugees, the physically and emotionally challenged, those with Down’s Syndrome, the blind, the deaf, those with genetic disorders and other diseases, the disabled, those struggling with their sexuality, the homeless, those with AIDS, the hungry (I met someone this week who was hungry so gave him some money. He told me he was just a “tramp.” I told him he’s not a tramp and he matters to God), the poor, those in prison, the elderly, and those of every race, ethnicity, and social class. While we focus on the preborn one weekend a year the white church largely ignores racism and bigotry. On Monday we recognize the impact of Martin Luther King, Jr. but let’s do what we can to make his dream a reality.
- Give to life. This month two of our Go Team Partners, Moody Radio and Pregnancy Resources, are partnering together by asking people to consider giving a gift of \$40.
- Set aside this Tuesday, January 22, the 46th Anniversary of Roe v Wade, as a day of fasting and prayer

Let’s speak up and stand up, and do what’s right to defend the defenseless in conversations and interactions with people. And let’s launch words of life to those who have failed and feel forgotten...even if they’re fans of the Chicago Bears.

Closing Video: Voice of the Voiceless

Baby Dedications