Glad Tidings

"And we bring you good of the promise made unto the fathers…" (Acts 13:32)

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Prudence For The Simple

(Jerry Fite)

Parents remember, or are currently experiencing the times huddled over their little four-pronged crawler, or shaky toddler making sure the little one does 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 the children are not heading for unforeseen trouble and consequential 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 are 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 young person 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, being wilily, or 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 naive regarding 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 look cool, or think clearer." Prudence can overcome such enticing rhetoric by causing the inexperienced youth to focus on the latter end of these destructive actions. *"Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it sparkleth in the cup, when it goeth down smoothly; at the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder." (Proverbs 23:31-32).* Following God's wise instructions, the simple can avoid the painful consequences.

The sexual desires in our adolescent youth are naturally strong. The seventh chapter of Proverbs tells the story of a young "simple one" passing by the strange woman's house. As the story unfolds, prudence tells us this was a fatal mistake. The woman lures him with one seductive step at a time, stripping him of any fear, while flattering him with her captivating words. His head spins with delight as he anticipates the fragrance of her couch. He is a goner! *"He goeth after her straightway, as an ox goeteh to the slaughter" (Proverbs 7:22).*

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