

# The Bible | A Parent's Best Friend

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[ 0 : 00 ] Let's turn to Proverbs chapter number 6. We are in verse 20. Halfway through this chapter as we've been going through the book of Proverbs together. Our kids are studying the Bible in Awana right now.

And so I have the privilege of watching the adults during the next 30 minutes while the kids are doing the serious work of Bible study. And since we're in here together, we might as well be around the Word. And if all of you act well and Mark Coffey stays awake, we might even have a game for you partly the way through where we have you quote some Bible memory, okay?

Any of you grew up in Awana? All right, then you're like me. You wish you grew up in Awana, right? One or two options there. Proverbs chapter number 6. We're just looking at four verses tonight. And I won't apologize that tonight's lesson is simple because that is the goal.

But I'm grateful for a portion of Scripture that makes it even hard for me to confuse. It's very straightforward. And in the book of Proverbs, there's these antithetical parallels, meaning if you do this, your life will be blessed.

And if you don't, then your life will be ruined. And it's just filled with them, right? A lot of Proverbs are like that. But in the middle of a chapter like this, we get four or five verses that remind us where the crossroads is at.

[ 1 : 12 ] What is the decision we're making? What is the mirror that we look into like Dylan was talking about that we have where we can look at it and say, I now have a decision to make. I'm looking at it.

And I'm glad that he brought up the church sign because that is, it's so important that when we look into God's Word, if we are not becoming obedient to it, then when we go back to it, we really won't be studying the Bible.

Only as we put it into action are we able to continue learning it. Now, these four verses are real straightforward about what should be happening with our children and with us in regards to the Word of God.

Verse 20, Heavenly Father, I pray that you'll be with us now, Lord, that everyone in here, Lord, will make room in their heart for the Word of God, that you, Lord, the Holy Spirit, will take the Word of God that is the same for every one of us, Lord.

But we have different walks of life. We have different circumstances that we're in. But you'll take the Word of God. You'll make application for our lives, Lord, so we can look more like your Son, which is what this world so desperately needs.

[ 2 : 40 ] In Jesus' name I pray. Amen. My Son, keep thy commandments and forsake the law of thy mother. Bind them continually. First thing I want you to take notice of here is that in the life of our children, that we are given to be part of their heart work.

We are supposed to be involved in something that takes place with their heart. It tells us that we should bind it upon the heart. Here's something we know about the heart of the children, and you can say amen to this. Proverbs 22, 15, it says, Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child.

And everybody says amen, isn't it? But the rod of correction shall drive it far from him. I told some people in the office before, I use my kids, for example, because it's royalty free.

I don't have to pay them anything if I use them in an example. But any of you want to tell me something that you did folly? Maddie told me that she, raise your hand, Maddie, in case people don't know who Maddie is, all right?

Maddie over here told me that she got kicked off of a horse. She got bucked off of a horse. And I'm like, well, that's kind of sad. She said, the name of the horse was Buck. I'm like, you should have known better, Maddie, right?

[ 3 : 40 ] That's where folly is. He makes bad decisions. I could get Jeremy Hall to come up here, and he could tell you of some decisions he made when he was younger, all right? Or Mark Coffey would tell you how he broke into his high school, and he stole a box of number two pencils, all right?

I mean, really, what are you doing, right? If you're going to steal, you might as well take something of value. And when he lands, the police are waiting on him. He gets the youth pastor. So he is set for these kids at this camp.

He understands that it's folly. And if you have children, if you're around children, our fullness is bound in the heart of a child. You know, there's many things in this world that we need to protect our children from.

And there's people constantly trying to sell us something that will tell us that we need this for our child. You would pay hundreds of thousands of dollars a month if you were to get everything that they were selling to you about keeping up with your children.

There's many things that we need to protect them from. But all the dangers are not just from without. There's also dangers from within, right? We've got to help guard them from their heart. You know this verse, Mark 7, 21 through 23.

[ 4 : 42 ] From without of the heart of men proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, and murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness.

And all these evil things come from within and defile the man. So we don't have the responsibility to protect our children from things that are without. We also know that their heart is bound to foolishness and that we have a job of helping them when it says, bind them, continue upon that heart, that there has to be some them for them to bind upon their heart.

We'll see what the them is. The them is the instructions that we give them directly from the word of the Lord. Solomon couldn't be any more clear that when he spoke to his children that it was directly connected to the word.

So guarding the heart has to be our highest priority. Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life. I say a full court press. How many of you played basketball growing up in here?

If we were in Kentucky, everybody's hand would be raised. All right? We're in Georgia. We're in football country. But you know, full court press. You typically just wait to the half court. When the guy crosses the line, you begin to guard him.

[ 5 : 45 ] But when the game is getting tight or towards the end of the game, you decide that you're going to guard your player the entire court. As soon as the ball is inbound, it's a full court press. When it comes to our kids' heart and to our own hearts, we have to go a full court press at keeping their heart.

At all times, we have to be watching it and having conversations. The 1600s said this, My son, give me thine heart. It is God's request. God is pleased to call that a gift, which is indeed a debt.

But he will put his honor upon the creature to receive it from him in the way of a gift. But if this be not given him, no regard whatsoever else you bring him.

So it says, God says, Son, would you give me your heart? Thatcher, would you give God your heart? If you don't give him your heart, then he doesn't regard anything else that you give him.

And God would be honored that he would allow us to give something that we owe him and call it a gift. You know that's what God does, right? Every time we give back to God, we're giving something that belongs to him.

[ 6 : 49 ] Our kids to do is to give their hearts to God, is to give it to him. Give it to God, even though it's owed to him as a debt, we give it to him as a gift. Because if you don't give God your heart, nothing else that you give him is going to matter.

No actions you give, no amount of wealth is going to matter, no matter anything they do with their life. If they don't give God their heart, then nothing else is going to matter. And this is the hardest work that we do. The hardest work you're on or in the ministries of the church are these heart works.

People say that they follow your heart. That sounds like nice, but it's basically saying pursue what you want. That's not very good advice, is it? It's not very pretty, is it, either, right? If you write that really said, which is pursue what you want, nobody would go for that.

So your hearts are, 2 Thessalonians 3, 5. And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God unto the patient waiting for Christ. Training and discipling to direct our hearts towards the things that God tells us that we're supposed to desire is what we want.

It doesn't make for as nice Hallmark card or needlework on a pillow as follow your heart. But really, training our heart to pursue the things that God would tell us to pursue is what we ought to be encouraging them to do.

[ 7 : 58 ] It is a work that continues even to adulthood. It's not just for kids. Paul speaking to Timothy in 1 Timothy 1, 5 says, Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart and of a good conscience and of a faith unfaded.

We have to guard our hearts with all diligence now, all the time. And so we ought to teach our children to flee sin and to follow righteousness. 2 Timothy 2, 22. Flee also youthful lusts, but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace with them.

Call upon the Lord out of a pure heart. So we teach them to flee away from sin, but not just flee away from sin, but to follow after righteousness. So we're not following our hearts.

We're following after righteousness. It's a constant work. Remember that story in Exodus 17 where Moses is fighting and where it says that he keeps his hands up. Then the enemy is off, and then as his hands get tired, Amalekites, Amalek, one of those, right?

Amalek, they would prevail against him when his hands would get tired and they would go down. And so some people came along beside them and held their hands up. You know how much happens in a kid's heart in a time?

[ 9 : 06 ] How much happens in your time in a heart? It's big. I mean, it is not enough to just have your heart checked on two, three times a week as you come to church. Our constant spiritual battles that we're facing.

My kids may not like it, but on my phone all day long I get their grades. Every time they take a test, any time they get on, it updates me and it says if they're doing good or if they're doing bad. And that's really helpful.

Except I'm not as helpful as I should be with the grades. But I would love to have, what if I could have something on my phone for my son's heart? What if I could say, hey, your son's really discouraged right now.

Or, hey, your son's really fearful. Or your son's really yielding the peer pressure. Or your son's just really something's going on. If I could be attuned to my son's heart, I know that I'll be much gentler with him.

I know that I would say the words that he would need. I wouldn't just get a notification that says, Carson's struggling with math, we need to deal with math. But I would say, Tinsley's dealing with this. And when she came home, I would sit down with her.

[10:01] I need to know what's going on in the hearts of my kids. We need to know what's going on with the hearts of the people we're dealing with. Because they're supposed to take the instruction that we give them. And they're supposed to have a heart that was foolishness. But now it's supposed to be bound with instruction that is there.

We're supposed to be involved in this. And it's a constant work. It just never stops. That which a man carries in his hand, he may forget and lose. That which he wears upon his person may be torn from him.

But that which is bound about his heart will remain there as long as life remains. So my instruction for my children is not only supposed to go into their Awana book. And it's not only supposed to go into their short-term memory, which is where it goes so they can get the candy needed for the Bible verses at night.

But it's supposed to go all the way into the heart of a child. And if I'm going to do heart work, if I'm going to work on the heart of my child, it can only come from my heart as well, being really in these.

So what is given of a, we have a picture in this passage, and I believe the Bible is perfect. I believe it's infallible. I believe it has order to it. So in this proverb where this is being taught, we kind of have this biography of a scoundrel.

[11:08] Or as the Bible says, a naughty person in verse 12, a naughty person, a wicked man, walketh with a froward mouth. I could ask all of you to say who that kid was in school, right? All of you knew somebody in school that when you got married and your wife says, hey, let's name our kid Chuck.

You're like, hey, I ain't naming my kid Chuck. If you knew Chuck back in school, you would not name your kid Chuck, right? And so every one of you already have a bio, a biography, or a picture of the kid.

And if you don't, you were that kid, all right? And as some of you, I'm most certain you were that kid. But the Bible doesn't just leave you to your experiences of the wicked people or the scoundrels that you saw growing up.

But it gives you a description of what a person is when he gets to that crossroads in life where he doesn't bind the word to his heart. So here's some of the things that it said about him. He's opposed to God in his whole being.

In chapter 4, verse 23 through 26, it says, 6, 12 through 14, Chapter 6, 17, 18 says, The eyes, the tongue, the heart, the feet, the mouth, the ears, every part is rebellion.

[12:43] Every part of a person that in their heart is evil, is rebellion against the things of God. It's going to come out in every way possible. The clearest picture of this, you have a kid and he's set on rebellion.

And you set him down and you say, sit here, do nothing. You put the kid in a straitjacket, what will he do? He will roll his eyes at you. If you leave anything possible, you leave any chance for him, they're going to do something because it isn't enough just to bind the hands or to bind the feet, that if the imaginations of the heart.

But we know that it's much more than that in our lives. We know that much of what we do, I won't name somebody's name, but I was at lunch this week with Matt over here. And he told me that, he said, If you would have seen me as a kid, I did all the right things.

But I knew that just because I was doing the right things doesn't mean it was always right in my heart, right? And that's what we have, that we have that issue. It's not just doing the right things, but it comes from the heart.

And if it isn't right in the heart, there isn't enough that you can do. It's always going to find a way out. It's always going to come out, the eyes, the ears, and one of those ways. So we have to be working upon the heart. Its foolishness comes to be bound in the heart of a child.

[ 13 : 51 ] If it doesn't, then they're going to show them, they're going to do things that God would hate. These six things, verse 16, does the Lord hate? Yea, seven are an abomination unto Him. Seven things God hates.

It doesn't sum up everything that God hates, or it doesn't name everything that God hates, but it's a pretty good summary. God says that He hates a proud look. A proud look comes from a heart with pride, an unrealistic sense of your self-worth.

A lying tongue comes from a heart that doesn't trust God. Hands that shed innocent blood, it comes from a hateful heart. A heart that devises wicked imaginations, it comes from a heart that is thinking upon evil.

Feet that are swift to be running to mischief. Who does that? It's a heart that resists God and turns to sin. A false witness that speaks lies, this is a heart that's intent on hurting other people.

He that soweth discord among brethren, this is a heart that wants to disrupt unity. So what's significant about that seven list? Some of you might have heard of seven deadly sins. The Catholic Church would teach about that.

[ 14 : 50 ] There'd be unforgivable sins. We know that all sins are equally deadly, right? So there's not seven deadly sins. All unforgiven sin is deadly. It'll separate us from God. Well, what's significant about those seven sins is that every one of them points back to the heart of the matter, which is the heart of whoever it's addressing.

These are heart matters. So it's an intimidating assignment. If we're to help guard the heart of our kids from the foolishness of this world and also from the foolishness that's in their heart, then we're going to need something that is greater, greater substance.

We're going to need something that's greater of this world. We're going to need something supernatural. We're going to need the words of God. We're going to need supernatural intervention, which is the words of God. It's God's words delivered through our relationship with our children that will do the most good in their lives.

You know, maybe you're not thinking this. I feel you thinking this. I hear you thinking this. Why would somebody choose to speak on the topic of parenting when I have five small children in my home?

If I only preached on things that I was perfect at, I would only talk about how to make a mess while eating chicken wings. That is the only thing in this world that I'm certain I do better than every one of you. But I'm grateful for passages in the Bible that make it unavoidable where I have to face this, that in all the busyness of life, the best thing that I can do is try to get the word of God to their heart.

[ 16 : 10 ] You know, every one of us. And it says, and look how it describes the commandments. My son, keep thy father's commandment and forsake not the law of thy mother. The youth is being exhorted to cling fast to the teaching of his parents.

Those of you that identify that you are children, that that's right now in life, Olivia, you are. You're both, okay? You may be married, but you're still over here. You looked at me here. Every one of you, you have the relationship with your parents.

So some of you being teenagers in here, then others of you that may have children in another room. But the youth are exhorted to cling fast to the teaching of the parents. So there's two things there, right? There's a responsibility of the child, which when they read this, is I need to cling fast to what I'm being told.

But there's also the parents that says, I gotta give them things that they can cling fast to, that they can bind into their heart. Parental instructions should provide guidance and protection and counsel.

Ephesians 6, 4, And the fathers provoke not your children the wrath, but bring them up and nurture and admonition unto the Lord. I love what Spurgeon says. He says this, it says, It is a very happy circumstance when the commandment of our father and the law of our mother are also the commandment of God and the law of the Lord.

[ 17 : 20 ] A happy circumstance. Some of you, many of you in here, had a happy circumstance in your life. That the law of the Lord, the commandments of your father, were the word of God.

And you didn't, but your kids ought to get that, right? They ought to have that. They ought to say, What my dad says for me and what the word of God says in alignment. My mom's heart for me and what she teaches me is what the word of God would have for me.

Sullivan says his words are like lamp unto them or unto a light. What else is said about that? He says that it's a lamp for us. He is putting his instruction right there with the Bible because it is the word of God that he is giving to his children.

How can you put your commandments to your children directly correlate to the words of God? It's when they are the words of God that can provide light to them. So biblical discipline is fundamentally about 7.5.

Open rebuke is better than secret love. We ought to provide training to our kids. And if we're going to provide training, that means we need to be on the field with them. It means that they have to do classes, but they need to be in real life scenarios where they're getting these instructions to them and coaching them along the way, being intentional with their words.

[ 18 : 35 ] Sunday afternoon, we had a testimony service. If we were to learn anything out of it, we ought to learn these kids are listening to everything. And everything that we think small, it really matters. Because it's never the big days, it's never the programs we think that are really going to make a difference, that they're just always watching, they're always paying attention, and they're growing.

And so we need to be very intentional with the words that we use. They can either build up, they can tear down, they should be used for training. Correction involves identifying errors and urging the removal of them. We should help our kids discern, have discernment in how they respond.

Proverbs 1.10, My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not. My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not. That's just the seven or eight words in scripture here.

But to teach that principle to a point where they can bind it upon their heart, they need to have real life application of knowing how to respond. Nancy Reagan taught me as a kid to just say no, Mark.

All right, you need to teach that to your kids, to just say no. I was told over and over again that when people wanted to sell you drugs, what do you say? You just say no. She taught us what our response was supposed to be.

[ 19 : 41 ] If we're going to teach our kids that sinners entice thee, consent thou not, we're going to have to talk to them about a lot of different things. And we're going to talk to them about the respond to it with their lives, how to say no and why to say no.

They need to see the Bible as a source of authority, most certainly. But our lives ought to be a source of example to them of how to live it out. And all this ought to be done through love. Proverbs 13.24, He that spirit is raw and hateth his son, but he that loveth him chasteneth him before times.

It ought to be love-focused instruction that we're giving them. You know, we have many great reasons the Bible will tell us that we should disciple or discipline our kids and bring correction.

One of them is for our neighbor's sake. I love this verse, Proverbs 17.12, Let a bear robbed of his whelps meet a man rather than the fool in his folly. Meaning it would be much better to get a bear cub and take it away from his mom and meet that bear in the woods than it would be to meet a seven-year-old girl in the aisle at the grocery store who has never been told no.

That girl is more dangerous than the bear cub, it says here, that when you meet a fool in his own folly. And so we raise our kids for the sake of other people. It's the neighborly thing that is the kind thing to do.

[ 20 : 52 ] But for our own peace, Proverbs 29.17, Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest. Yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul. For our own peace, we should bring correction to our children.

Ultimately for God's glory. Psalm 115.1, Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory for thy mercy and for thy truth's sakes. All these things should be done unto the Lord.

You know, feeling inadequate is one of the most common traits of parenting. We need to recognize the sufficiency of the scripture to go with our children where we cannot. The last verse, 22, it says, When thou goest, thou shalt leave thee.

When thou sleepest, thou shalt keep thee. When thou wakest, thou shalt talk with thee. The Bible can go places with our children that we will never get to go. It goes with them into the darkness of their heart at night when they're laying there and nobody knows what they're thinking about.

It goes with them when you can't go with them wherever it is when they grow up and they leave. It's the only thing that we'll be able to send with them. When thou goest, thou shalt lead thee. The company, the show, the guide, by going in advance.

[ 21 : 54 ] You know, we speak about God leading us. We tell our kids that we need God to lead us. But they ought to know that when we say that God's leading, God leads us by answering questions like in Romans 4, 3, For what saith the scriptures?

For what saith the scriptures? That's the kind of leading there. Hiding it in our hearts. Psalms 119. He will lead us throughout the day. It ought to be set before us.

Speaking about the millennium in Isaiah chapter number 30, verse 21, it says, In thy ears shall hear a word behind thee saying, This is the way, walk ye in it. And when you turn to the right hand and when you turn to the left, it will guide thee.

That God's word to the children of Israel and the millennial would be as if they were walking. God says, Now turn to the left and turn to the right. And that's how we should be able to live our lives. That's here. I'm going to give you a break tonight.

Jonathan, would you mind coming up here? All right. Don't do anything weird. Okay. Just be normal for a second. Okay. Here's Jonathan. Practically speaking here, how is the word of God supposed to guide him when he is awake?

[ 22 : 55 ] How is the word of God going to guide him in the Bible? So this is the game that we were going to play, our Juana game here tonight. And you're going to need to know some Bible. So Jonathan's about to head to this side of the building.

He's head this side of the building and he is angry. Okay. You know, something happens. Alyssa did something and you're about to respond in anger. And as you head to this side of the building, somebody respond with a Bible verse here.

Okay. What would be a Bible verse when you're about to respond in anger? Do not let the sun go down on your lap. All right. Don't let the sun go down on your lap. Be angry and sin not. That was very quick. All right. All right.

So come back this way. Okay. That is not the way that you want to go. Okay. So the word of God did that. He's coming this way. And now he has a question. Now, Jonathan wants to be lazy. All right. He wants to be lazy in life.

And then what should confront him? Go to that. Go back this way, Jonathan. All right. Now you're going back this direction. Okay. And he wants to be, he's just filled with, he's coming this way.

[ 23 : 53 ] Come this, Jonathan. All right. He's filled this way and he's just filled with anxiety. He just has so much anxiety in his life. And he, what? Be careful for nothing. Be careful for nothing.

All right. Be careful for you. Be careful for you. There you go. You hear that? And now he's going to be directed in this direction. All right, Jonathan, you can have a seat. Okay. Thank you very much. You did a fantastic job. All right. And so the word of God most certainly can direct us in that way, in that most very clear way that it comes into remembrance and the things that we should do and decisions.

And also the Bible tells us that when we sleep, the Bible says that it gives us 1 John 3, 21. If you have a guilty conscience due to sin, you won't be able to sleep. Bad stewardship, Ecclesiastes 5, 12, says that the word of God will keep us from making poor decisions in life that keep us up.

You ever been kept up for those? I have. It says, the result of being stressed out about dangerous places and places you put yourself because of bad company, the word of God will keep us from that. Proverbs 20, verse 4.

Be involved in dangerous activities with dangerous people that will cause you to lose sleep. Proverbs 13, 20 says that a wise man would avoid that. Believing and practicing what the Bible teaches is one of the means of which God gives us good sleep.

[ 24 : 59 ] Psalms 4, 8. I will both lay me down in peace and sleep for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety. The word of God helps us sleep. It keeps us in our sleep. And when thou awakest, it should be there.

When we wake up, that we could commune upon our own bed and think about the Lord. The Lord gives us counsel through his word. Psalm 16, verse 7. I will bless the Lord who has given me counsel.

My reins will instruct me in the night seasons. That the word of God is able to go with us where we can't or go with our children in places that we can't. It will lead us.

It will cause us. It will help us at sleep. It will also give us counsel. And it will give us guidance. So we're called upon to be involved in the work of our children. And if we're going to do that, the way we're going to do that is through our relationship with the word and with them.

And the word of God is going to have to become personal in our lives so they can go places with them that we can never go. One last quote here for you. You know, we know that the Bible is not a private interpretation.

[ 25 : 59 ] So, you know, in a Bible study, somebody would say, well, this means to me. And we say, well, that doesn't really matter. We want to know what does it mean. All right. What does the Bible mean? It means the same thing. We understand the Bible.

There's ways of understanding it. We interpret scripture with scripture. It has a meaning. But we have different lives that we live. And so it tells us different things. There's different applications. Even inside of this room, there's different applications that remain.



And I love what Spurgeon says. It says, the word of God is to me my own book. I have no doubt, brother, it is the same to you. There could not be a Bible that suited me better.

It seems written on purpose for me. Isn't that wonderful? That the Bible, even though it's not for any private interpretation, it's like this book is perfectly suited for me.

Because whatever situation you're in, it has exactly what you need. It can be with you there when you need to cry. It can be there when you need to make decisions. It is the guide that you need in life.

[ 26 : 54 ] And so we have the challenge. The kids are born with foolishness bound in their heart. But we have the word of God. And that relationship that we have with them, pursuing their heart, could really make a difference.

I'll ask you to make a decision today for those, for the kids in our church and for the kids in your home, make a decision concerning this word, that you'll use that relationship. Would they be able to say that it was my happy circumstance in life, that the instruction from my parents were the words of God, because our hearts are so in line with the heart of God found in his word.

Heavenly Father, I ask that you'll be with us tonight, Lord, as my brothers and sisters, Lord, make a decision about your word. Thank you for those that have invested their time tonight in the word with children, that make it possible, Lord, for them to learn the word so it can be bound in their heart.

With every head bound, every eye closed, I don't care the night where you'd make the decision, but I would believe that you most certainly should make a decision. We need to help our kids give their heart to the Lord. And that they do that is by having the word bound to it.

So would you make a decision? Maybe you're in here and you don't have children, but the day that you do, you go ahead and dedicate them to the Lord. Maybe you're like me as you read this and say, I need to be much more intentional, not about my kids' schedule, but about the conversations that I have about their heart.

[ 28 : 11 ] And hold the word in your hand and make a decision about it tonight. That will make a difference for your family.