

Where did Cain's wicked act spring from? The same place all *our* foolish and wicked acts originate—from the reservoir of our heart, for out of it flow the springs of life, including our actions. This is why wise parents will do their best to check their children's bad attitudes before they flow into bad behaviors. Be alert to their attitudes, then verbally correct \_\_\_\_\_ ones, and verbally encourage \_\_\_\_\_ ones.

An example: If for no good reason your child's angry heart is expressed in his or her face or words, challenge that attitude, checking it with a word of reproof. If it morphs into an action, like a tantrum, or throwing things, or hitting mommy, corrective discipline is absolutely required!

A word about *attitude detection*...

I add a caveat in the book at this point, concerning children who have had life-altering traumatic experiences. That counsel is on pages 33-34.

## Receive the gift of urgency!

*Understand, we don't have time to mess around.* Days and weeks and months and years tick by so very quickly. If I have a gift to give to you today—it's **the gift of urgency**. Time *really is* of the essence.

Scott and Jess: They **received the gift of urgency!**

## Wise Parenting Principles from Proverbs The Gift of Urgency

Proverbs 3 & 4

### Time *really is* of the essence!

I need you to ask yourself these most important questions: *Will your children be ready? Have you done everything humanly possible in the power of Christ to ensure that they are ready when they die?*

In the end, Lindsay discovered that being prepared for death and being prepared for a life of worship and service are one and the same. Because she was prepared in life, she was prepared for eternity.

Lindsay's and Jason's deaths did not teach me to trust in the Lord more, but to trust Him always, in every circumstance—even in the worst of times and circumstances. But what their deaths taught me the most was the urgent need to be prepared. \_\_\_\_\_ was my greatest lesson.

God has given me **the gift of urgency**. How about you? Has the sense of urgency taken root within your heart? Are you ready so that you're teaching your children to be ready?

One of Lindsay's journal entries: "I sometimes think of myself as a pilgrim in a foreign land, traveling through life. Don't waste time." Don't waste time, because *time really is of the essence!*

## Wise Parenting Principles from Proverbs:

1. **Wise parents correct their children through \_\_\_\_\_ (3:11-12).**

Done God's way, discipline is one of the most loving and caring parental things you can do. Look with me at Solomon's wise words to his son in Proverbs 3. Take note that this godly father is teaching his son to submit to both God's and his corrective discipline administered in love.

The word "discipline" speaks of physical correction, while the word "reproof" speaks of verbal correction. Both forms—physical and verbal—must be used in the ministry of correction. God and wise parents use

both in *correcting* the natural wayward bent of their children—the bent to drift off God’s Way, aka as the straight road of wise obedience.

Have you ever wondered what God’s corrective discipline looks like? Our loving Lord disciplines children in their early years primarily through faithful \_\_\_\_\_ who discipline their children God’s way, both verbally and physically. It’s like this: “I love my children just the way they are, but I love them too much to leave them there,” because obedience is not natural to a child. By their very nature, children want their own way. So some of their first words are selfish and defiant.

God, in **Proverbs 22:15**, gives us a universal truth that encompasses all children, even the sweet compliant ones: “Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child.” That means that obedience is a learned behavior that goes against the grain of every child’s sin nature. Consequently, talking, reasoning, and yelling will not accomplish much. With most [not all] children, verbal reproof without physical discipline is almost always ineffective. So with that in mind...

**Wise parents are careful not to be \_\_\_\_\_ verbal in corrective discipline.**

Verbal correction is biblical, so it is appropriate and necessary. However, it is too easy for many parents to overuse verbal correction and underuse disciplinary consequences.

Some parents think that their children can be talked or reasoned out of their inherent foolishness that’s bound up in their hearts. But the rest of **Proverbs 22:15** says, “The rod of discipline will remove it far from him.” Of course, God expects the parent wielding the instrument of correction to be wise and loving, who would never cross the line into abuse. Wise parents who delight in and love their children will take up their full responsibility as wise removers of this stubborn inborn trait—foolishness—and replace it with the wisdom of God’s Word, Will, and Way.

**Wise parents who correct their children through discipline are \_\_\_\_\_.**

They look down the road to the time when their children will be adults, and picture in their mind’s eye what they desire their kids to become

inside and out. Then they set their hearts on shaping the lives of their children to be like Jesus, knowing that consistently correcting their course in love is critical to reaching that goal, so that when they die way down the road, **they will be ready!**

**2. Wise parents correct their children’s \_\_\_\_\_ (4:20-23).**

The *heart* refers to a person’s whole inner being. It is the well from which attitudes form and spring forth into actions. What’s in a person’s heart, determines the direction of that person’s life. And an attitude, whether good or bad, reflects the makeup of the person’s inner being. Therefore, since the heart is the source from which all of life springs up—thoughts, attitudes, words, choices, and conduct—Solomon instructed his son to watch over his heart with all vigilance.

*It is most important to understand that behind every behavior is an \_\_\_\_\_ of the heart.* The attitude shows up most readily on children’s faces, body language, tone of voice. For example, what’s behind the pouty face, or the defiant crossed arms, or the angry expressions is more important than the behavior itself. We could rightly call the attitude of the heart the \_\_\_\_\_ of the behavior. Consequently, I’ve long been convinced that correcting the misbehavior without addressing the wrong attitude, is a parental trap too many have fallen into.

**Genesis 4** shows us exactly how harmful a bad attitude can be and how it should be strongly addressed. Cain’s anger toward God and his jealousy toward his brother Abel stemmed from an attitude of the heart. **Verse 5** says, “Cain became very angry and his countenance fell.” This means his posture and facial expressions reflected the attitude of his heart. But God, in His marvelous grace, came to Cain to reprove and correct his attitude: “Then the LORD said to Cain, ‘Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen?’” (6).

God saw in Cain’s countenance the attitude of his heart, and He made it crystal clear that Cain was not justified in his anger or jealousy. God then continued in **verse 7**: “If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it.” If Cain would have done well, he would have received the rebuke of God and would have made the right decision to change the attitude of his heart.