

# THE TRUTH ABOUT INFLUENCE

## PROVERBS

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[FATHER'S DAY]

Amen! Amen, what a wonderful, wonderful time of worship this morning. God bless you. Well, on this Father's Day I wanna speak to you on the truth regarding your spiritual influence. Now, men have a particular way about them. In fact, men are tremendous masters at delegation. Give us a task and we can assign it as quickly as possible.

I a..., heard about a man by the name of Cliff in a hot air balloon. The story says that he was lost and he realized he was lost, so he reduced his altitude and spotted a woman below. He descended a bit more and shouted, "Excuse me, can you help me? I promised a friend I would meet him an hour ago, but I don't know where I am." The woman below replied, "You're in a hot air balloon, hovering approximately 30 feet above the ground. You are between 40 and 41° north latitude and between 59 and 69° west longitude." "You must be an engineer." said the balloonist. ~~I replied...~~ "I am!" replied the woman. "How did you know?" "Well," answered the balloonist, "everything you told me is technically correct, but I have no idea what to make of your information and the fact is I am still lost and frankly you've not been much help so far." The woman below responded, "You must be in management." [congregation laughter] ~~I replied,~~ "I am!" replied the balloonists, how did you know?" "Well" said the woman, "you don't know where you are or where you're going. You have risen where you are due primarily to a large quantity of hot air, [more laughter] you made a promise which you have no idea how you're going to keep and you expect people beneath you to solve your problems. [more laughter] The fact is you are at exactly the same position you were in before we met, but now somehow it's my fault." [more laughter]

Well, we hear today about disconnected dads and frankly we are living in a culture in which fathers are often invisible; a so called fatherless culture and we know that our families are paying the price as a result. But you know...and looking at you today, most of our dads here today are probably not disconnected dads, but we have many dads who are delegating dads and may I remind you that the one assignment that you have in life of being a dad, being a father to your children is the one assignment you cannot, you must not delegate to someone else. This is your calling! Men, this is your challenge and we must never underestimate the value and the importance, the significance of the work of the Father and the spiritual leadership of the man in the home. Now, this in no way diminishes the influence and the impact of wives and mothers. But the fact is God has charged men with the responsibility of training, developing, disciplining, discipling our children, that it would not simply be a fact that you're a dad, but that as a dad you would be a force in the lives of your family... the life of your family and those around you. Well, having said that and in speaking of our spiritual influence, God has given us a book in the Scripture known as the book of Proverbs, that is in effect a training manual for life. It's all about how to live life wisely and skillfully. As a matter of fact there are 31 chapters in the book of Proverbs and if you would read one a day each day of the month, 30...31 days in the month, you would have wisdom, the wisdom of the ages in your life today. These principles that we find in Proverbs are sermons in a sentence and in fact these are saying, or sermons,

if you will, delivered from a father to his son. It's a manual on life and thus what this ancient father is teaching and training his own children to do, we can learn and live today by discovering *The Truth About Influence*. Proverbs chapter 4 and verse 7:

*Wisdom is the only thing...Wisdom is the principle thing; Therefore get wisdom...*

It sort of reminds you of coach Vince Lombardi, who once said:

*"Winning isn't everything, it's the only thing."*

Now, I don't know how you feel about that statement regarding athletic competition, but I hope as a dad you realize the significance of that saying that winning as a dad isn't just something, or one thing; to win as a parent, to win as a dad is the thing. It is the only thing and giving wisdom, God's wisdom, to your children is the priority purpose of any parent. Solomon wanted his son to make wise choices in life. He understood the powerful role of influence in his life given to the life of his son. You know leadership, according to J. Oswald Sim...Sanders is influence and every day in some way all of us are influencing others for good or for bad. Our lives are not static, but rather our lives are fluid and mobile and with powerful effect and dynamic and it's sad when so many live their lives without realizing the incredible power of their own personal influence. So I wanna take the book of Proverbs today and I wanna take it apart ra...rather quickly, in fact it's sort of like taking your remote control like most men do in their homes and move from program to program to program. We're gonna be moving from Scriptures and clicking on to Scriptures very quickly here, but I want you to get something of the flavor and the taste of what this dad is saying to his son and the most important issues of life regarding your spiritual influence. A..., **INSIGHTS TO HELP YOU BECOME A MAN, A WOMAN OF INFLUENCE.**

#1 If you want to exert this influence upon the life of your family then **TAKE GOD AND HIS WORD SERIOUSLY.** Look in Proverbs 1 and verse 7:

*The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, (or wisdom) But fools despise wisdom and instruction.*

You will often see in the Proverbs a contrast between wisdom and foolishness and this dad is saying son here's ~~not~~...how not to become a fool and if you don't want your children to become fools or foolish then rather than just letting the world instruct them, let God's wisdom instruct them and that is by taking God and His word seriously.

*The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom...*

Did you know that the fear of the Lord, the love of the Lord is often seen through the lens of our earthly fathers? In other words, we often see God in the Fathers through the lens of the testimonies of dedicated dads or in contrast to that, we often see, sadly see, people think of God as they think of their dad and for many people that's not much. Now God is the perfect Father and we are by no means perfect fathers, but we are called to be pattern fathers, to set the example, to say follow me as I follow Christ. Can you say that? Can you say love God as I love God? Fear God as I fear God? There was a time in American life that to speak of a God fearing man, a God fearing woman was a common occurrence, but it sounds out of date and antiquated today to speak of someone as being God fearing

and yet we're called to love God, to fear God. In fact fear has been described as love of God on it's knees. The awesome a..., reverence and respect of Almighty God. We teach our children many things a..., everything from baseball to baking, from fishing to fashion, but there is one thing we must not fail to teach our children; the priority is to teach our children to love God, to fear God and to walk in the wisdom of His word, to take God and His word seriously.

I was reading the testimony of a well known Christian athlete baseball player and in describing his new found faith and commitment to Christ he referred to a time before when he said, "You know, I just was a fringe Christian." How descriptive of so many in the church today who are on the fringes, in the shadows, out on the sidelines. How descriptive is this of so many dads, men, rather than being full throttle believers and maxed out for Jesus Christ, Christians, just sort of fringe Christians. So let me ask you a question, maybe I should ask your children the question, are you dad a full throttle, full out, faithful follower of Jesus Christ, or are you just sort of a fringe Christian? Kids recognize ambivalence every time and if you are ambivalent and nebulae about what God means to you, about what Christ means to you, your children are going to be picking up on it. Dads, your kids are watching you and they're following you.

I heard about a dad and his son who were mountain climbing and they came to a fork in...in the pathway and it was becoming darker and even more difficult and potentially dangerous to climb this mountain and so the dad was standing there at the fork trying to decide which fork, which path to take onward and upward. And as he was contemplating his choice his son said, "Dad, make the right choice because I'm coming behind you." Your children, your grandchildren who are coming behind you are looking to you to lead them, to make the right choice; first to follow Christ and not only to follow Christ but to live for Christ in the fear and the love of God and then to train up those children in the nurture and the admonition of the Lord. Satan is attacking our families. There is a war for the soul of your family, of your kids and yet many men are just clicking the remote control, living in cruise control, rather than committing and following Christ wholeheartedly. In the forward of this book, or actually the introduction of this book I challenge men with the old hymn.

*Rise up O men of God!  
Have done with lesser things;  
Give heart and mind and soul and voice  
To serve the King of kings.*

Get excited about Jesus in your life. Get motivated so that your kids will see that excitement because the life of Christ is not only taught, it is caught in the spirit and the atmosphere of the life of the believer, because I guarantee you if you don't teach your children to love and to fear God, to walk in the admonition of the Lord, the world will teach them something else. Someone will teach...someone else is teaching your children and men you can't delegate this to somebody else. You can't delegate it to the schools. You can't give it to mom alone. You can't give it to their brothers and sisters or even to the church. Dad, this is your calling! Take God and His word seriously.

Secondly, **MAKE WISE CHOICES DAILY**. When I read the book of Proverbs I read a word which appears again and again and you see it in Proverbs 2:11, it's the word discretion, the ability to make wise decisions. So in chapter 2, verse 11 it says:

<sup>11</sup>Discretion will preserve you; And understanding will keep you, <sup>12</sup>To deliver you from the way of evil,...

Discretion, discernment, decision-making, wisdom! So often we see the Bible as a book of rules and commandments to keep and indeed there are rules and standards and commandments to keep in God's Word, there are precepts by which we are to live. But you know the Bible is a book of great principles and often we find in the principles, the great principles of Scripture the ability to make good decisions, to make wise decisions and obviously in our world today many people are doing foolish things and making dumb decisions, but a wise dad, a dedicated, devoted follower of Christ who wants to exert spiritual influence will make wise choices daily and use and choose discretion in all that you do. Often on television programs today you see a screen that appears that says, *Parental discretion advised*. Interesting isn't it that now the media is telling us how to make decisions? But God told us how to make decisions a long time ago and there is spiritual discretion advised in the book of Proverbs on a variety of subjects and I just wanna hurriedly mention a few that regard your spiritual influence.

One, USE SPIRITUAL DISCRETION IN YOUR ATTITUDES, in your attitudes. Proverbs 3:27:

*Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, When it is in the power of your hand to do it.*

Many dads have the reputation of being faultfinders rather than good finders, constantly tearing the kids down, rather than building them up. But if you wanna be like Jesus then you will do as Jesus did, as the Scripture tells us:

*...He went about doing good...*

Everywhere Jesus went He lifted people and encouraged people and blessed people and called people to Himself. He helped them to see that they could live better lives, that they could experience a powerful spiritual victory in their lives. And dads, that attitude in your home of faith and trust and finding good and believing the best, not withholding good, especially from your kids, especially in your family. A man, a woman of good discretion will demonstrate honor and respect for others. ~~The most valu~~...one of the most valued lessons you can teach your children is to respect authority and to respect others possessions and things. It is all about finding good and giving good. So are you adding blessing to your children's life? Are you adding value to their lives? Or are you depleting them and draining them? God has called us to be a powerful force and oh what a godly life is in the hand of God dedicated to Him. **Attitudes establish the atmosphere of our relationships and our leadership.** Bad attitudes, negative thinking, anger and toxic emotions that are constantly spewed out and spilled out in so many families are unwise and unhealthy and yes, ungodly. So first in your attitudes.

And then with your money. **MAKE GOOD DECISIONS REGARDING YOUR MONEY.** ~~A man~~...your money and your use of money says so much about what is of greater importance in your life and so that's why in Proverbs 3:9 & 10 the Scripture says:

<sup>9</sup>Honor the LORD with your possessions, and with the first fruit of all your increase; <sup>10</sup>So that your increase and your barns will be filled with plenty, And our vats will overflow with new wine.

Proverbs 11:4 says:

*Riches do not profit in the day of wrath,...*

That is, when it all comes down at the end riches do not profit, but righteousness delivers from death. Your use of money, the decisions you make about how you spend your money and how you give your money reflects the true value of your heart and your kids know what's valuable to you. Your kids know if you're honoring God first with your tithes and your offerings and your substance and your service to Christ. But there's another area that Proverbs talks about.

And that's **IN THE AREA OF MARRIAGE, OUR RELATIONSHIPS, OUR MORALITY**. Proverbs 5:7 to 9 is a warning and this dad especially wanted his son to hear this warning:

*<sup>7</sup>Therefore hear me now, my children, And do not depart from the words of my mouth. <sup>8</sup>Remove your way far from her...house.*

What house? The house of a immoral woman.

*<sup>9</sup>Lest you give your honor to others, And your years to the cruel one;*

And then Proverbs 6:32:

*<sup>32</sup>Whoever commits adultery with a woman lacks understanding; He who does so destroys his own soul.*

*<sup>33</sup>Wounds and dishonor he will get, And his reproach will not be wiped away.*

When we indulge our appetites physically, when we live not according to God's standards and God's principles, but according to the lust of our flesh, our young men and even our daughters pick up on these kinds of behaviors and it dramatically damages the way they look at sex, the way they look at marriage, the way they look at life itself. That's why God, having given this wa...warning gives wise instruction in Proverbs 5, verse 15 and then verse 18:

*<sup>15</sup>Drink waters from your own cistern, And running water from your own well.*

*<sup>18</sup>Let your fountain be blessed, And rejoice with the wife of your youth.*

Author and speaker Jay Strack says the number one question that kids are asking today is: "Dad do you love Mom?" [pause] It is wise! You're not smarter than God. It is wise to obey God's principles and God's law for your life, not only for yourself and your marriage, but for the sake of your children and future generations.

And then we are to **USE DISCRETION AND MAKE GOOD CHOICES REGARDING OUR WORDS**, our words. A great area...a great arena of carelessness and callousness and even crudeness in the life of so many men is the use of the tongue, our language.

I heard about a husband and wife who were heating up in an argument. Finally he was so frustrated, so agitated, so angry he said to his wife, "I can't understand why God would make you so beautiful and so stupid at the same time." She wanted to respond with discretion so she said, "Well, God made

me beautiful so that you would be attracted to me and he made me stupid so I'd be dumb enough to marry you." [pause for congregation laughter] Well, the Proverbs says in Proverbs 10:19:

*In the multitudes of words sin is not lacking, But he who restrains his lips is wise.*

Restrain your lips, your words. May your speech be with grace and seasoned with salt. Proverbs 15:1 & 2:

*<sup>1</sup>A soft answer turns away wrath, But harsh words stir up anger. <sup>2</sup>The tongue of the wise uses knowledge rightly, But the mouth of fools pours forth foolishness.*

How much foolishness and filthiness is being poured out of men's mouths today? Well, that's the way guys talk! That's not the way men of God talk. A man of God uses discretion with his language, with his words, with his speech.

And then in your choices, **USE DISCRETION IN YOUR CHOICES**. We live in a world in which we're told much about choice. We thank God for our freedoms as ~~America and the spread~~...Americans and the fre...spread of freedom around the world. But as we know with freedom comes great responsibility and to be a person of influence, a man, a woman of influence you must make wise choices that reflect your desire to be an example of rightness and righteousness towards others. Many of the choices that we make in life have to do with setting the pace for others who are watching us and listening to us. I've made choices throughout my life in respect of those who may be weaker brothers or sisters, in respect to my own children who are looking to me to give, not a substandard, but a standard, a higher standard of godly living and that is why when you come to make various choices in life about your behavior about what you drink or what you don't drink, about what you say, what you don't say, what you do, what you don't do; you do that not just because you have liberty to do what you will, but because you have liberty to do what is right. I have chosen, in my life, to be a total abstainer from alcohol and in big part it's because of my influence, because of my example to my children and to your children. Listen to what Proverbs 20 in verse 1 says about alcohol:

*Wine is a mocker, An intoxicating drink arouses brawling, And whoever is led astray by it ids not wise.*

A wise decision is to take the high road on any behavior that is questionable. You say, well is it really questionable? Doesn't the Bible say something about drugs and drinking and alcohol? Well, as a matter of fact it does. Proverbs 23, 29 to 32 says quite a bit:

*<sup>29</sup>Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has contentions? Who has complaints? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes? <sup>30</sup>Those who linger long at the wine, Those who go in, in search of mixed wine or mixed drinks. <sup>31</sup>Do not look at the wine when it is red, When it is sparkling or swirling in the cup, When it swirls around smoothly;*

Speaking of intoxicating beverage.

*<sup>32</sup>At the last it bites like a serpent, And stings like a viper.*

How many families have been broken and fractured, because of the viper, because of the sting of a

father's decision regarding alcohol? If I am going to be discreet in my life, if I am going to be a man of discretion, not just a man of distinction, then I am going to make choices that honor God and I will refuse to do things even though my own personal liberty may say yes, for the sake of others, especially those who are looking to me for example, I will choose the wise way. Choice and choice alone says I have a right, but love says I have a responsibility.

*"Well, what are you going to be my boy when you have reached manhood's years? A doctor, a lawyer or an actor great, moving throngs to laughters and tears?" But he shook his head and he gave his reply in a serious way that he had, "I don't think I'd care to be any of them, I want to be just like my dad." He wants to be like his dad. You men, did you ever think as you pause that the boy who watches your every move is building a set of laws? He's molding a life, you're the model for and whether it's good or bad depends upon the kind of examples set to the boy who'd be just like his dad. Would you have him go with you everywhere you go? Have him do just the things you do and see everything that your eyes behold and woo all the gods you woo? When you see the worship that shines in the eyes of you're lovable little lad could you rest content if he gets his wise and grows up to be just like his dad? It's a job that none but yourself can fill, it's a charge you must answer for, it's a duty to show him the road to tread er he reaches his manhood's door. It's a debt you owe, for the greatest joy on this old earth to be had is the pleasure of having a boy to raise who wants to be just like his dad.*

So dads, men and women make wise decisions, take God and His word seriously and finally...

**LIVE AND LEAVE A GODLY LEGACY.** Proverbs 22, verse 1 says:

*A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches, Loving favor rather than silver or gold.*

What are you leaving your children? Is it a legacy of faith and spiritual courage? Is it a legacy of muscular Christianity and powerful faith? Is it a legacy of conviction rather than compromise? The Scripture says in Proverbs 13 in verse 22:

*A good man leaves an inheritance to his children's children, (that's our grandchildren) And the wealth of the sinner is laid for the just.*

You can pass down a godly history and a godly heritage to your children. So what are you leaving to your kids? Are you leaving stepping stones or stumbling blocks in the path of those who are coming behind you? Are you making it easier for your children and grandchildren to follow Christ or are you making it more difficulty by the life that you live...live? You must set the pace, you must set the standard and God will enable you, God will help you to be a man of God. We in ourselves cannot do this but: [Philippians 4:13]

*I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.*

Proverbs 3:5 & 6, verses that I learned at my grandfathers knee:

*<sup>5</sup>Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And do not learn unto your own understanding; <sup>6</sup>In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will direct your path.*

You get on God's pathway and follow Him with all your heart and I assure you there is no greater

satisfaction to...then to know that your life has made a difference in the life of your family, your wife, your husband, in the life of your children, in the life of your friends, your church and even in the culture. No greater satisfaction, no greater joy than to know that your children walk in truth, so live that you may leave a legacy.

I dedicated this, my 6<sup>th</sup> book I believe, maybe it's the 7<sup>th</sup>, to my maternal grandfather. My grandfather Sims, grandpa Sims, we lived in his home from the beginning of my life. His wife had passed away and so our little family, my brother...my older brother, my parents and I we moved in our grandfather's house; 332 Oliver Street, Conway, Arkansas and I had the privilege each evening of slipping into my grandfathers bedroom, crawling up into his lap and hearing him tell stories, read stories, but most of all to read the word of God, to teach me the Scriptures and biblical principles for life and what I learned there in his lap I've never forgotten to this day. You know how sometimes you can think back in a time in your life and you can almost smell it the way it was? Heh! My grandfather was a great man, he wasn't a perfect man. One bad habit that he had, the only one that I know of and I didn't know it was that bad a habit at the time, but he liked to cut off a piece of Bull Durham, Bull Of The Woods, actually. Now, you know what Bull Of The Woods is? Chewin tobacco, so he'd cut him off a plug of that and put it in his mouth and here we'd go in the Scriptures. [congregation laughter] And a..., I can still smell that Bull Of The Woods, but most of all the sweet fragrance of his life and his testimony and his godly dedication to Christ and the single greatest influence in my early life, my brother, my father powerful influences, but I can't tell you the impact, I can't explain to you the impact that this great man had in my life. So I wrote in the book in dedication to him.

*I dedicate this book to my grandfather, A. J. Sims, that's Arthur Judson Sims. He read me the Scriptures, led me to child like faith in Christ and demonstrated the life of a godly man and though he has been in heaven many years the legacy of his life lives on. I am forever grateful.*

My grandfather is still speaking today. His words are still being heard today. His testimony is still ringing true today. What he said to me I am saying to you. What he gave to me I am giving to you, it is the wisdom of God, it is the word of God, it is the power of Jesus Christ and when you think about it, of all the things that you can leave for your children, there...there's really only one thing you can leave and that's your faith and on the other hand there's only one thing you can take to heaven with you and that's you're kids, your grandkids, your family, your friends and would to God when we stand before our great Savior that we can say all of my family is with me today, tomorrow, from generation to generation let us so live that the life of faith will be given to those who come behind us. May they find us faithful and so I call you today men and woman to remember your spiritual influence. Don't underestimate it, don't be a delegating dad, be a devoted, committed godly man. Don't be just a man, anybody can be a man, that's biological, be a man of God, that's spiritual, that's powerful and He will do it in you if you will trust in Him.