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Responsible Sons and Daughters

925-A

Series: Living Lessons From Proverbs

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INTO HIS LIKENESS RADIO

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Responsible Sons and Daughters

We live in an incredible age! Technologically, the world is exploding into an electronic network of knowledge and entertainment! Today, a father can come home from work, sit down at his home computer and with the flick of a few well-chosen keys, he is transported into another world. He can, on command, call for and receive the latest news, the stock market reports, or the weather. By giving still another command, he can dial into an electronic encyclopedia that will furnish him on request, any bit of technical, historical, or practical information he desires. He can call up his word processing software and write a letter or design a form for his business, while still another whirring disk drive busily, yet automatically corrects his spelling. He can flick a switch and tell to the penny where every dollar he has spent this year has gone. He is an electronic general; for at his command lies an army of megabytes waiting to do his bidding. A few feet away, in the next room, his children are busily occupied shooting down enemy spacecraft that fly with precision across the screen of his new electronically tuned giant sized television set; as still another miracle machine computes their score, controls their flights, and tries with incredible success to outsmart the mesmerized marvels amidst the accompaniment of beeps and blips and bongs.

Mother, meanwhile, is in the kitchen preparing dynamic delicacies to slide into her miraculous microwave which at least “pretends” to do in seconds what grandma did in days.

We do, indeed, live in an incredible age! But beneath the surface of this challenging electronic home there lurks a disturbing cancer that eats away internally at the very fiber that holds together the family itself... that debilitating disease called DISRESPECT!

Dad falls into his easy chair and asks his daughter if she would bring him a coke. “Get it yourself, pop, she responds, I’m late to meet Bobby.” Son Billy wanders in and demands the keys to the car so he can make it on time to that movie Dad told him

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not to see. And poor Mom is frustrated in her attempts to motivate the family to cooperate in the titanic task of housekeeping. Jane is sixteen and still doesn't know how to hold a mop. And dad, who has the power of a president behind his electronic command ship, and who leads an entire corporation in its activities by day, finds he has no control whatever over the mini-flock that lives in his house by night.

Like the weebegone comedian who has won the sympathy of a nation, "Dad just don't get no respect." And in one generation, a people who have sent men to the moon and dwarfed a universe through communication, have lost for the most part the cement that holds it all together... the bond of respect from one generation to another!

Paul said it would happen! He wrote to Timothy that "in the last days there would be terrible times" People would become more self-centered than ever! Money and things would be their dominant drive. Young people would be characterized as abusive, disobedient, disrespectful, and ungrateful. In other words the key characteristic of the latter days would be the absence of respect, especially among young people, especially in the home!

Little more than a generation ago, children stood up when an adult entered the room... addressed those who were older as "sir" or "ma'am" and responded to their parents' or teachers' instructions with outward obedience (if not always with inner integrity.)

Today, teachers sometimes fear for their lives, just entering the classroom! "Hey You" has become the epitome of respect in some schools and in some homes...and the words "submit", "obey", and "discipline" have become words used to frame children's liberation legislation rather than the commonly accepted principles on which society maintains order and respect. The family unit is finding it's walls tumbling down as dad leaves mom; and mom leaves home and the kids can't wait to do the same!

But the Christian community obviously is faring much better. For Jesus Christ is the only carpenter who can build a home! Satan builds houses, (not homes) and he builds them on sand (Jesus said). They are designed to crumble when life's storms come. But God builds HOMES; and He builds them on the concrete slab of the WORD OF God. The rains will still come,

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the winds will still blow... but the house (now a home) is designed to stand... because it is built on the Rock!

At least one of the foundation stones in the Christian home is showing signs of unnecessary erosion. The salt water of the world has been blowing against it, and there are signs it is starting to weaken... it's that foundation stone of RESPECT!!

- the respect of a daughter for her mother
- the respect of a son for his dad
- the respect of a pre-schooler for his parents' choices
- the respect of a 3rd grader for her parents' wisdom
- the respect of a 6th grader for his parent's moral values!
- the respect of a tenth grader for his parent's wisdom in the decisions of life
- the respect of a college student for his parent's experience.

Respect! the hidden ingredient in God's recipe for communicating life from one generation to another. Without that ingredient, bitterness creeps into its flavor, and it loses its desirability.

Why today, a TV drama called "Father knows Best" would be laughed out of existence just for it's title! We live in a generation that isn't even sure father knows anything. The character of this age is disrespect! And the crisis of this age is the reality that much of the world is looking to the church for answers. The world is looking into your living room and mine to see if there is any real difference in the attitudes of their children and ours. (Unfortunately, in many cases, there isn't!)

Jesus said we were to become lights in a world of darkness... beacons in a world searching for some values and some absolutes...in other words, the worse things get in the world, the brighter those lights ought to shine!

In the same way, the world is looking to Christian parents to see if the old, old principles still work (and of course, they do!) ...and they are looking at Christian sons and daughters of all ages to be decidedly different as well:

- To be lights in a world of darkness and
- To honor, to respect, and to obey their parents (whether by the world's standards those parents deserve respect or not).

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The character of this age is rebellion and disrespect! The crisis of this age is that the world is looking at us as their last hope! So the call of this age is for Christian sons and daughters to return immediately to the standards of respect demanded in the Word of God. In order to do that, they must come to understand the miracle of God's ways. They are higher than the world's as much higher, Isaiah says, as the heavens are than the earth. That's the purpose of today's study of Responsible Christians from the book of Proverbs..

We have just concluded a four part study of responsible Christian parents, and now we turn to take a God's eye view of what it means to be responsible sons and daughters. It is a difficult lesson to teach because while the subject is particularly applicable to young people (and we are pleased to have many of them with us), most of the principles never stop applying. We will in a true sense always be sons and daughters. So if you are a parent or even a grandparent, please bear with us.

Our Title for this lesson is "Responsible Sons and Daughters" and our outline: (We've completed Part I.)

I- Sons and daughters in the final days

- A- the character of this age
- B- the crisis of this age
- C- the call of this age

II- Sons and daughters learning God's ways

- A- the ways of God and authority
- B- the ways of God and sonship
- C- the ways of God: principles from proverbs

III- Sons and daughters and a choice that pays

If we are to become responsible sons and daughters, the first of God's ways we need to remember is the way of authority. While there is not really time for us to dwell on this issue, there is no way to teach this lesson without reminding ourselves of at least the basic Biblical principles that rest on such passages as Romans 12, 13 and I Peter 2. So, just a refresher course, let's review, okay? Remember:

- 1- All authority originates with God. (Romans 13:1)
- 2- To resist that authority is in effect to resist God (Romans 13:2)
- 3- Not all authority is just (I Peter 2:18)

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- 4- To submit to unjust authority is to honor God
(I Peter 2:19-21)
- 5- The responsibility of revenge and justice belongs to
God alone. (Romans 12:14-21)

What that means in the home is that God in eternity past selected parents for each of us. He designed them to meet specific needs that only He knew we would have. Not all of them would be loving, not all of them would be just, not all of them would be sensitive or kind. God knew that, and nonetheless ordained them to be our parents as He knit us together in our mother's womb. (Psalm 139)

The issue is that all things DO work together for good. And God has promised to be responsible for our well-being if we agree to be responsible as children to obey, and as adults to honor those particular parents He has given us. To do so is to honor God.

Young people, let me remind you that the issue is not the PERSON. The issue is the POSITION. To you the person may not seem worthy of your respect. Your parents may have offended you, even abandoned you. But God ordained them to hold the POSITION of Parent. That POSITION brings to whatever PERSON holds it the right of RESPECT. It is a double honor for the person to have earned your respect. But you owe that RESPECT to the PERSON regardless, because of the POSITION they hold.

The President

The Governor

The Police

Your boss or teacher

All deserve your respect for the office or position they hold, whether or not they personally have met YOUR standards of respectability. That's one of the higher ways of God. He ordained authority to maintain order in the universe, in the world, in the nation, in the church, in the home. All authority originates with God. It creates dependence. All rebellion to authority originates with Satan. It creates independence. And the conflict in the spirit world for control of our lives is being waged over that very issue. So our task is not to judge our parents, but to obey, submit, and when older never cease to honor them for the office they hold. It is primary to God's plan, for it is one of His Higher Ways.

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Secondly, God's ways are higher where they deal with sonship. Throughout the scripture, God uses the father-son relationship to portray the relationship that exists between His Son Jesus and Himself, and then by adoption, the relationship that exists between us, His chosen, adopted children, and Him.

In Hebrews 12 He tells us He disciplines us just as an earthly father disciplines his children, then reminds us that any earthly father worth his salt disciplines his children. And in Matthew 7 He likens the Heavenly Father's desire to give us good things to the way an earthly father meets his children's needs. So God's primary portrait of His special relationship with His Children spiritually is to be that mystical relationship that exists between a parent and a child. For that reason, He has demanded certain things of Christian sons and daughters that the world is not obligated to do, nor is the world capable of understanding. They are a part of His higher ways!

In Colossians 3:20 Paul wrote to those who were still under their parent's authority in the home these words: "Children, obey your parents IN EVERYTHING"—in everything?—in everything! Why? because your parents are infallible? No, the verse goes on, "for this pleases the LORD."

Why does this please the Lord? Because there is a drama being enacted in your home that demonstrates to the world that God is your father. You are playing a starring role. And every time you obey or honor your earthly mother or father you are depicting the glory of honoring your heavenly father. That's why it's so important! In We read:

Children obey your parents IN THE Lord for this is right.
(You don't have the power to do it in yourself.)

(Ephesians 6:1 NKJV)

But in the LORD, you can, IN THE LORD, you must! Why? for this is right! It is the higher way of the righteous one. The verse goes on

Honor your father and your mother; which is the first commandment with promise.

(Ephesians 6:2 NKJV)

Honor, you see, is the fabric of which real obedience is woven. To obey without honoring is to outwardly salute and inwardly sneer. And though the day comes that you are freed from obedience, being released by God into another relationship the honoring goes on... it never stops... it reveals itself then, not

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in implicit obedience, but in unswerving respect.

Each of you must respect his mother and father... for I AM
the LORD your God. (Leviticus 19:3 NIV)

That's reason enough! There were no conditions to that commandment. It does not say they are respectable. It says they hold an office that commands respect. Their respectability is a matter between them and God.

Authority and Sonship!—The two pillars on which our respect may rest.—Two of the higher ways of God!

We have looked at the principles that govern our relationship. Now we must look at the precepts that govern our behavior. Let's look at some Principles from Proverbs on becoming responsible sons and daughters! Remember what responsibility is! It is our response to God's ability! The response is up to us. The ability is up to Him.

Now before we go on, I must explain that I have chosen to divide these principles by asking questions, then answering them through the Word. The questions are not written only for children, or even for young people. They apply to all of us. Even if your parents are deceased, the basic attitude that exists in your heart towards them is communicated to your children or to others as a demonstration of how you feel about God as your Heavenly Father. If you are a young person, you simply have a greater capacity, more opportunity, and more years to relate the portrait of sonship to the world; but the basic message is for all of us.

Question 1- Do you realize that much of your parents joy or happiness has been or is dependent on you?

A wise son maketh a glad father; but a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother. (Proverbs 10:1)

A wise son brings joy to his father, but a foolish son despises his mother. (Proverbs 15:20 NIV)

You say, but my parents never acted like they even cared what I did. My friend, that is not the issue: the scripture is God's final authority, and it says there is a formula at work in the home and it goes like this: wise children (those who live God's way) bring joy and happiness to their parents. Foolish children (those who follow after the ways of the world) bring grief and heaviness to their parents, and thus to God. You say, well, my

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parents didn't bring *ME* anything but grief.

I doubt that, but even if it's true, the issue is that the day you became a Christian God took care of all that. He gave you a new, perfect Father and asked you to allow Him supernaturally to demonstrate how to love that Father by honoring the earthly fathers and mothers He had given you. He told you He took care of all they did wrong to you at Calvary. He designed a master plan to work it together for your good, then He told you to bury the past and begin to think more highly of others than you do yourself. He said even if you are slapped on the right cheek, turn the other. If you are misused or abused, respond with love, and He would be RESPONSIBLE for the outcome. What your parents did is no longer an issue if you are a Christian. What you can do to make them happy is now the issue.

You say "My parents never understood me." That may be true. But God made you, and He understands you, and He has decided to take everything those parents ever said and or did and weave it together into your life message. Without those experiences, you would not be you!

Question 2- Have you brought disgrace to your family by how you have behaved?

A foolish son brings grief to his father and bitterness to the one who bore him
(Proverbs 17:25 NIV)

Be wise, my son, and bring joy to my heart; then I can answer anyone who treats me with contempt.
(Proverbs 27:11 NIV)

...It will be a public honor to me. (Proverbs 27:11 TLB)

He who brings trouble on his family will inherit only wind...
(Proverbs 11:29a NIV)

The issue here is that just as your behavior as a Christian takes on a whole new level of accountability, because you now possess the "NAME" of Jesus, and everything you do brings either honor or reproach to that "name"; so it is with the earthly NAME you bear (the name of your parents). Whatever you do that brings reproach to their name, dishonors them and thus dishonors God. You cannot re-live the past, or assume a mantle of guilt to carry around. God forbid. But you CAN go back and seek their forgiveness (if they are alive) for any reproach you brought to their name through how you behaved or are behaving.

Again you say, no, they brought reproach to my name—they

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were dishonest, or they were slothful, or they destroyed the home I longed to have through divorce. That's not your problem. You hold THEIR name. You are accountable to honor that name regardless of what they've done. That's part of being responsible sons and daughters.

Question 3- How have you responded to parental correction or counsel?

A wise son heeds his father's instruction, but a mocker does not listen to rebuke. (Proverbs 13:1 NIV)

A wise son loves discipline (Paraphrase)

A wise man sees reason for his father's correction. (NEB)

We learned last week that parental discipline is an earthly demonstration of a Heavenly principle; the principle of divine discipline, the pattern whereby God corrects His children. We learned that God only corrects those He loves. And that the very act of correction is proof of His love. Likewise, we read in Proverbs that when a parent becomes willing to punish his child, he is saying to that child "I Love You". We also read in Hebrews that no punishment is enjoyable while it's happening, but afterwards it yields fruit and eventual peace.

So the child who resents and resists his parent's correction is on dangerous ground. It does not have to do with his parent's wisdom in correction... that's God's business. It has to do with the child's response to God's right to discipline them any way He chooses for their good. So the Scripture says how you respond to your parent's rebuke tells whether or not you are "wise man" or a "mocker."

And God expects you to honor your parent's counsel, as well. Listen:

Listen, my son to your father's instructions, and do not forsake your mother's teaching.

They will be a garland to grace your head and chain to adorn your neck. (Proverbs 1:8,9 NIV)

My son, keep your father's commands and do not forsake your mother's teaching.

Bind them upon your heart forever; fasten them around your neck. (Proverbs 6:20,21 NIV)

So, responsible sons and daughters honor their parents both, by yielding to their correction, and by respecting their counsel.

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I realize that when you marry, you leave father and mother and cleave to one another-you leave their home, you leave their authority, you leave their realm of discipline... but they do not suddenly cease to exercise wisdom in their counsel...God still uses them to touch your life with a divine channel of experience and love. How many wrong choices we could have avoided, even as adults if only we had listened to the wise counsel of our parents? Even if they are not Christians, their hearts are in God's hands... He can turn them whithersoever He chooseth. Listen to, take heed to, pay close attention to your parent's counsel ALL THE DAYS OF YOUR LIFE. The Scripture says bind them around your heart forever-don't forsake them; fasten them around your neck.

Question 4- Have you ever cursed or railed at your parents, either to their face or behind their backs? You say why address that issue? Because God does.

If a man curses his father or mother, his lamp will be snuffed out in pitch darkness. (Proverbs 20:20)

God puts out the light of the man who curses his father or mother." (TLB)

His lamp of life will go out. (Moffatt)

There are those who curse their fathers and do not bless their mothers;

those who are pure in their own eyes and yet are not cleansed of their filth; (Proverbs 30:11,12 NIV)

Again the picture is the reason for the principle. The man or woman who curses his parents has adopted the role model of the believer who blasphemes God through bitterness, and then lifts himself up as a model of purity. When you curse your parents, you curse the God who gave them to you, and the punishment must be commensurate with the crime.

That's why the pastor or Christian worker who still nurses a spirit of bitterness towards his family will find his ministry diminished by his hypocrisy. If you have cursed your father or mother and never sought their forgiveness, you have a choice to make. Even if they have passed on, you have a choice to make. You can see the gravity of the sin and confess it to God, or you can strut around as though you were pure, the verse says, yet hold in your hands the stain of disrespect.

Question 5- Have you ever mocked your parents or made fun of them?

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The eye that mocks a father; that scorns obedience to a mother will be pecked out by the ravens of the valley, and eaten by vultures. (Proverbs 30:17)

Another translator puts it this way:

The eye which looks jeeringly on a father, and scornfully on an ageing mother... What it is saying is that your spiritual eyes will be blinded, and ultimately your spiritual discernment will disappear unless you reject that disrespectful spirit.

Young people, your parents are not to be the butt of your jokes. They are not to be the subject of your mocking. They are not to be the objects of your scorn. God takes your mocking seriously, because it is a portrayal of what it is like to mock your Heavenly Father. If you've done that, you need to ask God's forgiveness and your parents' forgiveness if they are still alive.

Fellow adults, we are just as guilty. The older generation that mocks or makes fun of grandma or grandpa instead of honoring their age and their office, sets the stage for a younger generation of mockers. God help us all to regain an attitude of respect.

Question 6- is designed especially for young people. It is this: Are your friendships acceptable to your parents?

A man who loves wisdom brings joy to his father, but a companion of irreputable friends is a squanderer. (Proverbs 29:3 paraphrase)

Young men who are wise obey the law; a son who is a member of a lawless gang is a shame to his father. (Proverbs 28:7 TLB)

God has endowed parents, even unbelieving parents with a supernatural sensing device that interprets the character of their children's friendships. So if momma says don't date that boy, I'd pay attention if I were you. She sees something you don't!

If daddy says, "I think you should stay away from that group", pay attention. God has sent off an alarm bell in his spirit that those friendships are not good for you... and wrong friendships ultimately mean wrong character.

Question 7- is for everybody: "Have you ever stolen from your parents, or presumptuously taken what was not yours to take?"

You say, "Well, everybody does that!" Not everybody... not those who desire God's best... listen:

He who robs his father or mother and says 'It's not wrong', he is a partner to him who destroys. (Proverbs 28:24)

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Still another translator puts it this way,

He who takes from his father or mother what is theirs by right, and says, It is no sin—the same is a taker of life!

The issue is that sonship does not constitute ownership of the parent's possessions; only of those possessions deeded to the sons. The right to deed them rests with the parent. The child is to be grateful for what he receives; for what a sovereign God impresses the parents to give them.

The son or daughter who demands riches because his parents are rich is a presumptuous fool. As an example, God has given to us in the spiritual realm all of the treasures of Heaven. He has made us joint-heirs with Christ. But the decision to do that was His and not ours, and how and when He gives His gifts are totally of His choosing. And that is what is being depicted in this principle.

The child or the young person or even the adult who is presumptuously taking what belongs to his parents and saying, "What's wrong with that?" is begging for divine discipline and defying God's Word. If you have unrightfully taken from your parents, seek God's forgiveness immediately, and their forgiveness if it is still possible... and if need be, offer to make restitution for taking presumptuously what was not yours, for robbing God of a chance to give you what He knew you needed.

Question 8: Do you appreciate the fine qualities in your parent's lives or are you continually blaming them for the weaknesses in yours?

We'll just take time for one example.

It is a wonderful heritage to have an honest father.

(Proverbs 20:7)

(How I praise God for the honest, loving parents He gave me.)

Let me ask you, when was the last time you made a list of the qualities in your parent's lives that have been a blessing to you? When was the last time you told them "thank you"? When was the last time you told God "thank you"? He gave them to you.

Just as you and I grow out of our self-centeredness by studying the character of God and praising Him for who He is, so we also grow out of bitterness by studying the positive qualities of our parents and praising God for choosing them and for using them, (even for using their weaknesses to develop strengths in

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us). What a precious, sovereign God we have!

Do you see what the Scriptures are saying? They are saying that responsible sons and daughters understand:

- that much of their parent's happiness depends on them, and that responsible sons and daughters will do anything to avoid bringing disgrace to their family name.
- that responsible sons and daughters will honor their parents correction and honor their parents counsel.
- that responsible sons and daughters will never curse their parents nor curse God for giving them those parents.
- that responsible sons and daughters will never mock or make fun of their parents or their grandparents-to do so is to mock the God who gave them to them.
- that responsible sons and daughters will be sensitive to their parent's counsel where friendships are concerned.
- that responsible sons and daughters will never presumptuously take what belongs to their parents, but will ever be grateful for whatever they are given.
- and that responsible sons and daughters will study their parents strengths to create a spirit of praise and thanksgiving to a sovereign God who designed those parents just for them.

Because responsible sons and daughters know that God's ways are higher than ours; as much higher as heaven is above the earth. His ways of authority are higher and his ways of sonship are higher. Responsible sons and daughters know these things and do these things (because today more than ever) the character of this age is disrespect. The crisis of this age is that the world's last hope is the church. And so the call of this age is for us as Christian sons and daughters to stand on the principles of the Word of God whatever the cost.

You may want to memorize this verse which says,

Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the days of trouble come. (Ecclesiastes 12:1 NIV)

Don't let the excitement of being young cause you to forget about your Creator. Honor Him in your youth before the days of evil come-when you'll no longer enjoy living. (TLB)

One way you do that is by remembering to honor, defer to, and respect the parents He has placed over you. You need to

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speak to them with respect, respond to them with respect, and obey them with respect, the way responsible sons and daughters so.

Some of us have some wrongs to make right.

Some of us have some praying to do.

Some of us have some confessing to do.

Some of us have some thinking to do and some thanking to do.

Some of you who are young people need to reassess your concepts of parenthood and accept forever God's precepts as yours. Some of us who are adults need to retrace our steps and instead of blaming mom and dad for all those wrong choices, humble ourselves and ask "How did I do harm to them?" "How did I fail to minister to them?" "How did I bring them unhappiness?" If they are still alive, "What can I do to bring joy to their lives in the years that remain?"

We are not here to assume more guilt. We are here to be set free. We give God the guilt; we can't change the past. But we can begin right now to let the mind of Christ control us. We can make a choice to assume God's mind as sons and daughters of the King. We can assume that whether we live in the home or out, whether our parents are living or not, we will choose to maintain an attitude of respect and honor at the very mention of their name from this day forward.

Life is a choice. And you and I have a choice to make this morning if we are to become responsible sons and daughters.

(See poem on next page)

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RESPONSIBLE SONS AND DAUGHTERS

Responsible sons and daughters
Oh, what a charge we possess
The charge to honor our parents
Thus, freeing our God to bless

The charge to never curse them
Nor mock them, nor take what is theirs
The charge to never disgrace them
Taking lightly their love or their prayers

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May that be the path we take
For the choice to become responsible
Is a choice that is ours to make.

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