## Lesson 2-20

# Raising Good Adults

##### Proverbs 22:1-16

###### Memorize This Week

“A good name is more desirable than great riches;

to be esteemed is better than silver or gold.”

Proverbs 22:1

This lesson focuses upon the theme of Sunday’s sermon: *How to Raise Good Adults!* We recognize that our goal in child rearing is to one day see them responding as godly adults. Keep this in mind as you study the passage this week.

## 22:1-5

1. Why is it better for your child to have a “good name” than for them to be wealthy *(22:1)?*

This proverb does not oppose wealth but implies that it must be rightly obtained. One who has obtained riches at the cost of a notorious reputation has paid too high a price.[[1]](#footnote-1)

1. What do the rich and poor have in common (22:2,4)?
2. How are the prudent child and the simple child different (22:3,5)? Alike?

22:2 Rich and poor have equal standing before the Lord. Those who are well off must never forget that they, no less than the poor are wholly dependent on God for life and livelihood. Therefore both must live with humility before God.[[2]](#footnote-2)

22:3 On the surface vv. 3, 5 both simply state that the wise see and avoid trouble but the ignorant or headstrong plunge into it. In the context of vv. 2, 4, this text asserts that the failure to spot danger arises precisely from refusal to submit to God.

The contrast is between the “shrewd” (prudent) person and the “simpleton.” The shrewd person knows where the dangers and pitfalls are in life and so can avoid them. The naive person is unwary, untrained, and gullible, unable to survive the dangers and blundering into them.

*“danger”* is in *Hebrew* “evil,” a term broad enough to include (1) “sin” as well as (2) any form of “danger” or “trouble”. The second option is more likely what is meant here: The naive do not see the danger and so suffers for it. The verb *’anash, “penalty”* means “to fine” specifically. In this line the punishment is the consequence of blundering into trouble—they will pay for it.

22:4 *“wages”* is the Hebrew *’eqev*, “reward” which is related to the term meaning “heel”; it refers to the consequences or the reward that follows (akin to the English expression “on the heels of”).

“Humility” is used here in the religious sense of “piety.” It is appropriately joined with “the fear of the Lord.”

“Snares (or thorns) and pitfalls” represent the dangers and threats to life.[[3]](#footnote-3)

Pray About This

What can you do to improve or enhance your child’s reputation?

## RAISING CHILDREN *(22:6, 15)*

1. What is the “right way” for children to go *(22:6)?*

22:6 Some take this as, “Train a child in accordance with his nature,” meaning the teacher must take into account the idiosyncrasies of the child and customize the method of training accordingly. The NIV takes it to mean one should train a child in the way he should go. A better interpretation is, loosely rendered, “Train a child in a manner befitting a child.” One should train a child using vocabulary, concepts, and illustrations a child can understand. One should begin instructing a child in elementary principles of right and wrong as soon as possible.[[4]](#footnote-4)

The expected consequence of such training is that it will last throughout life. One can anticipate positive results from careful child-training—but there may be an occasional exception.[[5]](#footnote-5)

1. Why is it necessary sometimes to spank children *(22:15)?*

In conjunction with v. 6, this verse clearly implies that if one gets the folly out of a child in the beginning, the child will continue in the right way.[[6]](#footnote-6)

The “heart of a child” refers here to the natural inclination of a child to foolishness. The younger child is meant in this context, but the word can include youth. The TEV translates, “Children just naturally do silly, careless things.”[[7]](#footnote-7)

Pray About This

Would your method of raising children produce adults who do what is right or who are a law to themselves?

## Debt *(22:7,16)*

1. What should you teach your child about debt *(22:7)?*

22:7 is an observational proverb and makes the point that debt is a form of slavery (this was all the more clear in ancient Israel, where the debtors were apt to find themselves enslaved (see 2 Kgs 4:1).[[8]](#footnote-8)

1. What should you teach your child about wealth *(22:16)?*

22:16 The Hebrew of this verse is extraordinarily difficult. … I would suggest the meaning, “One oppresses the weak to enrich himself; another gives to the rich only for poverty [i.e., with no future in sight but deeper poverty for himself].”

This should be read in the context of v. 7. The “giving” h is not giving presents to wealthy people but the pitiful attempts of the poor to meet the exorbitant demands of the wealthy creditor. In sum v. 16 represents not two separate activities but the two sides of the one coin in the ancient creditor-debtor relationship, one in which the former gets richer while the latter is ground deeper into poverty. … Debt is debilitating and demoralizing. No one can live the happy, prosperous life Proverbs recommends in that condition.[[9]](#footnote-9)

Pray About This

Do you know how to get out of debt and stay out?

## A Round World *(22:8-9)*

1. What can you teach your child about reciprocation*?*

22:8 is making an implied comparison, one who sins is like one who sows, for there will be a “harvest” or a return on the sin—trouble.

22:9 *Heb* “good of eye.” This expression is an attributed genitive meaning “bountiful of eye” (cf. KJV, ASV “He that hath a bountiful eye”). This is the opposite of the “evil eye” which is covetous and wicked.

It is from his own food that he gives to the poor. It is worth noting that in blessing this kind of person, God is providing for the poor, because out of this blessing, the generous will surely continue to share.[[10]](#footnote-10)

Pray About This

How can you train your child to be generous?

## Watch Your Mouth *(22:10-14)*

1. What truths should you teach your child about mocking speech versus gracious speech*?*

22:10 This proverb, written in loose synonymous parallelism, instructs that the scorner should be removed because he causes strife. Proverbs says he cannot be changed with discipline or correction, but despises and disrupts anything that is morally or socially constructive.

22:11 The expression refers to someone who has honest and clear intentions.

*Heb* “grace of his lips” (so KJV, ASV). The “lips” are a metonymy of cause representing what is said. This individual is gracious or kind in what he says; thus the verse is commending honest intentions and gracious words.

22:12 The “eyes of the Lord” is an anthropomorphic expression meaning the “omniscience of God.” When scripture uses the “eyes” of the Lord, it usually means evaluation, superintending, or safeguarding. The proverb affirms that in safeguarding true knowledge God will frustrate deception from faithless people—what they say will not have its intended effect.

22:13 The proverb humorously describes the sluggard as making ridiculous excuses for not working—he might be eaten by a lion if he goes outside (e.g., 26:13).

22:14 The word “mouth” is a metonymy of cause; it refers to the seductive speech of the strange woman (e.g., 2:16–22; and chapters 5, 7).

The point of the metaphor is that what the adulteress says is like a deep pit. The pit is like the hunter’s snare; it is a trap that is difficult to escape. So to succumb to the adulteress—or to any other folly this represents—is to get oneself into a difficulty that has no easy escape.

The proverb is saying that the Lord will use the seductive, deceptive words of the adulteress to bring about the downfall of one who is inclined to such folly.[[11]](#footnote-11)

Pray About This

Have you evaluated the way you speak to your child? Is is gracious?

1. Garrett, D. A., *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of songs* (The New American Commentary; Nashville 1993) XIV,186. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Garrett, 186. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. *The NET Bible Notes* (2006) Pr 22:2-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Garrett, 187-188. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. *The NET Bible* (2006) Pr 22:6. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Garrett, 188. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. *The NET Bible Notes* (2006) Pr 22:15. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Garrett, 188. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Garrett, 188. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. *The NET Bible Notes* (2006) Pr 22:8-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. *The NET Bible Notes* (2006) Pr 22:10-14. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)