



Today is a day on which we pay special attention to and honor mothers. That's certainly an appropriate thing to do. Every one of us owes much to the woman who brought us up and cared for us, and mothers do appreciate it when we treat them well on Mother's Day.

However, when you get right down to it, what every mother here wants from her children is not a nice corsage and Sunday dinner at Outback. They don't really want things from us. They want things for us. The best gift that any of us can give our mothers is a happy, successful, productive life.

In fact, that's why mothers tell us the things they do. It's not that they enjoy nagging us or making our lives miserable. It's that they've been around longer than we have, they've seen how various kinds of choices play out, and they want us to make good choices and not bad ones.

Mothers have felt this way for as long as there have been mothers, so it's not surprising that some of this timeless maternal wisdom has entered the Bible. This morning, then, let's turn to the book of Proverbs to see what sorts of things we will do if we listen to our mothers.

The first thing that we will do is to BE WISE. Why? Because it makes Mom happy. Consider here Proverbs 10:1. All of us need to recognize that we have a tremendous effect on our mother's happiness. All we have to do to make her miserable is to be

foolish, because she knows very well how our foolishness is going to turn out. She would much rather see us being wise instead.

It's probably true that all of us will make better decisions if we make those decisions with our mother's happiness in mind. When we make decisions in this way, we will pay less attention to the immediate effects of our decision and more attention to what the effects of that decision will be down the road. We'll pay more attention to the consequences of our actions.

Let me tell you about some of the wise decisions that my mother wanted me to make. First of all, she wanted me to assemble with the saints every time the doors were open. My mother wasn't anybody's fool. She'd seen enough to know that over time, Christians who faithfully attended services got stronger and stronger, but Christians who came once a week, if that, got weaker and weaker and perhaps even ended up falling away. Is there any commandment that says we have to be here three times a week? No, but it is wise!

My mother also wanted me to be careful with my money. When I was a young man, my financial carelessness drove her to distraction! Here too, it's a consequence thing. She knew that if I would be patient and diligent and save, bit by bit, I could build a better, more secure future for myself. I'd even have money left over to give to the Lord's work and help people in need. However, if I was a spendthrift, I wouldn't have that security in future, nor would I have the financial freedom to be generous. Generally, wisdom makes a big difference in our lives—whether we practice it or not!

In addition to generic wisdom, there are also specific ways in which the mothers of Proverbs advise their children to be wise. First, they want them to BEWARE SEXUAL IMMORALITY. Here, let's read from Proverbs 23:25-28. Specifically, we see that Mom here is concerned about two kinds of women: the prostitute and the adulteress. In our society, sadly, sexual temptation is as much a problem for women as for men, but these two kinds of temptations remain.

Let's start with the prostitute. Obviously, none of our mothers want us to have anything to do with people like that! However, I think we can expand the principle here to cover anyone who wants to make money off of lust.

Think about it. Why does A Game of Thrones have all those naked people in it? Why does so much comedy rely on innuendo and filthy humor? Why is there so much porn on the Internet? It's all there because somebody is trying to get us to lust so they can make money off us. Those people want us to believe that they care about us having a good time, but in reality, they are as heartless and calculating as the most jaded hooker on the street. The less we have to do with them and their works, the happier we will be, the happier our mothers will be, and the happier God will be.

Let's also watch out for the adulteress, who stands for anyone who entices us into sin for the sake of their pleasure. Notice that I say "their pleasure", not ours. By definition, anybody who tries to get us to sin with them cares more about themselves than they do about us. If they truly loved us, the very last thing they would do would be to endanger our souls! Here too, the dire consequences are many. When Mom tells us to stay away, she knows what she's talking about.

Finally, the mothers of Proverbs want us to AVOID ALCOHOL. Consider the words of King Lemuel's mother in Proverbs 31:1-5. Admittedly, this is advice dispensed by the mother of a king to a king. It's true that none of us are royal, but all of us want to reign with Christ. It seems to me that we'd still better listen.

That's all the more true because this advice is not popular. Just as there are brethren who insist that you don't have to come to Wednesday night services because there's no passage that says you do, so too there are brethren who insist that they can drink alcohol because there's no passage that says you can't. In fact, it's common to find Christians who insist on both of these things simultaneously.

However, I think both arguments miss the point. If we refuse to consider what wisdom has to say about both church attendance and drinking, we are quite literally being foolish. In both cases, we need to pay attention to the consequences before we decide what we're going to do.

Lemuel's mother spells out the consequences in no uncertain terms. She warns her son that drinking will lead him to forget God's decrees and to pervert justice. In other words, alcohol keeps us from remembering what God wants us to do, and it leads us not to do it.

Today, science has confirmed that Lemuel's mother was right on. Even for those who are not drunk, the consumption of alcohol decreases mental function. It also lowers our inhibitions. Both of those things make it more likely that we will sin, and on that list, Sin Number One is drunkenness.

In short, brethren, we need to exercise wise judgment when it comes to drinking, and it's impossible to make the argument that drinking in our society is wise. Let's do as Lemuel's mother advises. For that matter, let's do what our own mothers would want us to. Let's have nothing to do with drinking.

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