

Get Smart: A Study in Proverbs

Growth Group Leader's Supplement

Study 8: Wisdom in Parenting

Growth Point Insights

Questions are always guidelines. Never feel obligated to cover every one. Always put a stress on participation. If someone has a different question, by all means pursue it.

Devotional Seed:

The devotional seed is intended to stimulate conversation as an introduction to the discussion.

How does God parent us? How should we respond to his parenting?

This will help people review the sermon which referred to God's instruction, discipline and example. The challenge is for us to respond positively to God not resisting, being distracted or chafing under discipline.

Deeper Roots

1. Do you agree that the book of Proverbs and even the whole Bible can be considered as God's parental instruction to us?

Perhaps leading to a discussion about the nature of the Bible. The sermon quoted 2 Timothy 3:16 which talks about the source and intent of the scriptures.

Proverbs especially is geared as instructions from parent to child. Is it right to extrapolate this given 2 Tim 3:16

2. What is God's goal in parenting us? What goals should earthly parents have?

Keying off of some of the comments in proverbs you might say that God's desire for us is wisdom. Perhaps talk about the nature of wisdom as fearing God and following his ways.

The 2 Tim passage mentioned above talks about God's desires for us

Consider also Paul's purposes from the Colossians in col 1:28-29

Look also at Ephesians 4:17 to 5:10 and in particular 4:24 and 5:1 which talks about imitating God.

3. How would you define discipline?

Bit more of an opinion question, but perhaps giving the opportunity to distinguish between punishment and discipline. The goal of discipline is training but not all discipline is punishment.

4. Look at Hebrews 12:5-13. What does this say about how God disciplines, why he disciplines and how we should respond?

How: enduring hardship as discipline

Why: for our Good, because God loves us

Response Receive it willingly.

5. Do you believe that spankings are an appropriate form of discipline? (Parents may want to discuss forms of discipline that have been successful with their children)

Discussion form of question perhaps more important for parents and those looking towards this.

6. How is Christ an example to us in what it looks like to be a wise child of God? (John 12:49-50, Hebrews 5:8, Matthew 4:1-11)

Christ's attitude is one to take instruction (John 12) and use God's instructions (Matthew 4). Jesus responds with "it is written" and quotes God's word.

Heb 5:8 Is possibly confusing. To say that Jesus learned obedience is to say that he was shaped and formed by suffering. He learned the experience of suffering. He learned experientially what obedience would cost. Jesus did not need to be punished in order to conform his will. He did that willingly, though not without emotional strain. Matthew 26:36-46. Jesus shows us how to face suffering and choose obedience.

Bearing Fruit

These questions are designed to be a little more personal and application oriented. Use these questions to focus more on sharing. It helps if as a leader, you are willing to share your life with the group.

Branching Out

Each month your group will be asked to focus some time on outreach and service. Plan to spend some time planning and thinking about how your group can reach out together. We will use this space to help your group integrate with the larger outreach efforts of the church.

On Dec 10-12 we will have a Christmas outreach dinner called Together for Christmas. It will be a nice meal, conversation around the table along with a fun program filled with humor and interaction. It will be a great opportunity to invite guests. We need to help our groups get excited about inviting people. Create a list of possible invitees and pray for opportunity to invite and positive response.

It is important now to talk about finding opportunities to make invitations. Let's work together as groups to make this a success.