

MONDAY, August 24, 2009: *"To be always relevant, you have to say things which are eternal."*
_Simone Weil

Proverbs 23:12 Apply your heart to instruction, and your ears to words of knowledge.

Today I want to remind you to be a life-long learner. I know many people that were once disciplined learners but then moved on to other things. For example, many graduates do this. They think that because they earned a degree or finished a course that they have now learned what they need to learn. They join the work force, get started on the fast track and stop making time to apply themselves to personal growth. They stop reading, they stop asking questions, they stop seeking new experiences with a learner's eye and they stop seeking to uncover the great truths and mysteries of God.

What a sad state to be in! The love of God is limitless – dive deep into your relationship with Him. The knowledge of God is measureless – new mercies He reveals every day. Why not pursue with a passion the deep things of God. All creation – from the ant to the eagle – declares his glory and truth. Don't settle for the dreary drizzle of days that so many people do, burst through the clouds and experience the light of God's treasure house of wisdom and truth. Apply yourself and drink the elixir of life. Make the commitment to learn something new on the last day of your life. You'll never be sorry you did.

SCRIPTURE: Proverbs 1:20-33, 6:6, Psalm 19:1-2, 1Timothy 3:14-16

TUESDAY, August 25, 2009: *"No one would have remembered the Good Samaritan if he'd only had good intentions – he had money as well."* _Margaret Thatcher

Proverbs 22:26-27 Do not be one of those who shakes hands in a pledge, one of those who is surety for debts; ²⁷If you have nothing *with which* to pay, why should he take away your bed from under you?

These two verses teach two extremely valuable lessons. Let's discuss the first one today. What Solomon is talking about in these verses is "co-signing" for a loan and he simply says – "Don't do it." Lesson to learn: **Do not help people get in debt!** Really you are doing a person a disfavor by helping them get a loan. The fact that they need you to sign is evidence that they are not ready for the responsibility of debt. It would be better for them to learn patience and diligence.

Patience will teach them how to "postpone gratification" which is a real sign of maturity and will help them far more through life than a temporary fix that comes via a loan. And **diligence** will teach them about saving until they can afford what they want. It will also teach them how to find other options for getting things accomplished. Two very important lessons to learn in life.

Usually debt is a shortcut – why help people take shortcuts that will harm them in the long run? Your family or friends may get mad at you, but when you love, you would rather they mature and grow. If they do, they will thank you someday.

SCRIPTURE: Proverbs 11:15, 17:18, 2 Kings 4:7

WEDNESDAY, August 26, 2009: *"No man was ever holy by a happy chance. Infinite damage may be done by carelessness; but no man ever won life's battle by it. To let things go on as they please is to let them bear us down to hell."* _Warren W. Wiersbe, **Classics Sermons on Spiritual Warfare**

Proverbs 22:15 Foolishness *is* bound up in the heart of a child; the rod of correction will drive it far from him.

This is a proverb if misunderstood, could be used wrongly. But if understood correctly it teaches two very important principles.

First, it teaches that it is natural for children to act immature and irresponsible (foolish). All children are this way to some degree. Take comfort here parents – this is not a reflection on your poor stewardship as a parent – it's just human nature.

The second principle has to do with the "rod of correction." The "rod of correction" is not for "beating foolishness out of them" (that would be an abuse!) but rather it's an expression that helps us understand that we must teach our children that there is consequences to their actions. Sometimes that is painful but nevertheless, the sooner a child learns this lesson the sooner that foolishness will be driven far from them.

Bottom line, when God blesses us with children we must remember that He expects us to be parents – not their "buddy," or "playmate." It is not always easy, but being a parent means that we represent God on earth. It is our obligation to prepare our children for this life and the life to come. One of the very first things they need to learn is that there are consequences to every decision and every action they make. The sooner they learn that the less painful their lives will be. For rest assured, the "rod of correction" gets bigger as we get older.

SCRIPTURE: Deuteronomy 4:9, Proverbs 22:6

THURSDAY, August 27, 2009: *"God's vision defines success as radical obedience to His special direction for your life."* _George Barna, **Turning Vision into Action**

Proverbs 22:15 (See Wednesday)

I've been thinking about this "rod of correction" matter. I suppose it is because I am very familiar with it – the receiving end of it!

Think about when parents use the rod of correction. Experience has taught me that more times than not the motivation for using the rod is not out of a desire for correction but out of a sense of anger, frustration or embarrassment. The goal is not correction but punishment. While there is an important lesson in this for we parents, there is a deeper issue that I want us to think about today.

The issue is this: When we go through tough times the temptation is to think that God is mad at us and is punishing us – just like many parents. But this is not how God operates. Does he correct us – most certainly – but always to help us. Perhaps we are drifting toward disaster, God will allow tough times to come into our lives to get our attention. Many times he sends conviction to trouble our sleep and thoughts – why? Not because he wants to punish us but because he wants us to repent and be at peace.

I may be writing to someone today that is going through a tough time. You may be tempted to think that you are being punished and that God is angry at you. Don't fall for that temptation! Instead, turn to God with all your heart. Allow him to work in your life. Trust him – he is working all things together for your good – even if it hurts for a season. **SCRIPTURE:** Proverbs 3:11, Hebrews 12:5-11