

Dad Talks - Proverbs 3:1-15 April 30, 2023

One of the most popular internet resources to watch are presentations called **TED Talks** - Are you familiar with TED talks? - How many of you have watched one?

Do you know what the acronym TED stands for: **Technology, Entertainment and Design**

TED talk are short lectures - (usually about 15-18 minutes in length) - they are interesting and well produced - they are done on about every conceivable topic - I must say, I love the concept - They give you a very PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATION on a defined topic in a short time.

Let me say right up front, I am not recommending them - Like everything, some are good - and some are off the wall - some I have found helpful, but many are done by crazies - often from an UNBIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE!

But I love the idea of giving people powerful information that will help them - and doing it with short burst of information that leave you wanting more.

In the Bible, in the Book of Proverbs, we find the original TED Talks - Take for example if you want a short talk on the DANGERS OF ADULTERY, go read Proverbs 5 and 6.

If you want a TED Talk on VIRTUES OF MOTHERHOOD, of course Proverbs 31:10-31 - How about a talk on THE PITFALLS that can destroy a leader: Proverbs 31:1-9 - what a talk on the HAZARDS OF LAZINESS, there are several passages that will help you.

What some instruction on Wisdom - or how do HANDLE MONEY - or the importance of honesty and integrity - What about developing a strong work ethic - or the importance of controlling your tongue? - The Book of Proverbs has you covered.

Each talk will be short and full of truth! - Well, today I want us to look at one of my favorite TED Talks found in the Book of Proverbs - ONE we are going to call it **A DAD Talk!**

It is a talk given by a wise father to his young, teenage son - It is found in Proverbs 3:1-15.

The context of our passage today is a FATHER TALKING to his son about the IMPORTANCE OF WISDOM - Chapter 2 of Proverbs talks about the PROTECTIONS that wisdom brings to our lives.

But in chapter 3 our father is going to give his son 5 PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS of wisdom to EVERYDAY LIFE - He is going to tell his son, If you want to know what God's wisdom looks like in your life, here it is!

The title of today's message is **DAD Talks** - Ever had a DAD Talk? - That is when Father sits down across from you - he gets that STERN LOOK on his face - and he says, "Let's Talk"! - In these verses, this is exactly what this CARING FATHER does for his son - So, can we have a DAD TALK this morning???

Proverbs 3:1 My son, do not forget my law, But let your heart keep my commands; 2 For length of days and long life And peace they will add to you.

The first concern this father has is that his son will FORGET GOD'S LAW - Do you see what is implied here? - It is understood that his son HAS LEARNED GOD'S LAW - The father is confident that he has taught his son the WORD OF GOD!

As a parent who has raised teenagers, I was confident by the time my children were 13 or 14 years old, they knew RIGHT FROM WRONG - I was not always confident they were choose right over wrong, but I was fairly certain they knew the right thing to do in most situations!

If you are a young parent with children between the ages of birth and 12 years old, now is the time to teach them! - Now is the TIME TO PLANT in your child's life the TRUTHS OF SCRIPTURE - Don't waste a moment - Get them to church - Let our SS Teachers help you with this daunting task.

But, also DAILY, as life gives you opportunity, teach them the truths of the Bible - As topic like EVOLUTION & GENDER CONFUSION come up at school, talk about what you believe from God's Word.

After meals, don't just give them desert - let them earn it by playing a little Bible trivia - In the car, play games like: NAME FAMOUS 3'S of the Bible - You go around the car and everyone has to come up with one FAMOUS 3: Father, Son & Holy Spirit - Peter, James and John - Jesus 3 days in the tomb - 3 men on the Cross when Jesus was Crucified - the first 3 kings of Israel, Saul, David and Solomon.

Then we would go to Famous 40's of the Bible - Or famous 7's - This is a great way to teach your child the STORIES & FACTS of the Bible.

With older children, you can talk about WHAT HAPPENS on their favorite TV Shows - I used to drive my girls crazy while they were watching THE GILMORE GIRLS - I would constantly ask them: What does the Bible say about what they are doing on the show? - As a parent, this can be GREAT FUN!

Do this when they are young, then when they are teens, you CHANGE STRATEGIES - Now, when they go out WITHOUT YOU, you remind them at key moments **TO REMEMBER** what they have learned from you!

The teen years are when we STOP PREACHING - By this point, if you have done your job, THEY KNOW what you believe! - Now they have to BE REMINDED when the pressure is on, not to FORGET IT.

ALSO, Notice the father's real concern was his child's heart - He was just looking for OUTWARD OBEDIENCE, so that dad would leave him alone - NO, he wanted his son to obey God BECAUSE HE WANTED TO - Because HIS SON felt that obeying God was important and the RIGHT THING to do!

Don't worry so much about what your child is doing in front of you - No, the real concern of the parent of a teen is what decisions are they making when your not around! - This is when the convictions of their heart becomes clear!

One of my FAVORITE SAYINGS to my teens when they would leave home to go on A DATE, or to go BACK TO SCHOOL were 3 simple words: **Make good decisions!** - Remember God's Word!

For length of days and long life and peace they will add to you. - Here is an important reminder from the FATHER to his child - He reminds him that the **QUALITY & QUANTITY** of a child's life can be GREATLY AFFECTED by the choices they make during these pivotal teenage years!

TEENAGERS, all of those decisions you are making when MOM & DAD are not around, can have FAR REACHING CONSEQUENCES for you life - Remember God's Law - Remember His Word that you have been taught - Mom and Dad aren't there to MAKE YOU OBEY - Now, it is up to you!

Is OBEDIENCE in your heart? - **DAD Talk #1 - Remember God's Word and obey it from your heart!**

3 Let not mercy and truth forsake you; Bind them around your neck, Write them on the tablet of your heart, 4 [And] so find favor and high esteem In the sight of God and man.

In many ways mercy and truth are ALMOST OPPOSITES - Mercy is the willingness to overlook a transgression - Someone harms you in some way, and instead of BRINGING THE PUNISHMENT that is deserved, you choose to show kindness.

You CHOOSE FORGIVENESS - You give to them kindness when they deserve judgement!

Truth, on the other hand, demands that WE MAKE A STAND for what is right - Truth requires us to HOLD A PERSON ACCOUNTABLE for their sins - There is right and there is wrong - and truth requires us to judge wrong deeds!

Truth, by its very nature, means that wrong must be met with CONSEQUENCES - the law broken, therefore a fine must be paid - You did the deed, now you must pay the fee! - You did the crime, so you must serve the time!

Given those two extremes, how do we "**Bind both around our neck**"? - How do mercy & truth co-exist in our hearts?

HOW? - The same way they co-exist in the heart of God - Listen to these descriptions of Jesus: In **John 1:14 And the Word (Jesus) became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.**

John 1:17 For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

When we look at the life of Jesus we see THE PERFECT BALANCE of mercy (or grace) and truth - Jesus never excused sin - but He was so willing to OFFER MERCY to a repentant sinner!

John 8 - Woman caught in the act of Adultery - Was she guilty? - ABSOLUTELY - though she was not alone in her guilt - there was a man somewhere who was just as guilty.

Jesus never declared her innocent - but he showed her mercy - In **John 8:10-11 When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, "Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?" 11 She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said to her, "Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more."**

In one sentence Jesus perfectly illustrates how we bind mercy and truth into our hearts - **First, Mercy: "Neither do I condemn you"** - **Second, Truth - "Go and sin no more!"**

IT IS AMAZING how often Jesus could bind both mercy and truth around His neck as he dealt with others - Even on the Cross, Jesus exercised a PERFECT BALANCE of mercy and truth.

Luke 23:39-43 Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, "If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us." 40 But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, "Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? 41 "And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong." 42 Then he said to Jesus, "Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom." 43 And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."

Jesus knew this man was guilty of BREAKING THE LAW - He was hanging on a cross because he had done wrong - The man even ADMITS HIS GUILT - I suppose Jesus could have rescued him from his fate, but He doesn't - Jesus recognizes the man is guilty and getting his just punishment.

But, look at the mercy He shows - **43 And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."**

Can you and I carry this same conviction of Truth AND BLEND IT with the kindness of Mercy? - I believe we can if we seek to have the heart of Jesus.

Mercy will come from us as long as we REMEMBER OUR OWN GUILT and the mercy that has been shown to us by Jesus - At the same time, we will STAND FOR TRUTH as long as we stand firm in the conviction of God's Word.

Mercy and Truth function in our lives like the DOOR CLOSURES on our restroom doors - One of the FUNCTIONS of a Door Closure is to keep the door from going TOO FAR in either direction!

You can push open our doors ONLY SO FAR - at a point the closer stops the door from opening any further - then when the door shuts, the closure only allow the door TO CLOSE SO FAR - That closer keeps the door from GOING TO AN UNWANTED EXTREME in either direction.

This is what mercy and truth are to do in our lives - They are to WORK TOGETHER to keep us from either extreme - Mercy taken to an extreme does away with any accountability and responsibility for our sins - Life with ONLY MERCY, has NO BOUNDARIES - this is not good.

If we swing too far in the DIRECTION OF TRUTH, suddenly every situation becomes absolute - In every CIRCUMSTANCE there is only right or wrong - there is NO ROOM for mercy or kindness - Sin has occurred and it must be judged!

We can easily become LEGALISTIC PHARISEES who see it as OUR JOB to keep everyone else in line - We become the ARBITERS OF TRUTH - We are ALWAYS RIGHT and everyone who disagrees with us is wrong!

Can you begin to see how EITHER EXTREME is harmful to human relationships - Neither extreme represents THE HEART OF GOD - Jesus was full of Grace and Truth - MERCY was just as important for Jesus TO SHOW AS WAS Judgement!

When we OPERATE IN A SINFUL WORLD, we need both - We can not compromise on right and wrong - but we should always leave ROOM FOR MERCY!

Notice the result: **4 [And] so find favor and high esteem In the sight of God and man.**

God loves it when OUR RESPONSES TO SIN resembles the response of Jesus - People will SENSE FAIRNESS in how we treat others - When we show love, WITHOUT COMPROMISING truth, we know WE ARE NEAR the heart of God.

Dad Talk #2 - Treat people with mercy, but always couple that mercy with God's truth! You can't overlook sin, but you can confront it with kindness.

5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; 6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.

It amazes me how much of life IS BUILT ON TRUST - Marriage - employment - friendships - church life - the businesses we choose to support - all meaningful human relationships are built on trust!

This is also what our relationship with God is established on - Trust! - Even Our salvation is base on trusting Jesus' death on the Cross as payment for my sins!

Here this Dad instructs his son to trust God with ALL HIS HEART - To know if TRUSTING GOD with my whole heart, I have to ask myself this question: **What do I lean on in times of trouble or uncertainty?**

When everything is GOING GREAT in your life, it is easy to say you are trusting God - But how do you respond when THINGS GO WRONG - What do you LEAN ON when life get's out of your control?

You can't trust God with all your heart and, at the SAME TIME, LEAN on your own understanding - So many times in life, TO TRUST GOD will require you TO STEP OUT IN FAITH and trust HIM when you don't understand what He's doing!

EX: When our oldest son was born, Donna quit working to stay home with him - Financially, on paper, WE COULD NOT make it work - but we were convinced that this was the move our family needed to make.

Donna and I were often shocked at how QUICKLY OUR FAITH would be tested - Three months after she QUIT HER JOB, it was looking like we were not going to be able to pay our mortgage - I was about to panicked, when OUT OF THE BLUE, we got a check in the mail for the exact amount we needed.

Here's why the UNEXPECTED CHECK came - When Bryan was born, Donna had 6 weeks of PAID MATERNITY LEAVE - she took this leave before resigning from her job.

As it turned out, that leave took her two days into the New Year - because of that, the company decided to pay her two weeks vacation because TECHNICALLY she was employed that year - just the amount we needed!

There were so many times OVER THE YEARS when God would meet our needs in different ways - usually it wasn't by getting unexpected checks in the mail - often we had to LIVE WITHOUT - but we found we always had what we needed!

We found we just COULDN'T FIGURE IT OUT by our own understanding - We just had to trust that our loving Heavenly Father had a plan!

What does it mean to live life LEANING ON OUR OWN UNDERSTANDING? - Simply put, it is Living a life that REQUIRES NO FAITH - one that requires NO GOD - it is the attitude, **"If I can't figure it out, if I can't make it work on paper, I won't do it"**.

It is to live your life in a way, that for all practical purposes REQUIRES NO GOD - I must CONTROL THINGS - I must DEPEND ON ME - I have to be able to FIGURE IT OUT - This is leaning on your own understanding - It is a Life that NEEDS NO GOD!

You can't TRUST GOD with your whole heart, but then lean on yourself to have it all figured out!

Notice the next line: **In all your ways acknowledge Him!** - Have you ever walked into a room and NO ONE acknowledge your presence? - Everyone just IGNORED you - You might as well not even be there!

Don't you think this is HOW GOD FEELS at times with us - He is there - He is in the room with us - HE'S THERE in the MIDST OF OUR STRUGGLE - Yet, we IGNORE HIM - We treat God as if He doesn't matter!

To acknowledge God is simply to REMEMBER & to RECOGNIZE & to RESPOND to the fact that He is there! - **First, remember that God is with you** - He hasn't abandoned you just because things got difficult.

Second, recognize His presence - You do this by WELCOMING HIM - say a short prayer acknowledging that you are aware that He is with you!

Third, respond in light of His presence - remind yourself that SUCCESS OR FAILURE is not just up to you - God has a PLAN and a PURPOSE in this moment - You may not yet understand it yet, but God can be trusted!

And, if we acknowledge HIM, the PROMISE IS THIS: He will direct our paths! - A LITERAL TRANSLATION of the phrase is this: **God will make our PATHS SMOOTH** - I like that - He will smooth out the BUMPY ROAD that we are traveling on - He will make OUR WALK EASIER!

Isn't that really what we need - For God to SMOOTH THE WAY - We don't need God to PULL US FROM THE TRIAL - We just need Him to SMOOTH OUR PATH so that we can accomplish all that He wants to accomplish in our lives!

Notice the next phrase:

7 Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and depart from evil. 8 It will be health to your flesh, And strength to your bones.

Verse 7 continues the thought of TRUSTING GOD rather than trusting yourself - To be wise in your own eyes is to think I know better than God what is right in my situation!

It is TO IGNORE God's Word, and then to MAKE A DECISION based on what I think is best for me - Wow, do we see people doing this today!

Whenever you find yourself thinking: **"I know what the Bible says, but I think . . ."** - this is when you are BEING WISE in your own eyes - We think we are smarter than God!

It is EASIER THAN WE THINK TO LOST OUR RESPECT for who God is - to loss the FEAR OF GOD - in Matthew 10:28 Jesus said, **"And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.**

When we no longer fear God, we become quite comfortable CHOOSING SIN - And look at what this LOSS OF RESPECT & FEAR for God has done to the HEALTH OF OUR SOCIETY - Look at what this embracing of Evil has done to the HEALTH OF PEOPLE.

Addiction and self-destructive behaviors are at epidemic levels - And yet, in our PRIDE & REBELLION, we keep believing we know better - We have decided we are wise enough - and we don't need God.

Yet, this wise father reminds his son that FEARING GOD & HIS WORD is the key to a HEALTHY LIFE - Doing things God's Way is what will STRENGTHEN our bones!

DAD Talk #3 - Trust God, not yourself!

9 Honor the LORD with your possessions, And with the firstfruits of all your increase; 10 So your barns will be filled with plenty, And your vats will overflow with new wine.

This wise father gives his son a very SIMPLE REMINDER - Never forget where your BLESSINGS COME FROM - In our prosperous American society, it is very easy for us TO TAKE CREDIT for our material blessings - **“I’m the one who worked hard! I earned what I have!”**

The young man being addressed in our passage was MOST LIKELY A FARMER - Farmers need an awful lot to GO RIGHT in order to have a successful year - They need rain - but not too much rain - They need DRY - but not too much DRY.

Many crops need some cold - but not too much cold - They need some heat - but not too much heat - A farmer lives in constant awareness of HIS VULNERABILITY - Every PLANTING SEASON was a reminder of just how dependent he is on God’s blessings!

Today, we live in an ECONOMIC BUBBLE where we have forgotten just how vulnerable we are - God has been good to our country and we have forgotten how FLEETING PROSPERITY can be! - Our PROSPERITY has given us a false sense of security!

This father is simply reminding his son TO REMEMBER WHERE his blessings are coming from! - What about you? - In your prosperity, have you forgotten just how quickly it can all be lost? - Have you forgotten how much God has blessed you with?

Just last fall, in the same week OUR OVEN DIED and one of our AC UNITS died - In one short week, our savings account dropped by \$10,000 - it hit me that week, just how quickly you can go from financially comfortable to VERY UNCOMFORTABLE - especially if you are depending on yourself!

To HONOR the Lord with your possessions is to recognize where they came from - And you do this by giving the FIRST OF YOUR EARNINGS BACK to God - You don’t give back to God from the LEFTOVERS - No, you always GIVE TO GOD first!

My parents taught us this from a very early age - They would give us a WEEKLY ALLOWANCE - I think it was about \$1 PER WEEK for every year of our age - So when I was six, we would get about \$6.

It would go into our PIGGY BANK - but then we would pull .60 cents out - this would go into an envelope and we would take it to church - when the plate would come around, we would drop it in - every week.

My mom & dad were teaching us exactly what this father was teaching his son - We give to God first - We then trust God to **BLESS THE REST** to meet all our needs - GOD HAS PROVEN Himself faithful over and over again in my life!

Please remember this: **With God is not about the money!** - Do you really think God needs our money? - No, it is all about BEING THANKFUL - It is all about being reminded WHO IS THE SOURCE of our blessings - remembering to BE THANKFUL - remembering my need TO TRUST GOD - Remembering our need to recognize HIS BLESSING and our DEPENDENCE on His Blessing!

It is a reminder that we are NOT SELF-SUFFICIENT - we try to believe we are - but all it takes is a FEW BROKEN APPLIANCES to quickly remind us that without God's Blessing things CAN GO SOUTH in a hurry!

DAD Talk #4 - Give to God first and trust Him to bless the rest!

11 My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, Nor detest His correction; 12 For whom the LORD loves He corrects, Just as a father the son [in whom] he delights.

The FINAL APPLICATION of wisdom that this father gives to his son is this: **When God is trying to correct you, listen!** - Do you know what the CHASTENING OF THE LORD looks like? - Do you know what it FEELS LIKE?

Most often, God DISCIPLINES US by simply let's us REAP WHAT WE SOW - In other words, He let's us suffer the consequences of our poor choices!

Earthly mom's and dads will often make the mistake of RESCUING THEIR CHILDREN from the natural consequences of their bad choices - This is most often A MISTAKE!

Think about it - how do WE LEARN? - We learn by experiencing pain - **Our path is best corrected when we feel the pain and discomfort of the wrong path we have chosen to walk down!**

God does this for us - If we chose a PATH OF DESTRUCTION, God wants to WARN US before we get too far down that path - Don't get angry at God when things go wrong in your life - STOP! - Examine the choices you have been making! - Is the pain you are experiencing a result of some BAD DECISIONS you have made?

A WISE SON or daughter won't get angry - they will APPRECIATE that God loves them enough to correct them! - And they will MAKE CHANGES to their lives!

Don't get mad when your life EXPERIENCES TROUBLE - Stop - Ask Why you are experiencing pain - There is a GOOD POSSIBILITY that God may be trying to correct you!

DAD Talk #5 - Correction is good for us. Be thankful for it instead of getting angry about it!

13 Happy [is] the man [who] finds wisdom, And the man [who] gains understanding; 14 For her proceeds [are] better than the profits of silver, And her gain than fine gold. 15 She [is] more precious than rubies, And all the things you may desire cannot compare with her.

Wisdom is a powerful & valuable thing in this life - Today, this Wise Father has given us 5 practical applications of God's Wisdom for our lives:

THE FATHER IN HEAVEN is looking you in the eye this morning and saying: Here is Wisdom:

- **Remember God's Word and obey it from your heart!**
- **Treat people with mercy, but always couple that mercy with God's truth! You can't overlook sin, but you can confront it with kindness.**
- **Trust God, not yourself!**
- **Give to God first and trust Him to bless the rest!**
- **Correction is good for us. Be thankful for it instead of getting angry about it!**