

Packing Your Child's Suitcase

Wisdom

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HDBC

When our children are first born, we don't want to let them out of our sights, especially those first-borns. It is all so new and exciting. We can't stop looking at them, touching them, smelling them. Especially true of moms, but dads experience some of this as well. The bond is extremely tight. Part of that is because children are completely dependent upon others for everything.

But as they grow that dependence wanes and is replaced by a growing independence. No longer is it essential for them to be with the parent. They can survive at a distance. Daycare, kindergarten, slumber party, church camp, and for some going away to college. The intention is to prepare them to leave. We love having them in the nest when they are young, but when they reach adulthood, they need to build their own nests and walk their own roads.

But we don't want to send them out unprepared. There are some essentials that they need to take with them. And it is the job of parents to help make sure they have these essentials. That's what this series is about. It's about some of the key things we want to make sure are included as we are ***packing our child's suitcase***. The first, was a *ticket home*. Salvation. Prepared for Heaven. This morning let's talk about a second thing that needs to be in their suitcase.

Wisdom – Three Bible verses to offer as a foundation.

Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise. Eph 5:15

How blessed is the man who finds wisdom. Prov. 3:13

The one who gets wisdom loves life; Prov 19:8

The Bible mentions wisdom no less than 141 times, with 41 of those coming in the book of Proverbs. It is the primary book of wisdom in the Bible. It presents a number of statements about wisdom, as well as dozens of examples of how wisdom is applied to real living. Most of the sayings we have there were recorded by Solomon for his sons and through the Holy Spirit for all people. And as with

every other portion of God's word these sayings are *profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.*

So, Proverbs is a fitting textbook for parents who want to teach their children how to act and react in this world. It is very practical. It hits right where we live. That's the point of wisdom. How do we define wisdom as the Bible presents it?

Wisdom is the ability to judge correctly and apply the best course of action based on knowledge and understanding.

Wisdom is the ability to look beyond the immediate decision, see the likely outcomes, and choose the best course of action based on those outcomes.

Wisdom enables a person to make right choices when the right and wrong of a situation are not clearly stated.

Everything in life cannot be placed in clear, easy categories of right and wrong. There are thousands of situations that your children will encounter which have not been clearly explained by parents, spelled out in a handbook, or specifically addressed in the Bible. In those situations, wisdom will be the best friend your child could possibly have. Wisdom will lead them.

I think I should warn you about something. **If you try to pack wisdom in your child's suitcase**, but do not use it yourself, they will reject it. **Solomon is a great example of a parent who wanted desperately to teach wisdom to his kids but failed to apply many of them to his own life.** Partly because of this failure, his son, Rehoboam made a series of bad choices that crippled the nation for generations.

There is a high price to pay for a hypocritical life. **In Solomon's case it not only affected his son but tore the entire country apart.**

The most important thing in your child's suitcase is a ticket home. Salvation. The second most important thing in your child's suitcase is wisdom. So, how can you pack wisdom into your child's suitcase for adulthood?

I suggest six things.

1. Help them develop a healthy fear of God

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom . . . Proverbs 9:10

All genuine wisdom and knowledge begin with the fear of the Lord. The fear of the Lord is the foundation for all wisdom.

What is the fear of the Lord?

It is not a phobia. Not the kind of fear that causes one to cower away from that which they fear. I think there are two important elements to this fear.

First, there is **a reverence for God**. A sacred awe of God's utter holiness. It is the reverence one would show in the presence of absolute majesty.

Second, there is the **fear of displeasing God**. Genuine faith acknowledges that God has a right to lovingly chasten his children. The true fear of the Lord involves an awareness that our actions may lead God to bring discipline lovingly but firmly into our lives.

Children not only need to know that God loves and saves. They also need to know that God judges and punishes those who reject him. And **He disciplines his children when they are rebellious against Him**. This fear is a motivation to live right and to please God.

The fear of the Lord is the conscious awareness that I am in the presence of a holy and righteous God who sees everything I do, knows everything I think, hears everything I say, and holds me accountable for those things.

We must not only lead our children to fear displeasing us, causing discipline from us, but also of **displeasing God, resulting in divine discipline**. Your children need to grow up with an awareness that when they do wrong, it doesn't just irritate mom or dad, they are setting themselves against a holy God who deals out consequences for those who violate His principles.

The fear of the Lord prolongs life. . . . Proverbs 10:27

In the fear of the Lord there is strong confidence . . . Proverbs 14:26

2. Model the importance of spending time in God's Word

There are all kinds of sources of wisdom. For example . . .

Cowboy Wisdom:

If you're ridin' ahead of the herd, take a look back every now and then to make sure it's still there.

If you get to thinking you're a person of some influence, try ordering somebody else's dog around.

Never kick a cow chip on a hot day.

Never slap a man who's chewing tobacco.

Always drink upstream from the herd.

Wisdom from Kids

Wear a hat when feeding seagulls.

Don't flush the toilet when your dad's in the shower.

Don't pick on your sister when she's holding a baseball bat.

Never spit when on a roller coaster.

Never dare your little brother to paint the family car.

Wisdom of Yogi Berra

Former New York Yankees baseball player, known for his interesting and often seemingly contradictory statements. Here are a few quotes from when he addressed graduates at Montclair State University:

When you come to a fork in the road, take it.

Don't follow the crowd. Nobody goes there anymore. It's too crowded.

Remember, whatever you do in your life, 90 percent of it is half mental.

These kinds of sources of wisdom can be helpful but are limited in scope and power. The primary source for wisdom is the Bible. The best way for your kids to gain wisdom is by allowing the words of God to be absorbed into their lives. Speak of it. Model it. Hang it in your home. Pray it.

For the LORD gives wisdom; from His mouth come knowledge and understanding. He stores up sound wisdom for the upright; He is a shield to those who walk in integrity,

Help your kids to understand that wisdom does not come from this world, but

from God. He is the source of wisdom. When they find themselves in need of wisdom they should first turn to the Lord.

3. Teach them to pray for wisdom

Sometimes we lack wisdom simply because we do not ask for it. God can provide all the wisdom you need. Listen to His word.

If anyone lacks wisdom, let him ask of God who gives to all men generously, and without reproach. James 1:5

Rackham Holt wrote an early biography of George Washington Carver, a book which Carver reviewed before his death – the Tuskegee scientist long mused over the problems of science and faith.

Carver “had a little story,” Holt writes, “in which he related his experience of praying about these things. He indicated that he was spending time with the Lord and asked God to explain the universe to him. How and for what was it made? God’s response? That is too much for you to comprehend. What was man made for? What is our purpose?

God’s response? That is too much for you to comprehend.

Then Mr. Creator, will you tell me why the peanut was made?

That’s better,” the Lord said, and beginning that day Carver discovered over 300 uses for the lowly peanut.

There may be some fictional aspects of Carver’s account, but it does illustrate the reality that he asked for and received wisdom from God.

4. Caution them about the power of friendships

This is certainly one of the more important principles of wisdom that we ought to teach our children. But it is often the one most neglected.

He who walks with wise men will be wise, but the companion of fools will be destroyed. Proverbs 13:20

Parents must take the offensive in this, especially in the earlier years. You must help your children select their friends and teach them why you want them to be friends with certain kinds of people.

Paul wrote, *do not be deceived: bad company corrupts good morals.*

Your kid's personal moral standards, the language they use, the things they do will be greatly impacted by the people they are with. It is a rare person who is able to surround himself with godless people without being brought down to their level. That's what negative peer pressure does.

5. Reveal the connection between discipline and wisdom

Proverbs makes this connection clear.

Listen to counsel and accept discipline, that you may be wise the rest of your days. Proverbs 19:20

The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child who gets his own way brings shame to his mother. Proverbs 29:15

Through proper Biblical discipline your children will learn wisdom. It is not something children are born with. It is something learned and developed through the process of being properly trained by Godly parents.

6. Provide illustrations of how to use wisdom

Proverbs is full of illustrations. Read it and talk about them. You can also share illustrations that are more relevant to their own lives. Here are a few.

Young man and lady decide to stop dating each other because the relationship has become too physical. They have crossed the line that they knew was wrong. In order to avoid continuing in sin, they broke it off. After a couple of weeks, he gives her a call just see how she is doing. She is excited to hear from him. They talk about getting together for dinner. He feels a hesitancy but convinces himself that there is nothing wrong with having dinner.

After dinner they go for a drive. She is a little hesitant, but there is nothing wrong with a little drive. End up in a secluded place and park the car. Both feel a little uneasy, but neither say anything. Before they know it, they are engaging in the same sexual activity they determined to avoid.

Their problem was not that they decided to go and have a sexual relationship which they both knew was wrong. They just refused to be wise. Wisdom would have kept them from putting themselves in the position for that to happen. Wisdom would have led them to look down that road and assess the high potential for danger and avoid it early.

Here's another illustration. Picking up a poisonous snake is not wrong. You violate no moral law if you do it. So, what keeps most of us from doing so? Wisdom. We are able to look beyond the simple act of picking up the snake to the highly probable consequences that could be deadly.

Being on a lake during a lightning storm is not wrong. Wisdom

Your kids are going to face some situations that will challenge them. Places they will be invited to go. Things they will be invited to see. Activities they will be invited to do. Not all can be categorized as right or wrong.

Parents, it is our job to make sure that our kids have wisdom when they leave the safety of childhood for the stormy seas of adulthood. Chuck Swindoll summed it up when he wrote ***Home is where life makes up its mind.***

Home's lessons, like belted ammunition, are a series of rapid-fire first impressions that become lasting impressions. We are formed, shaped and steeled for the rest of our lives by home.

Make sure wisdom is one of the things that that is so reinforced in your home that your kids will carry it with them when they ride off into their own adult lives.