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Parent-Child Relationships

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Parent-Child Relationships

Listen, my child, to the instruction from your father, and do not forsake the teaching from your mother. For they will be like an elegant garland on your head, and like pendants around your neck.
(Proverbs 1:8-9)

Solomon outlines a contract of sorts, giving responsibilities to both parents and their children. Parents are to model integrity through their actions in the home because children learn value systems largely through observation of their parents' actions and reactions on a daily basis. Parents are expected to teach their children and to give them guidelines for life (Proverbs 1:1-9). Parents are also to school their children in the process of decision-making: through gentle and loving guidance, rather than heavy-handed authoritarianism, parents can help children avoid the consequences of poor decisions and commitments.

In addition to teaching children the basics of daily living, the home provides the context to teach children about God. This religious education is to be life-oriented, with children taught to see God in every single aspect of life.

Throughout Proverbs, we see the parent and child as a loving unit, such that parents are not to be overly demanding, unfair, or cruel in their discipline. Discipline is for the betterment and growth of children, not to promote their anger or frustration.

Solomon also outlines expectations for children. Children are to honor their parents, showing them lifelong respect. The wise child brings peace and great joy to his parents but the foolish child brings shame, disgrace, and grief.

Do you have a healthy relationship with your parents/children? Have you forgiven your parents for their conscious and unconscious failures? What are you doing specifically to not repeat the mistakes of the past? Are you taking responsibility for your own actions or are you still blaming a "suboptimal" parent-child relationship? Are love and respect the bases for your relationships with your parents? Your children?