

# Proverbs Week #67 (6:20-21)

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*My son, observe the commandment of your father and do not forsake the teaching of your mother; bind them continually on your heart; tie them around your neck. (Prov 6:20-21)*

This is not the first time we have been admonished not to forsake teaching and to bind commandments on our hearts. This theme is repeated throughout the opening chapters of the book of Proverbs. The importance of parent and children relationships is clearly in view in these verses. There must be both teacher and student for the truth of these verses to be realized. How important is it to place a high value on being learning families? Are we families that regularly learn together, cultivate wisdom, and practice what we learn? From a military point of view, what is the state of our command? Is the thought of commanding children foreign, stiff, or out of place?

Children, I want to ask you a question. How do you respond when your parents come to you and try to teach you something? Do you stop what you are doing or try to multi-task and “listen” while you are playing a game, watching TV, or engaging in some other activity? The lessons that we learn from the wisdom of Proverbs require us to be involved in the learning process. This learning is in a family environment.

*When I was a son to my father, tender and the only son in the sight of my mother, then he taught me and said to me, “Let your heart hold fast my words; Keep my commandments and live...” Proverbs 4:3-4*

These verses provide a glimpse at an intimate family setting. It recalls a story of a mother and father who taught their son when he was still young and when he held a special place in their eyes. It is here that the parents directed, “Let your heart hold fast my words.” But what we see here is more than just a mother and father teaching their son. We see a third generation. The father is speaking to his son about the son’s grandmother and grandfather. The wisdom that is being taught is generational and the son is being instructed to consider the keeping of these commandments as life itself. He says in effect, “Your grandfather (my father) told me to keep his commandments and live.” The first verses of this chapter ask the son to pay attention and our verses today add the context that he should pay attention to the advice of his father, mother, and grandparents.

As I continue to teach and review these lessons in the book of Proverbs, I also want to keep in mind how we as a community are also involved in taking the message of the Torah to the next generation. Not everyone has young children or even a family of their own. One aspect of today’s lesson that I want to focus on and apply to everyone is the importance of fostering and maintaining a community that functions like a family. At first that may not seem like a positive idea. Many of us look back on family relationships with mixed or even bad memories. The family I’m thinking of is the type of family that is a family after God’s own heart. These words from the Apostle Paul give us advice on how that family functions and conducts itself.

*“Therefore, laying aside falsehood, speak truth each one of you with his neighbor, for we are members of one another. Be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not give the devil an opportunity. He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have something to share with one who has need. Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear.” Ephesians 4:25-29*

In the context of these verses Paul was teaching about a healthy community. He describes it as a body where each person does their part. When that is happening the body grows into the fullness of the Messiah and it matures past childhood to a stature that can endure the storms that buffet it. If we have placed our faith and hope in Yeshua as our Messiah and Master then we are a part of that body. The Spirit of God seals those who are redeemed and our failure to live lives that are right in His eyes can grieve Him. In Messiah we can also be a delight to our Father. Our aim is to be and do what is right in His eyes as we continue to study together and seek to place a high value on His wisdom.