

# Wise Advice for Families



## SABBATH—APRIL 27

**READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON:** Proverbs 5:3–14; Proverbs 14:26; Proverbs 13:24; Proverbs 21:9, 19; Proverbs 31:10–31.

**MEMORY VERSE:** “Trust the Lord with all your heart. Don’t [do not] depend on your own understanding. Remember the Lord in everything you do. And he will give you success” (Proverbs 3:5, 6, ICB).



**Whatever you are now in life, you are here because you had a father and mother.**

**THE BOOK OF PROVERBS** is filled with wise advice for families. Are you a mother or father? Or are you married but with no kids? Or are you single? Whatever you are now in life, you are here because you had a mother and father. Some people choose not to start a family of their own. Other people never marry. The only family they know is the family they grew up with.

Maybe we did not start our own family. But we should read Proverbs anyway. Proverbs has many wise sayings about the family. It is filled with information, poems, questions, and advice for a holy life. Think of the book of Proverbs as a book written by a father to a son: “My son, listen to your father’s advice. Don’t [do not] turn away from your mother’s teaching” (Proverbs 1:8, NIV). Deuteronomy tells parents to share their beliefs with their children. Proverbs shows us a father telling his son about his faith. The father’s speeches in Proverbs show us what is in the heart of our Father in heaven. God speaks to us in the book of Proverbs. He wants us to read this book so we can see how much He loves us.

**LOVE THE RIGHT WOMAN (Proverbs 5:3–14)**

**Proverbs 5:3–14 warns about all the problems that happen when a person has sex with another man’s wife. What problems do these verses warn us about? What bad things happen to people who have sex with someone else’s husband or wife?**

True followers of God will wait until they are married before they have sex. They will save their deepest feelings and their bodies for marriage. Proverbs warns men about having sex with women who are not their wives. But the advice in Proverbs is for wives too. The Song of Solomon talks about why a woman should save herself for marriage (read Song of Solomon 4:12–15). Love that is wrong can feel very strong and powerful. Sin makes us feel good at the time. But we must always remember that this feeling is a lie. Trouble will follow. Sex between two people who are not married is wrong. It shows no loyalty or love. It cannot show true closeness. In the end, sin causes us to waste our time, money, and energy. Then we must answer to God for the wrong choice we made.

Sex is one of God’s most wonderful gifts. But the Bible is clear. Sex is right only when it happens between two people who are married to each other (Matthew 19:5; 1 Corinthians 7:3, 4; Hebrews 13:4). In Proverbs, water is a word picture for the love and joy that a married couple should feel. But dirty water is a word picture for what happens when a married person has sex with someone else. Proverbs 5:18, ERV says: “Be happy with your own wife. Enjoy the woman you married while you were young.” This advice is good. It tells us that a married couple should love each other more and more as they get older. “Let her love always make you happy” (Proverbs 5:19, ICB). And “Stay drunk on her love” (Proverbs 5:19, ERV).

As sinners, our wish to have sex can lead us away from God’s plan sometimes. But God also gave us the power to think and to choose. So, we must make up our minds to follow only God’s plan for sex. Then we will be truly happy.

**Do you know someone who is having a hard time following God’s plan for having sex only in marriage? What advice would you give him or her?**



**In Proverbs, water is a word picture for the love and joy that a married couple should feel.**

**WHAT MAKES A GOOD FATHER? (Proverbs 14:26)**

The verses below give some good advice for fathers. What advice is that?

Proverbs 13:22; Proverbs 27:23, 24 \_\_\_\_\_

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Proverbs 14:26 \_\_\_\_\_

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Proverbs 15:1, 18; Proverbs 16:32 \_\_\_\_\_

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Proverbs 15:27 \_\_\_\_\_

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Proverbs 29:17 \_\_\_\_\_



**The most important thing a father can do for his kids is to love their mother.**

A father's behavior can make a big difference in his children's lives. Children need support from their fathers. Children also need their fathers to love them and guide their lives. Proverbs praises dads who take good care of their families. Proverbs also praises wise dads who take good care of everything God gives them. "A greedy person brings trouble to his family. But the person who can't [cannot] be paid to do wrong will live" (Proverbs 15:27, ICB). Fathers must put their families first. Their families should always be more important to them than their work. Loving fathers always will try to be patient. They will understand how much their children need them. Fathers will punish their children when necessary. But fathers will not be mean when they punish them. Fathers who love God will be controlled by God's love. They will want to follow God's teachings. They will teach their children to follow God too. The most important thing a father can do for his kids is love their mother. His children will see this love. It will help them to become good people.

**How has your behavior changed the lives of other people? How has it changed the lives of children? Was the change good or bad? How can you improve your behavior?**

**THE RIGHT WAY TO PUNISH A CHILD (Proverbs 13:24)**

**What does Proverbs say about punishing children? Read Proverbs 10:17; Proverbs 23:13, 14; Proverbs 29:1; and Proverbs 29:15 for the answer.**

Why do parents punish their children? Parents want to teach their children to behave and obey. But what is God's reason? Proverbs can help us answer that question. Proverbs 19:18, NLV, says: "Punish your son if he needs it while there is hope, and do not worry about his crying." Parents who love God know that their children are born with a wish to sin. Only one power can help their children win the war against sin. This power is Jesus (read Ellen G. White, *Education*, page 29). Punishing children should lead them to God, not away from Him.

God's plan is for loving parents to guide their children to Jesus. Parents should correct their children with love and gentle words. They should train their children in the right way when they are young. Parents should help their children not to do wrong. Then children will learn self-control. They will learn to trust God. Then they will follow God and accept His plan to save them.

**What advice does Proverbs 13:24 and Proverbs 23:13, 14 give to parents?**

Only a few verses in the Bible talk about spanking a child. A parent should use spanking the same way that a shepherd uses his sheep stick to guide his flock (Psalm 23:4). The Bible also says that parents must be patient with their children. Parents must be good examples. They should feel close to their children. These things will help their children to be better people (Deuteronomy 11:18, 19). It is very important for children to feel that their parents love them. Then the children will accept the punishment that their parents give them. It will show the children that their parents love them very much (Proverbs 13:24). Then they will want to change.

**Sometimes parents can be very mean when they punish their kids. What is the best way for parents to punish or correct their children?**



**Parents should correct their children with love and gentle words.**

## IS LIFE REALLY BETTER ON A ROOF? (Proverbs 21:9, 19)

Sometimes the writer of Proverbs says some very funny things. Some examples are Proverbs 21:9, 19 and Proverbs 27:15, 16. In these verses, the writer talks about everyday troubles that married couples have. How does the writer use humor to help us understand what he is talking about?

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**It is important  
that we can smile or laugh  
at our mistakes.**

Sometimes people who love each other may do the right thing at the wrong time. What about the singer in Proverbs 25:20, NIV, who does not know when to keep quiet? “You may sing songs to a troubled heart. But that’s [that is] like [the same as] taking a coat away on a cold day. It’s [it is] like [the same as] pouring vinegar on a wound.” Or what about the loud guy in Proverbs 27:14, ERV, who “blesses” his neighbors by shouting a big hello to them very early in the morning? “Don’t [do not] wake up your neighbors early in the morning with a shout of ‘Good morning!’ They will treat it like [the same as] a curse, not a blessing.”

A happy heart helps us get along with our families. “Happiness is good medicine, but sorrow is a disease [sickness]” (Proverbs 17:22, ERV). It is important that we can smile or laugh at our mistakes. Laughing helps us to have a happy heart. A happy heart helps us talk about things that bother us. But we must be careful. We must not laugh at things we need to change but do nothing about.

A low fever may be a sign that we are sick. So, what is our fighting and complaining with our family members a sign of? Fighting and complaining may be signs of deeper problems. Maybe we are very angry with a family member. But we do not know how to tell this person. What is the answer to this problem? First, we must not try to act as if there is no problem. That will not make the problem go away. Then we need to remember our love for the Lord and for each other. Love helps us to open up about what is in our hearts. Then we can fix the problem.

**Why is laughter very important for the home? How can it be used for good? How can it be used for evil? Bring your answer to class.**



## A WONDERFUL WIFE (Proverbs 31:10–31)

**Proverbs ends with praise for a wife. What good things about this woman do you see in Proverbs 31:10–31?**

The woman in these verses is very special. These verses are a beautiful poem. Each verse starts with one of the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet. You get the feeling that the writer of Proverbs has many more wonderful things to say about this woman. But he had to stop at 22 nice things. Why? Because he ran out of letters to start new verses!

Proverbs says that we should marry a good life partner. Jewish teachers say the same thing: “A man’s home is his wife.” Proverbs agrees. “A good wife is like [the same as] a crown to her husband, but a shameful wife is like [the same as] a cancer” (Proverbs 12:4, ERV). The woman in Proverbs chapter 31 is clearly a “crown to her husband.” We see that the woman has many different skills. She can make clothes, buy land, plant food, and wisely manage her home and money.

Not every woman will have all these talents. Husbands should not expect their wives to be an exact copy of the woman in Proverbs 31. But Proverbs shows us that the most important thing is not this woman’s skills but who she is. Her skills tell us that she is someone that people can trust. She is loving and gentle. She shows mercy to other people. She works hard. She is loyal. What is the secret to her success? Proverbs 31:30 tells us that she “respects the LORD” (ERV).

Proverbs 31:10, ERV, says: “How hard it is to find the perfect wife. She is worth far more than jewels.” The word written as “perfect” in the ERV also is written as “excellent” in the NIV and “good” in the NLT. This word is written as “riches” in Psalm 62:10, ERV. Boaz uses this same word when he says that Ruth is “ ‘a very good woman’ ” (Ruth 3:11, ERV). All these verses show us that true riches are a word picture for someone who loves and obeys the Lord. That is why the Bible says that the woman in Proverbs 31 is worth far more than jewels.

**Think of the good women who have made a difference in your life. What can you add to the list of skills that a good woman should have? What else should she do and be?**



**The woman in Proverbs 31 is worth far more than jewels.**

**ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: KEEP YOUR HEARTS IN HEAVEN.** “Christians must be careful to guard their hearts at all times. They should spend time thinking about God’s words to us in the Bible. They should give themselves fully to God. Many Christians act as if it is a waste of their time to think about God, study the Bible, and pray. I wish everyone saw these things in the way God wants you to see them. Then you will make God’s kingdom number one in your lives. You must keep your heart in heaven. It will give you strength. It will give new life to your work. Train your minds to think about the things of heaven. Then new life and a wish to do what is right will fill everything you do. . . . Our spiritual lives are very weak. We are not as strong and spiritual as we should be [Ephesians 4:13].”—Ellen G. White Comments [ideas], *The SDA Bible Commentary [explanation]*, volume 3, page 1157.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- 1 Many Christians say that it is helpful to have good friends to give you support during hard times. How can good friends help us keep our hearts in heaven? Many people fight against the evil wishes and sins in their hearts to do what is wrong. But they cannot seem to win or stop their bad behavior. They may need special help. How can a pastor or other professionals help this person?
- 2 Share your answers to Wednesday’s final question. God gave us the gift of laughing. We laugh at things we find funny. But how can this gift be twisted into something that can hurt us?
- 3 Proverbs 31 shows us a very good woman. She does many things that fill us with respect for her. Compare the picture of the woman in Proverbs 31 with the way women are shown in popular magazines, on TV, or in your community. How can we protect our hearts and minds from these wrong pictures of women?
- 4 How do the people outside the church in your town or community think about family? How important is family to them? Are some of their ideas the same as Bible teachings? If yes, how are they the same? How can these strong ideas make our own families stronger?



**Christians should be careful to guard their hearts at all times.**