

Intro:

We're talking about making wise choices in a family context. What sort of words or images come to mind when you think about "family" in your life?

Some of us have great images and wonderful words, others have horrific ones.

The book of Proverbs and the life of Jesus have some great, practical things to say to all of us. I'm excited to look at it together. Two main things we want to think about today for the Bible. The first is about the reality of families.

The reality of families:

Good ones are a joy

17:6- children/parents

17:7- siblings

18:22- spouse

Bad ones can be totally devastating, like hell on earth

17:21

12:4

21:9, 21:19

I think we've experienced a little bit of both, perhaps one side more than the other. The question is this then:

How can we create good families?

Note: Not just biological, but spiritual. In fact, spiritual may be greater.

Mark 3:32-35

1 John 3:1

Control your words, control anger

This is something we discussed a few weeks back- you can look at the notes from there. But I bring it up here because, as we noted earlier, this is simply key in living a good life. Whether it be us as parents, as children, as spouses, or as siblings- our words, and our anger, can essentially make or break the relationship.

Instill Respect

30:17

Pretty harsh words, huh? For some of us and our family backgrounds and cultures, we think "of course!" But for others, this seems totally out there. But this is key.

And it's key, again, here in our church community. A handful of you are engaged in our children and youth work, along with our Pulitzer group. Many of you know that many of the kids come from incomplete or broken families. Your presence and love is essential. But don't forget to help the kids develop a sense of respect for others and their authority.

Story of me doing lunch duty.

Discipline our kids

19:18

23:13-14

29:15

Now I know for some of us the immediate picture we have based on these verses may be ones of child abuse, not actual discipline and training a child. That is not what this is talking about, although it does point to the use of physical discipline or spanking in modern terminology. There

are a number of books written about how to best implement this principle- it's not our place go through them here. Needless to say, we need to do this, again, in both of our families.

Find the right values and purpose

Do you realize that there is a God-given purpose behind getting married, and behind having kids? I think many of us don't fully realize this- we kind of stumble into both, thinking of how a marriage or kids are simply natural and part of the way we find love, companionship, and meaning.

Now, marriage and kids are natural, and they do give a certain sense of love, companionship, meaning. But God has greater purposes for you, and for your family. It's amazing how many families fall apart, many of which because they don't have something greater, something beyond themselves, to live for. This is key.

31:10-31 hints at it: industriousness, support, social justice, life with God

Gen. 1:26-28 is the explicit reference: reflect God- channel His goodness to our world, point the world to His glory.

Recognize God's grace

What we mean by this is: Yes, we do make choices- we should make good ones about who we marry. And yes, we can and should plan for kids and plan to parent them well. But in the end, good families are gifts of God.

19:14

We can't control it all. In fact, we need to utterly depend on God for all good things, even as we strive to make the right choices.

And it's not just about our biological families. God, in his amazing grace, has made it possible for us to be a part of his family. This is a gift. I realize some of us think at times it's a right- I mean, if God made us and loves us, of course he would let us be a part of his family! Well, yes, you could look at it that way. But that's not the whole story. Because on the other side of the story if our turning away from God, our disobedience, our utter disrespect, our murder and violence of God in Jesus. We looked at proverb that said the eyes of one who looks down on a parent should get pecked out. What about one that murders their parents?

And yet God chose to forgive us of all of that, and invite us back into a relationship with him.

1 John 3:1

If you haven't taken God's invitation to be a part of his family, today is the day for this. After our time of question/answer, I'm going to invite you to do so, actually. God help all of us to remember this grace of His- in our relationship with Him and our spiritual family, and our relationship with each other.

Questions/Comments?

Challenge:

Have people stand

Do you need to be a better family member?

Do you need to join in the family of God?