

Tommy Meador / General

The Book of Proverbs / Pr 4:1–27

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## Introduction

- [https://www.huffpost.com/entry/ap-as-japan-mount-fuji-tourists\\_n\\_66313d21e4b0c9bc87592cbe](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/ap-as-japan-mount-fuji-tourists_n_66313d21e4b0c9bc87592cbe) - One town going to great lengths to keep people away.
- The church doesn't go to great lengths to keep people away. We go to great lengths to bring people in to the faith and keep them in. We want all people to know Jesus and walk faithfully with Jesus.
- However, the church struggles. Today, we recognize our graduating seniors. Reality: statistics about church involvement after high school are sobering. According to research by Kara Powell in the book *Sticky Faith*, 40-50% of kids active in church will not stick with their faith in college. Somewhere between 30-60% will return to the church in their late 20s, but 40-70% won't. And for those who do return, around a decade away from the church making decisions that will impact the rest of their lives apart from the influence of God's people.
- What can we do to help the next generation stay in the faith as they come into adulthood? How can our church more effectively help students stay connected to the body of Christ? To their faith? It starts in the home...
- Solomon wants his son to stay in the faith. For nine chapters, encouraging his son to walk in the wisdom of God - to pursue a relationship with God. As a father, Solomon doing all that he can to pass down his faith.

- As an individual follower of Jesus, how serious do you take the calling of passing down the wisdom of God? In this passage, three ways we need to pass on the wisdom of God to help the next generation walk in the wisdom of God.

## Pass on the wisdom of God by reminding of the past.

- vs. 1-4 - Solomon again calling his sons to listen to his teaching. But, this time, he points his son to his father.
- Solomon teaching his sons what his father, David, taught him. Solomon saw God faithfully work in the nation of Israel, and he also saw God work faithfully in the life of David.
- [Proverbs 3:3](#) - Steadfast love and faithfulness - [Proverbs 3](#) a reminder of the covenant faithfulness to the nation of Israel. Solomon knew how God had been at work in the nation of Israel. And, it was personal. Solomon saw the covenant faithfulness of God up in the life of his father.
- God was faithful to make David into a great king, and God made a covenant with David that one from his lineage would sit on his throne forever ([2 Samuel 7:13](#)).
- Solomon telling his sons that the wisdom that he was passing down to them was wisdom that had been passed down to him.
- David was not perfect, nor was Solomon. They both failed God, but God did not fail them. Solomon wants his sons to walk faithfully with the God who would not fail them.
- vs. 5-9 - Solomon does not want his sons to forget their spiritual heritage. As if Solomon is saying, “Look what at what God has done in our nation’s history and in our family. Now, go get the wisdom He offers. Don’t abandon. Cherish His wisdom. Embrace His wisdom. His wisdom is the path of life.”

- You are passing down something to the next generation, especially if you are a parent. What are you passing down?
- **No faith** - For some... Because you don't walk with God, you don't talk about God. You may be passing down a strong work ethic, good morals, etc., but you are not passing down the wisdom of God because you don't know the wisdom of God because of your own lack of faith.
- **Religious tradition** - The next generation sees you attending church because it's what your family has always done, but the next generation doesn't actually see how the Gospel that is proclaimed in the local church has changed your life.
- **Hypocritical faith** - The next generation hears you talking about walking in the wisdom of God, but doesn't actually see you do it. Maybe you're full of religious opinions and you love to give religious advice, but you don't take your own advice.
- **Honest faith** - I want to pass down an honest faith. An honest faith is quick to confess my own failures (like David), but also quick to point to the faithfulness of God. An honest faith is a generational faith - "Look what God has done throughout history and in the history of our family." Even if you don't have a long list of people who walked by faith in your family, do you regularly talk about what God has done in your life? Is the work of God in your life and in the life of your family a normal part of your daily conversations?

## Pass on the wisdom of God through continual instruction.

- Notice number of times in [Proverbs 4](#) (and in [Prov. 1-9](#)) that Solomon refers to his teaching or his instruction.
- vs. 10-13 - "I am teaching you... I am guiding you... Hold on to instruction..."

- vs. 14-19 - Notice Solomon again is teaching a way of life. He continually instructs his sons to choose the path of wisdom and not the path of folly. Notice the comparisons.
- Solomon repeating himself over and over again. [Proverbs 1-9](#) is more cyclical than linear. When it comes to talking about the things of God to the next generation, it is ok to repeat yourself. We learn by repetition. ([Deuteronomy 6:7](#) - **Repeat** them to your children...)
- If you are a parent or a disciple-maker of the next generation, what does continual instruction need to look like?
  - **Doctrinal** - Solomon teaching his sons truths about God (e.g., fear the Lord, trust the Lord, etc.) Parents, what doctrinal truths are you teaching? We must equip the next generation with the fundamentals of the faith. e.g., Who is God? What is sin? Who is Jesus? How is someone saved? Do you know the basics of the faith? Do you rehearse Gospel truths in your home regularly? Can your children share the Gospel? (Using something like New City catechism could be helpful. Or, be in a D Group, take an equip group so you can learn to be able to help your kids learn.)
  - **Focused on character** - Solomon teaching his sons about things like integrity. Right doctrine should inform right character. Are you constantly talking about the kind of people God wants us to be, and why? Are you talking about the fruit of the Spirit? Integrity?
  - **Formal and informal** - Formal in the sense that he's writing it down. Formal in your home may be a time of family devotion where you spend a few minutes talking about a specific doctrine. Informal may be when you are coaching your children in how to respond with Christlike character to a specific situation.
  - **Modeled** - Solomon's sons saw wisdom lived out by there dad. The next generation needs to see you living your faith. Parents, your children need to see you studying the Word, praying, sharing your

faith, giving, etc. They need to see that the wisdom of God matters to you.

- **Communal** - In the context of family for Solomon - “Listen to your mother, your grandfather, etc.” For us, the gift of the body of Christ. In *Sticky Faith*, author talks about the need for students to have 5 mentoring relationships. How are you helping your students develop relationships with more mature Christians that will help them in their faith development?
- **Realistic** - Passing on wisdom in a broken world. It’s going to be a battle, and it is going to be a slow process. Expect it.
- We have a responsibility to pass on the faith to the next generation, especially if you are a parent. If you’re children are grown and gone, a responsibility to look for opportunities to invest in the next generation ([Titus 2:1-8](#)).
- You will continually teach about something... What are you continually teaching? You will continually teach what is most important to you? Is walking in the wisdom of God what’s most important to you?

## Pass on the wisdom of God with passionate pleading.

- Notice the last verses are aimed at the heart. vs. 21 - “keep them within your heart.” vs. 23 - “Guard your heart above all else, for it is the source of life.”
- The heart = the control center of human life or the core of who you are. It’s why we say things like, “He’s got a lot of heart.” Or, “He wears his heart on his sleeve.” Or, “Put your heart into it.” We use the word *heart* to describe drive, motivation, and ambition.

- Solomon wants the wisdom of God to permeate the heart of his son - and that's what we want for the next generation - for the wisdom of God to get deep in their hearts.
- When the wisdom of God gets deep into the heart, it's transformative.
- Solomon's instruction: "Guard your heart..." That's a good word for all of us. Guard your hearts - be careful of what you allow to affect your heart. Let God Himself have control of your heart.
- When God controls your heart, it changes the way you speak (vs. 24), where you place your eyes (vs. 25), and where you let your feet take you (vs. 26-27).
- [Proverbs 1-9](#) - Solomon passionately pleading with his sons. You can sense the urgency in Solomon's words. Is there urgency in the way that you are training up the next generation? Is there pleading?
- What Solomon wants in the lives of his sons is nothing less than a miracle of God's grace - that they would be captivated by lady wisdom.
- That's what we long for in the next generation, a miracle of God's grace. That miracle requires that we:
- **Constantly point others to Jesus.** The continual instruction that we talked about that's rooted in the Gospel.
- **Pray with fervency.** Yes, constantly teach and encourage your children, but pray. Pray with fervency and passion.
- **Depend on the Holy Spirit.** Pray with fervency and passion because you are convinced that only the Spirit can transform the heart. Yes, the Spirit of God will use you in the lives of the next generation, but ultimately, the transformation of their hearts is a work of the Spirit of God. Do the work that God has called you to do in the lives of your children, but trust the Spirit of God for transformation.

- This morning, maybe you are in need of a transformation. Maybe the Spirit of God is opening your eyes to your need for a Savior. Today, God wants to work a miracle of grace in your life as you believe lived, died, and rose again for you. Repent of your sins and turn to Him by faith.
- Follower of Jesus, pray for a move of God's Spirit in your life and in the lives of the next generation. Let us renew our commitment to pass on what has been entrusted to us.