

God's Blueprint For The Home

Lesson 6: God's Blueprint For Children



Discovering God's Word
Bible Study Series

God's Blueprint For The Home

Lesson 6: God's Blueprint For Children

Learn how children can be wise and fulfill their God-given responsibilities toward their parents and their Heavenly Father

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Discovering God's Word Bible Study Series

Study Number: DGW183

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My plea: It is my hope and prayer that you are searching for the truth that is contained in God's word, the Bible. My desire is to help you understand and obey these truths God has revealed in the pages of His word. It is to that end that I write this material. Please observe all of the Scripture references and evaluate whether the conclusions I have drawn are in harmony with God's word. If they are, I ask that you make honest application of those truths to your life and obey God's instructions.

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Lesson 6:

God's Blueprint For Children

The roles God has assigned in the home do not end with the husband, father, wife, and mother. Instead, everyone in the home has a God-assigned role. This includes however many children there are in the home. Once again, God has assigned these roles knowing what will make the home the greatest possible success.

Children are great blessings from God. However, children must also be taught their God-given role. It is not something that just comes naturally. For, many children are not taught their appropriate role in the home and cause great distress to the home.

In so many ways, the home is a training ground for life. As Proverbs 22:6 teaches, "Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it." While we will focus on this passage as it relates to parents in the next lesson, we need to appreciate it from the perspective of children.

Satan is trying to destroy the next generation by interfering with this training. He knows that if he can convince parents to train their children in ways that do not honor God, he will be largely successful in taking control of the next generation. And, he knows that if he can get children not to fulfill their role in the home, it will go a long way to interfere with them fulfilling their role toward their Heavenly

Father later in life. So, it is vitally important that children be brought up in homes that train in the way God desires and that teaches them the importance of fulfilling their role.

Wise Children

As children grow, they need to be taught the value of possessing wisdom that will uphold and guide them throughout their lives. But, this wisdom is not something that they are born with. Instead, it is something that must be acquired. Even Jesus as a child "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men" (Luke 2:52). And, one of the first signs of wisdom is a child who learns from the wisdom his/her parents have acquired through the years. So, let's consider some things the Scriptures say about wise children (particularly the book of Proverbs).

Proverbs 13:1

"A wise son heeds his father's instruction, But a scoffer does not listen to rebuke" (Proverbs 13:1). Let's observe the fact that there is such a thing as a "wise son" (or daughter). Now, let's also acknowledge that this does not happen by chance. Some children do not just get "lucky" and win some kind of genetic favor that makes them predisposed to being wise. While there are children who are born into better earthly circumstances than others, not a single child is born wise!

Listen to Proverbs 22:15: "Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; The rod of correction will drive it far from him." Proverbs 29:15 says, "The rod and rebuke give wisdom, But a child left to himself brings shame to his mother." Both of these passages demonstrate that a child has not learned wisdom's ways whenever he/she was born. Instead, this comes through the determined work of both parents and child. It is truly unfortunate, then, whenever children do not have loving and wise parents who will drive foolishness out of them!

Notice that a "wise son" listens to his father's instructions (Proverbs 13:1). Thus, children should determine to listen to the instructions of their parents,

recognizing that they have much to learn! But, the one who does not listen to rebuke (correction) is a “scoffer” (mocker). Such a one is not interested in wisdom’s way. Instead, he makes a mockery of it and will suffer the consequences later in life (compare with Proverbs 1:20-33).

As you consider the contrast between a wise and foolish child, listen to Proverbs 10:1 and Proverbs 15:20. Proverbs 10:1 says, “The proverbs of Solomon: A wise son makes a glad father, But a foolish son is the grief of his mother.” Proverbs 15:20 says, “A wise son makes a father glad, But a foolish man despises his mother.”

If a child will listen to the instructions and rebuke of his/her parents, that child will make his/her parents glad and proud. The parents of this child will be able to watch the child enjoy the kinds of success (both physically and spiritually) that wisdom brings. However, the child who does not choose to listen to the instructions and rebuke of his/her parents will be a source of grief to his/her parents and will show contempt for his/her parents. The parents of this child will watch the child make decisions that result in the kinds of suffering and harm (both physically and spiritually) that foolishness brings. And, both children reflect the kind of job the parents have done in training them in the way they should go and driving foolishness out of the heart of the child.

Proverbs 1:8-9

“My son, hear the instruction of your father, And do not forsake the law of your mother; For they will be a graceful ornament on your head, And chains about your neck” (Proverbs 1:8-9). The “graceful ornament” on the head and “chains” around the neck were signs of glory and marks of distinction. But, notice that it is the instruction of the father and law of the mother that is equal to such signs.

Children must be devoted to learning the wisdom of their parents. This (so long as the parents are truly wise) will save the children from a great deal of suffering. Instead of experiencing the consequences of foolish decisions and actions, these children will excel at the things they do in life and in the favor of God. Thus, they will be truly different

from all the other children who have neglected to learn wisdom from their parents.

Proverbs 4:1-9

“Hear, my children, the instruction of a father, And give attention to know 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, and she will keep you. Wisdom is the principal thing; Therefore get wisdom. And in all your 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; A crown of glory she will deliver to you.’”

Actually, you could read this entire chapter to learn about the value of learning wisdom from your parents (as the book of Proverbs is primarily written from the perspective of a father addressing his son concerning wisdom’s ways). Once again, children must value the wisdom that parents try and instill in them. These wise ways must not be forsaken. Instead, they must be retained and not forgotten.

Notice that wisdom is “the principle thing.” Other translations reflect that getting wisdom is the beginning of wisdom. Therefore, children must determine to seek out wisdom. God and their parents ought to be the primary teachers of this wisdom. And, this wisdom will result in some wonderful blessings. The text says that wisdom will bring about life and preservation. Wisdom will keep and promote you. Wisdom will bring honor and glory.

Proverbs 6:20-25

“My son, keep your father's command, And do not forsake the law of your mother. Bind them continually upon your heart; Tie them around your neck. When you roam, they will lead you; When you sleep, they will keep you; And when you awake, they will speak with you. For the commandment is a lamp, And the law a light; Reproofs of instruction are the

way of life, To keep you from the evil woman, From the flattering tongue of a seductress. Do not lust after her beauty in your heart, Nor let her allure you with her eyelids” (Proverbs 6:20-25).

I want to emphasize the portion of this text that states the father’s command and the mother’s law should be always bound on your heart and tied around your neck. Wise children do not rebel against their parents’ instructions and rules whenever they leave the house and get away from the parents. Instead, the wisdom and instructions given by the parents should be ever-present in their lives.

They should appreciate that the instructions and rules set by their parents are for their own good. For instance, this passage speaks of these commandments and law as a lamp to light the way in life and keep the children from the evil woman and seductress. A child who casts away the instructions and wisdom of his/her parents upon leaving the house or being out of the presence of his/her parents may fall for the trap that is set by this seductress. The result (as is demonstrated throughout the rest of the chapter) is suffering and consequences.

Yet, the principle is applicable to any element of the parents’ instruction and law. It should be valued and appreciated by the children. It ought to be engrained into the very moral fibers of who the children are in order that it might help and protect them from the challenges they will face throughout life. Wise children will cling to these instructions and laws in this way. Foolish children will quickly disregard them.

Proverbs 15:5

“A fool despises his father’s instruction. But he who receives correction is prudent” (Proverbs 15:5). The number of rebellious children in this world indicate that the children who choose the pursue foolishness far outnumber the children who pursue wisdom. It is quite common for children to speak in negative ways concerning the rules their parents have given and the way their parents choose to discipline.

Although there are certainly cases when children are abused and hated by their parents, this passage is not addressing such a situation. Instead, it

is common for children to speak of their parents in disrespectful ways due simply to the fact that they do not like to be restrained. And, not only do children often verbally express their disrespect toward their parents, but it is also apparent whenever they choose not to listen to their parents’ instruction.

In contrast, there are some children who choose the way of wisdom and prudence (cautiousness). They demonstrate respect for the wisdom and authority that is possessed by their parents and choose to listen to their instructions and corrections. They are determined to receive the correction and training that is given by their parents, recognizing the love that their parents have for them.

Proverbs 23:22

“Listen to your father who begot you, And do not despise your mother when she is old” (Proverbs 23:22). Parents deserve to be listened to. Their children would have no life without them. They have much more experience at living life and facing the challenges life brings than their children. So, children ought to not only listen to their parents, but should also seek out the advice of their parents.

Now, let me say something about the age of parents for the benefit of the children. Children often despise the age of their parents and claim that their parents have forgotten how it is to be young. Or, they claim that times have changed so much that the wisdom of their parents is no longer relevant. Therefore, their rules and punishments are often viewed as being “old fashioned” and “out of style.”

However, this is mere foolishness on the part of children. As far as wisdom is concerned, age is more of an asset than a detriment. As long as an individual has sought wisdom throughout life, age has provided more opportunities to gain wisdom than the young have had. So, children must not despise the age of their parents. Instead, their age should be a cause for greater respect and a greater desire to listen to the wisdom their parents have gained throughout their lives.

Then, as we will observe a bit later, this respect should continue throughout the life of the child. As time passes and parents continue to age, they will experience any number of difficulties

because of their increased age. But, rather than despising the “burden” that this places on the lives of the children, there should be a commitment to repay the love and care they had been shown by their parents throughout their lives!

The Responsibility Of Wise Children Toward Their Parents

All children will have a choice to make very early in their lives. They must decide whether they will pursue wisdom or foolishness. Parents must do their very best to instill the value of pursuing wisdom in the hearts of the children early on so that they will make that decision for themselves whenever they become personally accountable before God. Now, let’s consider some specific responsibilities God gives to those who are children. Although these are the responsibilities every child must fulfill, only wise children will fulfill them.

Obey their parents

Wise children obey their parents. Ephesians 6:1 says, “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.” Colossians 3:20 says, “Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord.”

God is the source of all true wisdom. There is nothing He does not know and no true wisdom that does not belong to Him. Therefore, it is important to recognize that He has always expected children to be obedient to their parents. That is, they must live *under* the rule and direction of their parents. They are not free to live in whatever way they desire, regardless of what their parents instruct.

God knows what happens whenever children live according to their own whims and desires without having gained the wisdom that should guide their decisions and actions. Proverbs 30:11-12 says, “There is a generation that curses its father, And does not bless its mother. There is a generation that is pure in its own eyes, Yet is not washed from its filthiness.” Then, Proverbs 30:17 says, “The eye that mocks his father, And scorns obedience to his mother, The

ravens of the valley will pick it out, And the young eagles will eat it.”

Now, let’s consider the extent to which God expects children to obey their parents. Colossians 3:20 instructs children to obey their parents “in all things.” Although children would often rather not listen to what their parents instruct them to do, God gives them no option in the matter. God’s rule is that children obey their parents in all circumstances. So, even though a child may be doing something else at a given moment or may not like to do what his/her parents instruct, he/she still has the God-given responsibility to obey!

And, please recognize that this responsibility concerns both “parents.” Although it is true that the father is the head of the family, the child’s responsibility of obedience also includes the mother. Both have authority from God over the child.

There is only one acceptable exception to this rule. The child’s primary responsibility is to obey God (as we will discuss a bit later). So, if there is something that is instructed by the parents that is contrary to the commandments of the Lord, the child must obey God rather than men – even his/her parents (Acts 5:29). This may be suggested in Ephesians 6:1 by the phrase (“in the Lord”). Again, the passage says, “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.”

Although the general rule and principles we have been discussing throughout this lesson is one of respecting the wisdom and instructions of your parents, we must consider the reality that some children are taught and instructed to do things that are contrary to the will of God. And, although children must obey and respect their parents in all things, this simply does *not* apply in situations that would cause children to be disobedient to God!

For instance, Jesus taught (in Matthew 10:34-39) that those who follow Him will, sometimes, even be divided from their parents. But, even though children must sometimes choose between following the Lord and following their parents, those who choose to follow the Lord will be rewarded! Jesus says, “He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he

who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it” (verses 37-39).

Honor their parents

Not only must children obey their parents in all things (unless it is contrary to God’s ways), but they must also honor their parents. Ephesians 6:2-3 continues the instruction to children, “‘Honor your father and mother,’ which is the first commandment with promise: ‘that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.’”

One sign of wisdom is to respect others who have wisdom. This certainly should include the parents of a child. This honor toward parents was even part of the Ten Commandments. Exodus 20:12 says, “Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God is giving you.”

Now, how is this commandment the “first commandment with promise” (as Ephesians 6:2-3 says). The fifth of the Ten Commandments is the first commandment given in the Mosaic Law that had a specific promise attached to it (beyond the general promises of obeying God). The promise to the Israelites was that if they honored their fathers and mothers they would have their days prolonged in the land God was going to give them (the land of Canaan). It takes a more general form in Ephesians 6 that applies to children today, saying that it will be well with them and they will live long on the earth.

Although this is no guarantee against tragedy, the simple fact of the matter is that children who live to honor their parents generally experience fewer self-inflicted hardships and struggles in their childhood and throughout their lives. This is the direct result of applying wisdom to their lives rather than ignoring wisdom and experiencing the consequences of foolishness. So, children who honor their fathers and mothers will, generally, live longer and more prosperous lives than those who do not because they will not experiment with the sins and crimes that bring about suffering and consequences (think about what results from consuming alcohol, sexually promiscuous activity, gambling, theft,

consuming tobacco products, drugs, choosing the wrong friends, etc.).

Actually, it was even part of the Law of Moses that children who did not show honor to their parents were to be put to death. This is how serious of an offense this was. For instance, Exodus 21:15 says, “And he who strikes his father or his mother shall surely be put to death.” Exodus 21:17 says, “And he who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death.” While the consequences of violating this law is not physical death under the new covenant of Jesus Christ, this does *not* mean that the offense is not as bad today. In fact, God will hold children (even grown children) who have reached the age of accountability responsible on the Day of Judgment for whether or not they have shown honor to their earthly parents.

But, in what ways should children show honor to their parents? One clear way of honoring your parents is by obeying them (as we have previously discussed). Another way this honor must be shown is through a respect for one’s parents. You must respect them for being in a God-given position of authority over you and should respect their wisdom and instructions (whether you like what they have said or not). This respect even extends to the times when your parents discipline you. As you grow, you should recognize that (hopefully) their discipline was out of love and for your own good (see Proverbs 15:5, 10 and Proverbs 13:24).

Then, this honor should not stop whenever you are grown and leave the home. For instance, all children (whether old or young) can express their thankfulness to their parents. After all, their parents have given them life, taken care of them, trained them, spent money on them, worked to provide for their needs, loved them, etc., etc., etc. And, all children should look for opportunities to show honor to their parents by repaying their parents (as we will discuss in a few moments).

Learn from their parents

Wise children learn from their parents. I have been stressing this point throughout this lesson. But, let me give it some more attention here. Children are subject to their parents’ training. And, if that training

is according to the will of God, this is a wonderful blessing for the child.

A child knows very little whenever he/she is born. To function properly in this world and to serve God, he/she will have to be trained. Unfortunately, there are many children in this world who have such disregard for their parents that they do not have any interest in learning from them.

Rather than listening to their parents, many children feel the need to “re-invent the wheel.” So, what they could have learned quickly takes a much longer time because they are not willing to learn from their parents who have already acquired the knowledge. Or, many mistakes are repeated and suffering is experienced because children do not take the time to learn from the wisdom of their parents who want to keep them from making those mistakes.

Children should recognize what the goal of parenting should be. It is summarized by Proverbs 22:6: “Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it.” Parents ought to be proactively working to equip their children to go in the way that they should go (i.e. the way that will be most profitable for them). Therefore, if children do not learn from the training their parents provide, the implication is that they will go in the way they should *not* go.

Repay their parents

The honor that children should show to their parents does *not* just apply to the time they are in their parents’ homes. Instead, even as children and parents age, there should be a continued honor shown to parents. Remember what Proverbs 23:22 said. “Listen to your father who begot you, And do not despise your mother when she is old.”

Paul’s instructions in 1 Timothy 5:3-8 are especially applicable on this point. “Honor widows who are really widows. But if any widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show piety at home and to repay their parents; for this is good and acceptable before God. Now she who is really a widow, and left alone, trusts in God and continues in supplications and prayers night and day. But she who lives in pleasure is dead while she lives. And these things command, that they may be

blameless. But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.” Verse 16 adds, “If any believing man or woman has widows, let them relieve them, and do not let the church be burdened, that it may relieve those who are really widows.”

In giving instructions concerning the church financially caring for its widows, Paul limits the church’s responsibility. Among other things, he says that a widow’s family has the responsibility to take care of her before the church does. So, her children and grandchildren are expected to fulfill their God-given duty toward her by repaying all that she has done for them (i.e. in raising them, teaching them, sacrificing for them, etc.). If a child or grandchild does not fulfill this responsibility to the best of his/her own ability, then he/she has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

So, there is responsibility to pay back our parents (and even our grandparents) and relieve their needs. Although the specific teaching in this verse applies to the financial relief of widows, I believe the principle is much broader than this. What kind of honor does a child or grandchild show if he/she does not do everything within his/her ability to relieve the needs he/she sees in a parent or grandparent?

Yet, there are many parents and grandparents who struggle on a daily basis to pay their bills, to get to doctor’s appointments, to maintain their houses, to mow their grass, to shovel their sidewalks, etc., etc., etc. And, there are many children and grandchildren who are too quick to put their aging family members into a “home” so that others will take care of them. Although I recognize that there are situations when this may be necessary (due to the specialized care that is required), I am speaking of situations in which the children or grandchildren do not do all that they can to repay their parents and grandparents. This is very sad and God is not pleased!

The Responsibility Of Wise Children Toward Their Heavenly Father

Everyone who studies this lesson is a child (although your parents may not be living any longer). And, it is my sincere hope that you will choose to be a wise child and fulfill all of your responsibilities toward your parents. Then, we also need to consider the fact that every member of the home who is a Christian should be wise in fulfilling their responsibilities toward their Heavenly Father. And, even the smallest of children who are too young to become Christians must be trained to fulfill these responsibilities. Although there is much that we could discuss, let's focus on three simple points for the sake of this lesson.

Remember Him

Wise children will remember their Creator. Ecclesiastes 12:1 says, "Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth, Before the difficult days come, And the years draw near when you say, 'I have no pleasure in them.'" Although it is common for young people to want to sow their "wild oats" and enjoy carefree living during their youth, this is *not* what God wants from them.

Although He wants young people to enjoy their youth (Ecclesiastes 11:9), He wants these young people to remember Him during this time in their lives and remember that they will be judged for all the things they do – even during this time (see Ecclesiastes 11:9-10). He wants them to put evil away from their lives and live to serve Him in all things.

God also wants children to recognize that there are difficult days coming (as is depicted in 12:1-8). As one grows older, there are increasing struggles that are experienced as a natural part of the aging process. So, before one must contend with these difficulties, God wants the young to remember Him.

Now, I want to go a little bit deeper. I mentioned earlier that the home is a training ground

to help children serve God. As children are taught to remember their parents who gave them physical life and have provided for them, we must recognize the need to remember our ultimate Creator and Provider (the Giver and Sustainer of all life, both physical and spiritual). This remembrance of Him ought to impact our lives in such a way that we remember Him and His will in every decision that we make.

Fear Him

Wise children will also fear God. Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 says, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is man's all. For God will bring every work into judgment, Including every secret thing, Whether good or evil."

There are two essential elements to the fear of God. The first is a reverential respect. Again, I want you to appreciate how the respect you should have been trained to have for your earthly parents ought to help you appreciate your Heavenly Father. Although your earthly parents were imperfect, your Heavenly Father is perfect. He has perfect knowledge and wisdom. He has perfect love. He has perfect discipline. He has perfect judgment. He has perfect authority. He has perfect care in every way. Therefore, everything that you do in your life should reflect a reverential respect and honor for God!

Then, another element to the fear of God is a terror of failing to obey God. As you considered the power and authority that your earthly parents had, you should have recognized that they could punish your disobedience. This should have caused some degree of fear toward rebelling against your parents and served as a deterrent to your rebellion. And, you must recognize that God has even greater power and authority. So, if you choose not to obey Him, you must recognize that He has promised to punish you with great punishment (see 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9 and Revelation 21:8). This should cause you to fear rebelling against Him and serve as a deterrent for your rebellion.

Keep His commandments

Wise children will keep God's commandments. This was also seen in Ecclesiastes

12:13-14. We have previously studied the responsibility that children have to be obedient to their earthly parents. Now, learning such submission to earthly parents should help you be obedient to your Heavenly Father.

God warns you that there is a Day of Judgment that is coming. On this Day, everything that you have done, thought, and said in your life will be judged. Nothing will be excluded. Even those things you thought had been done in secret (perhaps even unknown to your earthly parents) will be judged. This is because your Heavenly Father knows and sees everything (see Proverbs 15:3).

So, as you live your life (as a child, a man, or a woman), you must live to keep the commandments of God. There is nothing as important in life as fearing God (in the ways we have discussed) and keeping His commandments. According to Ecclesiastes 12:13-14, this is your whole duty in living life on this earth. Then, on that Day of Judgment, you will be welcomed to spend eternity with God in Heaven!

Conclusion

Children have an important role to fulfill in the home. Whether they fulfill this role or not will greatly impact their lives. And, as children become older and are accountable to God, whether or not they fulfill these responsibilities will impact whether they are pleasing to God. Ultimately, all children must remember their Creator most of all and determine to fear Him and keep His commandments! If children will fulfill these responsibilities, it will be well with them (at least on a spiritual level)!

Study Questions

How is Satan trying to destroy the next generation by convincing children not to fulfill their role in the home?

1. Wise Children

What does Proverbs 13:1 teach about wise children?

What does Proverbs 1:8-9 teach about wise children?

What does Proverbs 4:1-9 teach about wise children?

What does Proverbs 6:20-25 teach about wise children?

What does Proverbs 15:5 teach about wise children?

What does Proverbs 23:22 teach about wise children?

2. The Responsibility Of Wise Children Toward Their Parents

Explain the child's responsibility to obey his/her parents.

Explain the child's responsibility to honor his/her parents.

Explain the child's responsibility to learn from his/her parents.

Explain the child's responsibility to repay his/her parents

3. The Responsibility Of Wise Children Toward Their Heavenly Father

Explain the child's responsibility to remember his/her Heavenly Father.

Explain the child's responsibility to fear his/her Heavenly Father.

Explain the child's responsibility to keep the commandments of his/her Heavenly Father.