

GLAD TIDINGS

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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PRUDENCE FOR THE SIMPLE

By: Jerry Fite

Parents, no doubt, remember the time when they huddled over their little four pronged crawler, or shaky toddler making sure the little one did not wander off into danger and harm. As our children grow, we set boundaries for their protection, and lovingly discipline them when the boundaries are crossed.

As these precious children continue into adolescence, they want to spread their wings over new endeavors and activities. As parents, we cannot huddle over them like we once did every moment of their day. What can a parent do during these anxious times to help ensure that the children are not heading for trouble and destruction?

We can instill in them something the Bible calls, “*prudence*”. We can direct them to, and instruct them in the rich material contained in the inspired Book of Proverbs. These wise sayings were given to bridge the gap from inexperienced youth to circumspective maturity, passing over the harmful flood waters of foolish decisions. “*The proverbs of Solomon, the son of David, king*

of Israel...to give prudence to the simple, To the young man knowledge and discretion.” (Proverbs 1:4).

God does not refer to the simple as those who are not intelligent, but as inexperienced. A highly intelligent youth is still simple for he or she has not had the experiences in life to be aware of the pitfalls that lie around them. “*A prudent man seeth the evil, and hideth himself; but the simple pass on, and suffer for it” (Proverbs 22:3).*

The word “prudence” in the Hebrew emphasizes *subtlety, wilily*, or one even possessing *crafty counsel*. It is like one being all greased up with oil, enabling the body to squeeze through troublesome spots without harm. Let us look at the potential harm our young people can fall prey to when we are not right there to guide them, and how a mind exercised in divine prudence can protect them.

Young people tend to be naïve as to what people tell them: “*The simple believeth every word; But the prudent man looketh well to his going” (Proverbs 14:15).* There comes a time when a young

person hears, drink this, it will make you feel better; or smoke this, it will make you think clearer. Prudence can overcome this type of shallow reasoning, by causing the inexperienced youth to focus on the latter end of these destructive actions and avoid their harmful consequences (*cf. Prov.23*).

The sexual desires of youth are naturally strong. The seventh chapter of Proverbs tells the story of one of the youthful simple ones passing by the strange woman’s house. As the story unfolds, prudence tells us this was a fatal mistake. For after he and she meet, she lures him one seductive step at a time, stripping him of any fear, while flattering him with her words. His head spins with delight as he smells the fragrance of her couch. He is a goner! “*He goeth after her straight-way, as an ox goeth to the slaughter” (Proverbs 7:22).*

Parents, young people equipped with God’s Word will be able to add prudence to your directives. They will be able to see the end from the beginning and avoid many sorrows.