

PARENTING THROUGH PROVERBS pt 4

Selected Proverbs



MAY 26, 2019 | DAVID ANDERSON

What's the goal of parenting? What are we shooting for?

- Is the goal for them to get a scholarship into a prestigious university?
- Is the goal for them to get married?
- Is the goal that they wouldn't struggle with addiction and self-imposed pain?
- Is the goal for our kids to be liked?
- Is the goal that they aren't an embarrassment to the family?
- Is the goal for them to get a stable, well-paying job?
- Is the goal for them to have kids, so you can have grandchildren?

If we are confused about the end game of parenting, our children are left very vulnerable. In the absence of true life meaning for our kids, they will get sucked into a black hole of performance and pleasure.

This is what Solomon experienced in Ecclesiastes 2:

So I was far wealthier than all my predecessors in Jerusalem, yet I maintained my objectivity: I did not restrain myself from getting whatever I wanted; I did not deny myself anything that would bring me pleasure. So all my accomplishments gave me joy; this was my reward for all my effort. Yet when I reflected on everything I had accomplished and on all the effort that I had expended to accomplish it, I concluded: "All these achievements and possessions are ultimately profitless—like chasing the wind! There is nothing gained from them on earth." (vs. 9-11)

The term for "vanity" is *hebel* and it is the idea of "breath, vapor, wind." Solomon uses it in connection with the phrase "chasing after the wind." He describing something that has no profit. It's futile, with no lasting or meaningful value. Chasing the wind is a graphic picture of expending effort in vain. No one can catch the wind by chasing.

Each of our children can be captured by the *hebel* of this world:

- 1) Perhaps your child wants to control people. We have kids in our community who are like five-year-old CEOs. If permitted, they would select the recess games each day and be the self-appointed coach, referee, line judge and jury.
- 2) Perhaps your child is only happy if he can excel—run faster, jump higher or spell better than others. They will sacrifice; they will deny themselves; they will practice; they will do whatever it takes. When they fail to obtain these distinctions, they are dejected.
- 3) Perhaps your child is paralyzed by the opinion of other children. What people think of their shoes, clothing, hair or ideas is the most important. They will do wrong rather than be uncool. They are addicted to the attention of others, even if it is negative attention. Their loyalty to their peers is greater than their loyalty to parents.

This world and the ruler of this world, Satan, are conspiring to seduce the hearts of our children with cheap and empty pleasures.

Proverbs 21:30 reminds us: "There is no wisdom and there is no understanding, and there is no counsel against the LORD." True life meaning begins and ends with the fear of the Lord. Our children need to understand what it means to fear the Lord. In Proverbs, Solomon often associates fear of the Lord with humility. Fearing the Lord is realizing everything is created and sustained by God. We are utterly dependent on Him!

Proverbs 14:27: "The fear of the LORD is like a life-giving fountain, to turn people from deadly snares."

Proverbs 10:3: "The LORD satisfies the appetite of the righteous, but he thwarts the craving of the wicked."

Solomon says, "Better is little with the fear of the LORD than great wealth and turmoil with it. Better a meal of vegetables where there is love than a fattened ox where there is hatred." (Prov. 15:16-17)
Proverbs 19:23, "Fearing the LORD leads to life, and one who does so will live satisfied; he will not be afflicted by calamity."

The goal of parenting is that our children would find their Treasure.

Jesus puts it this way, "The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure, hidden in a field that a person found and covered. Then because of joy he went and sold all that he had and bought that field." (Matt. 13:44) The man sold everything he had and he did it with joy. He sells everything and goes and buys the field. The point is that the kingdom is so valuable, that if you lose everything on this earth but you get the kingdom - that is a trade-off you take every time.

Paul says in Philippians 3:7-8, "Whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ."

This is the message to our children: We are not going to find meaning outside of an abiding, intimate relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. Satisfaction is not going to happen without Jesus.

However God leads our children, however they are gifted, however life turns out - marriage, jobs, locations - if Jesus isn't the center of their universe, they are sunk. Cheap and empty pleasures will not satisfy; only He can!