



# Parents Have It, You Need It, Come Get It!

By Rod Arters

*The book of Proverbs is nestled in the middle of a series of smaller books in the Old Testament often called Wisdom Literature; Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and the Song of Solomon. Of the five books, we know that Solomon, the King of Israel, penned the last three. This is fitting since the Bible records Solomon as having “very great discernment and breadth of mind, like the sand that is on the seashore . . . surpassing the wisdom of all the sons of the east and all the wisdom of Egypt” (I Kings 4:29-31).*

**I**n I Kings chapter 3, God asked Solomon a most unbelievable question. In fact, it was not just a question but an offer; “Ask what you wish Me to give you” (I Kings 3:5). What a question! Like a Genie in a bottle, God asked Solomon what he desired. Unlike us, Solomon did not ask for more wishes. He did not even ask for money or fame or more land. He simply asked for “an understanding heart” (3:9). Clearly, Solomon desired wisdom from the Source of all wisdom.

Solomon knew, as the new King of Israel, of all the things for which he could have asked, what he needed most was wisdom. Of all that might be available, what was most important to him was the ability to understand since “I am but a little child, I do not know how to go out or come in (3:7).

The 31 chapters of Proverbs seem to be written to Solomon’s children for one purpose; “to know wisdom and instruction, to discern the sayings of understanding, to receive instruction in wise behavior, righteousness, justice and equity; to give prudence to the naive, to the youth knowledge and discretion . . . to understand a proverb and a figure, the words of the wise and their riddles” (1-7). Throughout the first seven chapters, Solomon repeats the phrase, “Hear, my son, your father’s instruction and do not forsake your mother’s teaching” (1:8, 2:1-2, 3:1, 4:1-13, 5:1-2, 6:20-23, 7:1-4).

So, young person, how about you? Have you ever asked God for wisdom? James 1:5 tells us that “If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him” (NIV). Since we all lack wisdom, we should be asking God for some. And since it is the one request God promises to grant, we all ought to be asking regularly. In fact, I often add the “give me wisdom” request when I pray—even when I say “grace” over a meal. Why? Because I know God will answer and I know I need it.

And though God is the Source of wisdom and we certainly should ask Him for it, there are others close to you who possesses wisdom; your parents. When Solomon was imploring his children to seek his wisdom, he did not implore them to do so because he was crowned the wisest man. No, in fact, he begs his children to listen to him simply because he is “Dad.” Below are four reasons why your parents are a great source of wisdom from which you can benefit.

**They are wiser than you.** Though they may not possess the wisdom of Solomon, they certainly are wiser than you. Glean from their wisdom. Learn all you can while you can. It would be a shame to not take full advantage of all they could teach you. Having lost my father when I was five, I certainly wish I had access to his wisdom today.

**They are older than you.** Simply having lived 20 to 30 years before you came along means they have decades of experience with this thing called "Life." Do anything for 20 or 30 years and you will acquire wisdom on that subject. Do not forget the number of years that separates you from your parents. Though you may "feel" you know a lot, you actually know quite little in comparison.

**They have made more mistakes than you.** Sinful choices often breed wisdom. Since your parents have a big head start in regard to mistakes, they also have the same lead in regard to wisdom. All parents have made choices they deeply regret, so nothing would please your parents more than to see their own children avoid the same traps. Learn from their mistakes so you do not have to make them.

**They are invested.** No one has invested more in you (or loves you more) than your parents. Consider the investment they have made in you so far. Who sustained you when you could not sustain yourself? Who taught you how to walk and talk? Who has assisted you with homework night after night so that you might get the grade that will get the diploma that will get the job that will allow you to make the income to become a contributing member of society? It reportedly costs over \$200,000 to raise a child from birth to 18 years of age. Consider that investment. The next time you ask your parents for \$20 and they say, "no," remember they have already given you much more than that.

Begin today to seek wisdom. "Keep your father's word and treasure mom's commandments within you. Keep their commandments and live . . . bind them on your fingers and write them on the tablet of your heart. Say to wisdom, 'You are my sister' and call understanding your intimate friend" (7:1-4). Although everyone needs wisdom, youth need it more since their lack of experience deprives them of it. Ask God for it often and learn it from your parents.

What might God do with a generation of youth who are wise beyond their years? Let's find out!

*All Scripture is from the New American Standard Bible (NASB) unless otherwise noted. For more information about Rod Arters, or to read other articles written by him, please visit [www.rodarters.com](http://www.rodarters.com).*

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