

Hopewell ARP Midweek Sermon
Wednesday, October 9, 2024

Proverbs 4:1–9

1 Hear, my children, the instruction of a father,
And give attention to know understanding;
2 For I give you good doctrine:
Do not forsake my law.
3 When I was my father's son,
Tender and the only one in the sight of my mother,
4 He also taught me, and said to me:
“Let your heart retain my words;
Keep my commands, and live.
5 Get wisdom! Get understanding!
Do not forget, nor turn away from the words of my mouth.
6 Do not forsake her, and she will preserve you;
Love her, and she will keep you.
7 Wisdom is the principal thing;
Therefore get wisdom.
And in all your getting, get understanding.
8 Exalt her, and she will promote you;
She will bring you honor, when you embrace her.
9 She will place on your head an ornament of grace;
A crown of glory she will deliver to you.”

Good Doctrine for Newborns, How Kings Are Made

Main idea: God's royal offspring should give themselves to getting His wisdom

Introduction: Good doctrine! An invitation for children, and an exhortation to fathers (v1–2).

1. **Where it begins** (v3–4)
 1. The responsibility of begetting/bearing an image-bearer.
 2. A responsibility reinforced by God's providence around newborns.
 3. A responsibility they will one day have, and for which they must begin preparing at once.
 4. A responsibility not just of the head but of the heart.
 5. A responsibility not just of the heart but of the hands.
 6. A responsibility that produces good fruit: life!
2. **How it develops** (v5–7, 8)
 1. Effort. Get, get, get, in all your getting, get!
 2. Perseverance. Do not forget, do not forsake, do not turn away!

3. Affection. Love her, exalt her, embrace her.
3. **What it profits** (v8–9)
 1. Exalting.
 2. Honoring.
 3. Adorning.
 4. Crowning.
 5. In this life, in significant/important measure. But supremely so in the next.

Conclusion: we were meant to be kings. And there is only one way—the Lord Jesus Christ, the Wisdom of God incarnate, Who gives Himself to us and to our children by means of His Word, the wisdom of God written and preached.

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Proverbs 4, verses 1 through 9, these are God's words. Here my children. The instruction of a father. And give attention to no understanding. For I give you good Doctrine. Do not forsake my law. When I was my father's son. Tender and the only one in the sight of my mother.

He also taught me and said to me, Let your heart retain my words. Keep my commands and live. Get wisdom. Get understanding. Do not forget nor turn away from the words of my mouth. Do not forsake her and she will preserve you. Love her. She will keep you. Wisdom is the principal thing.

Therefore, get wisdom. And then all you're getting. Get understanding. Exalt her. And she will promote you, she will bring you honor when you embrace her. She will place on your head. An ornament of Grace. The crown of Glory. She will deliver to you.

Amen, thus sends this reading of God's inspired and And Aaron twerk.

Children. And often, when I'm going to address those of you who are younger. Say children. And hope that either, that will snap you to attention or Maybe a well-placed parental elbow, or nudge, or sibling elbow. Snap you to attention and sometimes. A desire for the adults to pay better attention.

I say children. Because they are. Listening, perhaps I think, um, It will be something that is simpler and easier or perhaps they are tuning in because they want to address. Their own children well and they're hoping to get some help from God's servant as he addresses the children. Or perhaps.

We all just know ourselves to God's children. Did not the Apostle, the last one. So often. Address the church as little children. Little children. And not just because he was older now and Everyone else was? Younger. Uh, every once in a while, I'll hear. Someone who is quite a young ordained minister instead of saying fathers and brothers.

I'll hear him say. At a respiratory meeting or assembly or a senate fathers and fathers. Uh, or every once in a while. I've heard a much older man. Say, brothers and sons But we are all. God's little children. If we are his In his. And particularly, especially if we are his by faith in Jesus Christ, his son, whom he sent into the world and the fullness of time, because Now, on this side of the sending of the When we come to believe in Jesus, he sends forth his Spirit into our hearts because we are children.

The address at the beginning of, Proverbs chapter 4 is not my son or even my children, although the word my has been supplied by our translators and editors In our English version is this here children. The instruction. Of a father. This is addressed to children everywhere, even if they do not have this particular, good father.

At least they have his words as recorded in the text. And if this is Solomon speaking, generally to his children, there would have been sadly, very many children, who to whom, it might have been addressed. Because of the Folly and sin. Of Solomon. And yet he speaks here, not so much as Himself as a father to those generally who are his children.

But he speaks as the ideal father. Speaking to children everywhere, especially children of Godly parents. But children of God, And he says, The instruction of a father. Give attention. To no understanding. Give me your eyes. Pay attention, turn your head. Give me your thoughts. Focus. Listen.

Give attention to no understanding. I give you good Doctrine. Do not forsake my law. Do not forsake my fatherly instruction for I give you good. Doctrine. Now, every one of us who our fathers ought to want to be able to make the same appeal to our children. Children, give me your attention.

Give me your attention because I am your father and because you are to honor the father that God has given you. Yes. Give me your attention because in order to obey your parents in the Lord, you need to know what your parents in the Lord have said. And if you did not as soon as Daddy started speaking, Uh, drop what you are doing and Turn away your attention, from whatever else you were listening to.

And you hear the sound of your daddy's voice. Begin and you didn't turn, and listen, and make sure you could hear. And if you couldn't hear ask him again, what it is that he is saying what it is. Don't ever give the excuse to your parents if you could hear that they were speaking but didn't give attention and say well, I didn't hear you.

I wasn't listening. You have a duty to listen. Give attention. Those are all we should give attention just because it is our father whom. We are to honor whom we are to obey, who is speaking. Our daddy But here, the reason given is not merely in the relationship. And God who has established that relationship and the commands that he gives you about your relationship with your father.

Here's the reason given is super added to all of those things. For I give you good. Doctrine. Oh, what a blessing. If you were a child of a Christian father, And you receive good teaching. Good instruction. Good Doctrine from your daddy. Do not waste such a gift from God.

Don't you know how few in the history of this world have had a father who gave them good Doctrine. Many who sit in the churches and they hear about about good, fatherhood they grieve over the father that they didn't have or over the father that they did and was not the father.

He should have been. If you have a dad who gives you good Doctrine, if you have a dad who gives you good instruction, good theology. Good teaching. Oh, make use of him while you can. You do not know. When the Lord will take your dad out of this world.

Or when Providence may take him in some way out of his life or diminish, his abilities or so order things that you are unable to spend so much time. How many of us who reach? Early, adulthood, or middle age. And, and something happens with our father and we realize we will not have him forever.

We realize how much we have squandered this time that we had to listen to good Doctrine. Good theology from a Godly father. Oh make use of it. Happen to know every one of you children who are in this room and I certainly hope. Many of those who. Will listen one day or our streaming.

Even now you have fathers who give you good Doctrine. Pay attention. But what is an invitation to the children here? Is also an implied exhortation for us who are fathers, isn't it? Should not our mouths, we who know the Lord, we who have his word, we who have been the beneficiaries of so much instruction.

Not only from our own parents, many of us But so much good preaching and teaching so many good books. Never has there been so much. Good theology, good doctrine available for a father who now has children. And wants to be able to say here children. The instruction of a father for I give you good Doctrine.

Here is an incentive for us to study, not to waste time, not to waste our thoughts. To make good use of God's word. Not only when we have opportunity to read it to not only when we have our opportunity to go and hear it taught and sit under it preached and opportunity.

Even to meditate upon it. What an incentive for us, who our fathers, who wish to store up good Doctrine. For our children. Good Doctrine. It's an invitation, for children is an exhortation to fathers. And Now as the the father Solomon here, writing not so much in himself and his own fatherhood as writing as an ideal father, at least In this passage.

Speaking as the generalized Godly father would speak to his children. Modeling for how fathers ought to speak to our to our children is. He does. So He gives. A little bit with respect to himself, probably As the child of. David, and Bathsheba. Remembering back or perhaps, not even remembering because of how early it is referring back to that about which he has been reminded Probably by his father David on many occasions.

And yet, also speaking as an ideal father, ideally this is how it will be. That the good doctrine that a father is teaching. His children will not have started when he came to be a father. Praise God, he is merciful and gracious. Sometimes he saves out of complete unbelief and and those who are even strangers to the church and strangers to the truth and he brings them in late in life and those who are saved in such a manner often feel that the the disadvantage at, which they find themselves to have gotten such a, a late start and God is also merciful and gracious for those who who have squandered so much of their their opportunities, as children, and who did not start to accumulate.

Good Doctrine and meditate upon the word of God and set their hearts before God and his word until they were older and realized how much time had been lost. Not the ideal. Praise God, is gracious. And the often as it were makes up to us the years that the locusts have eaten.

But that doesn't mean, oh it's fine. We'll squander our childhood. Let the children play will squander the youth. Let them expand themselves and explore the world.

We want to know where did this good Doctrine begin. That's where where he takes us. In verses, three, and four. Where did this ideal father's? Good Doctrine. Begin And and then how did it develop? What was the instruction that he received and in the beginning that he followed and is now urging his own son to follow?

Really in verses. Five through eight. And, And then not just how it developed, but what wisdom profits, what he has tasted of and now is calling his own son to invite inviting, his own son to taste of as well. And we see that beginning really in verse six, her preservation her keeping Then emphasized in verse 8, and And so, Brief time in this portion of God's word, this evening will hope Think about it, under those three main ideas, where it begins, where this good Doctrine begins, how this good Doctrine develops and what this good Doctrine profits.

First, where it begins? When I was my father's son. Tender and the only one. In the sight of my mother. What? An interesting way of saying it, when I was my father's son, Something that you might hear. Someone who knew your dad, if you're a young man and As you grow out of your Boyhood, and into your manhood, and someone who knew your dad, when he was your age, He, he might not even know you or meet you and or And meet you with your father, and yet you come and you meet him and you introduce yourself and immediately, he says

Now that makes sense.

You are your father's son. Was he saying he's saying I recognize? From whom you came. You see, there's a responsibility. When a father begets children. He is not just beginning children in his own image, Were we created to be in our own image? No. We were created in the image of God and especially those who have been redeemed.

You have been redeemed into the image of God to be renewed in the image of God. This was this was one of the first great Commandments, wasn't it? As God created Adam and we thought about this praise God because we were thinking about the Sabbath and the Lord's Day morning sermon as God creates Adam and it's not good for him to be alone and Adam is alone.

He's the only one in the image of God and in the whole creation. And God plants this Garden for him and puts him there and he starts bringing him, one of each. Kind of the other creatures of each kind of animal. But none of them are made in the image of God.

Dogs are sweet and loyal and friendly and love to serve and all the more before the fall. Seem to have been affected less by the Maybe horses, also, maybe there are other animals, but none of them made in God's image. And then God makes a woman. And he brings her to the man and wakes him up.

And He sees hers this at last bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh, he sings over her and then God addresses. Now the two who are The only two who are in the image of God and all of the creation. And he tells them to be fruitful and multiply Not after your kind.

Everything else is to be fruitful and multiply after it's, they're kind. But man is unique. The man and the woman are in the image of God. And when he tells them to be fruitful and multiply there to be fruitful and multiply image bearers, Which is far more than just Multiplying children.

That means. Teaching them. Teaching them because they're yours. There is a responsibility. To teach our children. Who their God is. That they are made in His Image. What sin is how we got to be this way. What God has done about it and giving us the Lord, Jesus Christ.

The new man, the last Adam, another whole Humanity. That by believing in him, we become his and he becomes ours, and his righteousness is counted for us, and his cross takes away our sin and his spirit. It starts making us to be more and more like he is so that we are renewed into the image of God.

When you beget a child, or when you as a mother bear, a child, you have a responsibility from God to teach your children. This good Doctrine. So, he says, when I was my father's son. The fact that God gave me to him and reproduced me from him. Had placed upon my dad.

This responsibility a responsibility of begetting or bearing, an image Bearer, a responsibility that is reinforced by God's Providence around newborns. You see this in the rest of verse three tender. And the only one in the sight of my mother. Now, that's not true in an absolute sense. You know, mom still has of course, lots of affection even a primary or a preceding affection for Dad.

If husband and wife are not putting one, another first, as the two who have been made one flesh, they are not being good parents. You can't put good parenting over against being a good spouse. That's an impossibility. But There is a season of In which God gives you a newborn.

Who is totally and utterly helpless? And needs constant attention. They can eat. And sometimes they don't eat very well and they can sleep and sometimes they don't even sleep very well, and they can poop and sometimes they don't even poop very well. And they sometimes they do it very well and when they're doing it very well, they still need extra attention.

Because they're eating more, you got to feed them more and they're sleeping more. And you you gotta adjust your schedule to their sleeping. They're pooping more and that creates all kinds of dirty work. Doesn't it? But God just in the Providence of how it is with newborns. He makes a whole family to be consumed and not in a not in a drudgering.

Sort of way where we find the child to be a burden although God forgive us. The sin and a dad's heart, or a mom's heart is such that we feel that before him. And we're so thankful for the Forgiveness of the Lord Jesus, and how he turns us right around and in the cleansing of our conscience by his grace and and gives us to Out of love for him and love for our baby, right back to giving attention to that newborn And sometimes.

Sometimes we get those moments, in fact, often we have those moments and we're telling our newborn everything Yeah, there's a great difference between the believing mommy. Holding her brand fresh new baby. There's a brand fresh new baby in the congregation this week, even And holding brand new, fresh new baby and say, oh mommy loves you and Daddy loves you, and we can't wait for you to get to know your brothers and sisters and you're just telling them about everything.

Well. That's the season in which they are tender. And the only one in the sight of mom. Because mom's life is of a providential necessity consumed with this baby.

But a Godly father and a Godly mother. Who are telling their baby everything. For spending all their time on their baby. They ought to be teaching. Their baby. Is a responsibility. We're hoping even when there are a tiny little baby. That one day. That tiny little baby girl will be a mommy.

Or one day, that tiny little baby boy will be a daddy. And they need to learn good Doctrine. And now in this ideal, father, in this description of the ideal father in Proverbs chapter 4, he's saying that's where it should start. In that season. When I was a newborn I was a fresh baby.

My daddy taught me and said to me, let your heart retain my words, keep my commands and live.

My wife and I were in seminary before. We had children. God gave us the blessing of good friends. Dead family worship well and we were often over at their house for supper and family worship and their little girl was And and my friend her daddy. Would read the Bible and he would address her and he would explain theology to her and he would make application to her heart.

And she was learning sometimes. Um, It cost her some pain, although never in front of us, she was learning to pay attention. She was learning to listen. Her daddy was giving her good Doctrine. And I trust that didn't begin when she was two, at least two years. I trust that that began before she was two days old.

You see it is never too early. To start teaching our children. Good Doctrine. We do not know. How much they are understanding. That's why you're already saying, you know, it's going to be months before she can squeak out a mama. Yet is When from The the time you hold her for the first time and you're telling her how beautiful she is and that you're her mama.

And you're pointing out to the dad that she can't even see because her eyes. Don't go that far yet, you know there's Dada. Why Because, you know, she's already starting to learn And you don't, and we've learned not to underestimate how much they're learning and how aware they are.

Well, if they're already starting to learn and they're, you're not, you shouldn't underestimate how how much they're learning and what they might be aware of. Does not make, does it not make sense to tell them about their God, to start speaking to them his words to start giving to them the good Doctrine.

To always be helping them and and challenging them with the That to grow in their ability to listen and their ability to understand and their ability to take things to heart. Do not wait until we can see that they're able to do it and then ask them to do it.

Well, that's one thing Justin, the natural order and the way that God has has created us but there's something even greater Because our hope for our children is never. That by the Excellence of their intellectual aptitude and their theological aptitude, they will figure things out and make right decisions and uh, become Godly in and of themselves and their increasing abilities.

Know, our hope in using God's word. Is always the god of that word. And we know that. He is able and does. Work beyond our capacities and beyond the ordinary usefulness of the means in itself because the means or means of his grace and it is his strength that is made perfect in our weakness.

And so we don't use the Bible in a superstitious way as a magical Talisman. If we just say enough Bible, God's going to save my child. No, we are address the child as this idealized father here. It's addressing. He also taught me and said to me, let your heart Retain my words.

That we don't just teach our children to fill their heads. That we teach our children to move their hearts. Let your heart retain my words. Again, we'll borrow from Sermons passed. Where

all of the faculty? Of the, the soul are the intellect and the affections and the will. Keep my commands and live so responsibly, not just of the head but of the heart, not just of the heart, but of the hands.

And the appointed means by which God will give them life. Keep my commands and live. Oh, dear children. You're never too young. To pay attention. When Daddy or Mommy is reading the Bible. Or is teaching you about God. You're created in the image of God and he gave you a daddy and a mommy.

To begin teaching you about himself. And he helps Daddy and to teach and he helps you to listen. And his Spirit is the one who uses his word to give you life from Jesus. And to give you faith in Jesus, To make you to be more and more like Jesus.

And God, doesn't wait until you're older. He works in you. He might convert you young. He might bring you to After three or four years you might bring you to So early that you don't remember it at all, he might give you to struggle for a long time. And not really bring you under the depth of conviction for your sins, until older than we've already mentioned.

We don't know. But God uses his word and he blesses his word. Listen to your parents as they teach you. Calm and listen during the prayer meetings, and listen during the Sabbath school. And listen during the sermons give your heart to God who addresses you from his word. Don't worry that, you find it hard.

Many of us who are much older. Also find it hard. It's not just you. But God will help you. God will help you with how well you can pay attention and God will help you with how clearly you can think and understand and God will help you when your heart is cold.

And you ask him help me Lord to love you and to respond to your word from my heart. And God will help you to do it. You come back and you hear the same thing again in church or Mom and Dad are telling you the same thing they've told you before, and you realize, you have not been doing it, you've been disobedient, you've not been keeping my commands and living like verse 4 says, But it's God's word and it's God, who helps you?

And he will help you in all of those things. Oh, what a blessing, it will be to your dad or to your mom. And you're asking, A man, I know whether in the body or out of the body had to know that's not true. It's in the body as a man.

I know whose children will sometimes drop a hint if he's busy and things are dragging. Are we having family worship soon? Daddy? Oh, what will it be like, for the dad, or the mom? This child says, oh, is it Wednesday yet? It is Wednesday. Let's make sure we get ready for prayer.

Meeting on time, we get to go and hear the word. The word that gives us good Doctrine. One day, I will be a dad or I will be a mom. And I want to have good Doctrine because the wisdom that we get it, we get from it, it prepares us to be Kings forever and to give us life forever.

But it also prepares us to be good dads and good moms when we grow up.

Where it begins? How it develops. Well. Many different aspects. But there are three here, especially highlighted. Uh, it develops, by effort it develops, by perseverance, it develops by affection again. Grace, sustained, and Grace, blessed, effort and Grace sustained, and Grace, blessed, perseverance and Grace sustained and Grace blessed, affection, you can't produce the effort perseverance or affection from yourself, and the effort and perseverance and affection.

Can't increase your with increase wisdom for you by themselves. And so, don't forget God's grace and these things, but these, this is the appointed way. That he gives us wisdom and grows us in wisdom. Why do we say effort? Well, that's behind this word, get, we have four commands to get, and one of them is a supreme command to get Verse 5.

Get wisdom, get understanding. And then again, verse 7, get wisdom. And then at the end of verse 7, get understanding, but that one, he says, in all you're getting get understanding of all the things you could possibly get. Here is the one to make sure you don't miss out on.

Make sure that you get understanding, make sure that you get wisdom, make sure that you get God by his word and get his word. You know. Have these. These YouTube channels. There's nothing that the church does in its folly that the world can't do better. You know, churches with with giveaways and all kinds of in incentivizations, on others.

These Youtube channels that become wildly popular and you know the last one to take his arm hand off the plane, gets to keep the plane that that sort of nonsense. Well. You can imagine a church. In which? Uh, the minister lugs, a big bucket of Of gold and jewels eat your heart out, Trunk or Treat.

And he announces, we're going to be giving away treasure. He gets up into the pulpit and he starts reaching in. And throwing out the gold pieces, and the jewels Well. You would get the whole congregation to show up for sure. And you get up more than just the congregation.

The people will be clamoring to sit in the front. Oh, give it to me, give me all of it. Well. Wisdom. The chief thing. The principal thing verse 7 says, We ought to be as eager. For having the word preached for having good Doctrine, taught and preached. We ought to be as eager to come.

And as eager to sit in the front. And as eager to collect, as much of it as we possibly can, As if the minister was throwing out gold and silver and jewels.

Effort. I wonder what effort people would make to get there. If that was the case. With the Earthly treasure. No, we're not humiliated. Perseverance than not just getting it, but retaining, it, do not forget, do not turn away, do not forsake. We must stick with it and affection. This isn't just merely transactional.

Love her. Verse 6 says, Embrace her. Exalt term verse 8, says, And so, Uh, we ought to begin. At. At once. And it develops with effort and perseverance and affection. And it profits. There's nothing that you can do. In in terms of loving and exalting wisdom that God won't by wisdom, do back to you.

You you're not going to outdo him. In exalting his word. Exalt her and she will promote you uses two synonyms. There are different words. The uh the one that's translated promote is the one that Abram starts out with. Remember he goes from, exalted, father to father of a multitude, which was almost a joke, because at the time, he's called, father of a multitude.

He's got just the one sun and it's Ishmael of all people. But he starts out. Exalted father. That's what wisdom will do to you. She will if you if you value her. She? Lift you up. She will make you waiting, honorable Dignified, when you embrace her verse 8, she will adorn you Verse 9.

Verse 9, the adorning the ornament. In the first half and the crown. And the second, they're actually both crownings. The first one is the crowning with a wreath. As as on the The day that the king is crowned, And the second one is the actual Heavy and enduring Crown.

Wisdom gives us all these things in this life in significant and important measure. The Godly Man Who understands God and the gospel and his word and how to live The Godly woman that will be esteemed in the eyes of The Godly Maybe not in the eyes of the world, but in the eyes of The Godly, And it is ordinarily.

A path to not just walking with the Lord and having him as your treasure, but living, well, being useful. Being useful to your family being useful, to your church, being useful to your neighbor.

But wisdom, exalts and honors and adorns and crowns far more than that. Because we were all meant to be Kings.

Earlier, we referred to one of those first great commands. Be fruitful multiply and fill the Earth. We're also to take dominion of it. And one day we shall and not just in the small ways and the the areas of our life and in which God gives us to have some control to have some responsibility to be able to bring to bear.

The effects of our service and our labor where we are and in our various callings and offices. But one day, Jesus will be the firstborn among many Brethren on a day of glorification. When he appears in all the radiance and all the Brilliance, not only of his his Divine personhood as the god man.

But in his mediatorial, kingship as the Christ, And already in glory, they praise Him who by his blood has brought us into his royalty. Where we are all Crown princes, and princesses. The siblings of the Lord Jesus Christ, who will appear with his glory in the last day and forever.

In a new heavens and a new Earth. And he is even now as he gives himself to us by his word. And as he uses his word to shape, our thoughts, and our affections and our desires, he is even now training us and forming us for our kingship for our Queen Hood.

I don't know what the the adjectival form of that is But he is making us into the Kings and Queens of the new heavens and the new Earth that we shall be in him and with him. So that already in glory they praise him and they say for you have redeemed Us by your blood and made us Kings and Priests to our God.

And the Holy Angels, Scurry around. So glorious that we would not want to blaspheme them. To speak about them in dishonoring way. And yet servants. Who rush around? Serving those who are inheriting salvation. And God's word. The reading of it and hearing it taught and preached and meditating upon it.

Is a means, by which He is doing the work in you now. To make you into that then.

We were meant to be Kings and there is only one way. To come into. Royal the royal purpose of God's design for us. And that way is the Lord Jesus Christ. Who is the wisdom of God incarnate, And who gives himself to us and to our children by means of his work.

Which is the wisdom of God written. And preached.

And so, in all you're getting, Got wisdom. Begin now. Dear children. Do not think that this is something that you're going to wait, for until you're older begin with your children now, dear parents. Put forth the effort. Coordinate, your or order your priorities. And persevere with it. Keep keep at it.

Do it with affection, love wisdom. Exalter embrace her. And trust the Lord. That she will repay. He will repay you by her. Amen.