



from the desk of

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On Instruction and Teaching

⁸ Listen, my son, to your father's instruction and do not forsake your mother's teaching.

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

A proverb is designed to teach a truth in a concentrated form. While the proverb above is aimed at the child, it implies something for the parent. For the child to listen to instruction, for the child to not forsake teaching, the implication is that the parent *is* doing teaching and instruction. The call here in these verses is for the parents to intentionally teach and instruct their children.

We live in an age where knowledge engulfs us. Some claim that there is a syndrome where we think we are smarter than we really are because we can find an answer to just about anything by Googling it (or if you have one of the Amazon or Google "personal assistants" you can just sit there and ask questions). A vast amount of knowledge of things is within even a child's reach.

Knowledge is one thing - wisdom is quite another.

The next several chapters of Proverbs have the father taking his son through the city and pointing out sources of wisdom and sources of folly. The father here does this by walking with the son through the city and pointing out real life influences.

The Proverb quickly points out that there is a long-term benefit to the child's listening to the teaching and instruction of the parent.

The *Bible Background Commentary* puts it this way:

The words of the father and mother, which embody the wisdom of the society, can become a decorative wreath for the son's head and a chain or necklace of office. Just as a champion is adorned with a garland of victory

and a newly appointed official is given the chain and vestments of his office, so too is the attentive son assured of prosperity and a stable life (see [Prov 4:1-6](#)).

To be the positive influence on your child means that you need to be there alongside them. Help them navigate through the many voices and differing values that they face. Help them think through the consequences of choices that are made. It might be as simple as when a report comes on TV of some bad choice someone makes (DUI, robbery, drug charges, whatever) help them see why this was a bad choice and what the fallout might be for that person (jail time, injury to others or one's own health, even difficulty in getting a job).

Don't have your child live in a parental vacuum. Take time with them, and start this sooner rather than later (the teen years come soon enough!).

.....or you could get them an Amazon Echo of their own to help guide them. (I personally think you'll do a better job at it).

DCE Randy