

HONORING DEPENDENT PARENTS

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Session 2

Honor as Respect: Heeding

Passages: from Proverbs (after setup from Proverbs 6:16–19)

In groups of 2 or 3, as assigned by set LETTER:

Set A:

Proverbs 1:7–8
Proverbs 6:20–24
Proverbs 13:1
Proverbs 28:7

Set B:

Proverbs 4:1
Proverbs 8:32
Proverbs 15:5
Proverbs 23:22–25

Set C:

Proverbs 6:20–24
Proverbs 7:34
Proverbs 10:5
Proverbs 29:15

Class observations about mothers, fathers, and children from these verses:

- Proverbs is a book of instructions from parents to children.
 - Proverbs 1-9 is a single poem, a prologue that is the key to understanding the aphorisms in 10-31.
 - The prologue draws a vivid contrast between two women: Wisdom and Folly
 - The aphorisms center on a handful of important lessons (warnings and admonitions) about how the world works.
 - Worldly wisdom and godly wisdom overlap
- *Heeding* our parents is a common theme
 - Both parents equally – unique to the Bible
 - Gratitude is a bonus, not the basis

Principle #1: We honor our dependent parents by making the choices for them about the use of their own resources (time, energy, opportunities, reputation, property, money, relationships, and so on) that they would make if their decision-making powers were restored.

- Advancing the values and priorities they espoused and exhibited when making decisions independently and confidently;
- Among the options permitted by God's Word; and
- Choosing the most righteous (or least foolish) option they would recognize as they would choose if they could think the choice through clearly and confidently; and

- Heeding their considered judgment (what they would choose if their powers were restored) about biblically permissible risk tolerance.

Case Study #2 (Workbook #4): Edith and Grant¹

Grant is 38 years old and the pastor of a small church. He and his wife, Tessa, have three sons (13, 10, and 8). Grant's only living blood relative is his paternal grandmother, Edith (91). Edith lives in a nice assisted living facility that she can afford out of her own savings. She is physically frail, and apart from occasionally losing track of what she is doing, she is mentally sharp.

"Losing track" had not been a serious problem, but recently Edith fell and broke her hip, requiring surgery. Her doctors have warned her that if she falls again before recovering from the surgery, the injury could be fatal. Since the fall, Edith is even more likely to "lose track" of what she is doing. In particular, she is liable to forget that she should not try to stand up and walk. The only way to be sure that she will not hurt herself is for her to have a full time "sitter" who can remind her to stay down any time she tries to rise.

Edith cannot afford to pay for a full-time sitter. Her own resources are sufficient for her to stay where she lives for the rest of her life, but she cannot afford more. Grant and Tessa have been saving for their own retirement and their children's college education, and it occurred to Tessa that the money might be used to provide Edith with a full-time sitter. Grant and Tessa regularly take the boys to visit Edith in the assisted living facility, and they are all concerned about the danger she now faces. During their last visit, they tried to talk to Edith about it. To their dismay, they discovered that the pain medication Edith is taking makes it hard for her to follow the details of a conversation. They had hoped to ask her what she would want them to do, but she is not able to understand their questions.

Together in groups of three or four, discuss

How should Grant and Tessa (and their boys) honor Edith in this difficult situation?

- Is Grant obligated to take money from savings to protect Edith?
- If Edith falls and dies (without a sitter), did Grant kill her?

Homework (and for discussion next week, also in the Workbook):

5. Nina is 83 years old and lives in a nursing home. Her husband, Roger, died four years ago. They had been married for 55 years, and Nina was devoted to Roger. Nina's memory is failing. She sometimes recognizes her children, but she cannot answer questions about her husband or their life together. Recently, Nina has been spending a lot of time with another resident of the nursing home named Robert. Nina didn't object when Robert started holding her hand or kissing her on the cheek. Staff members have heard her say, "I've missed you, Roger" to Robert. Robert does not have memory issues, and he is interested in more physical intimacy. Nina's children recently saw

¹ This case study is discussed in detail in Davis, *Honoring Dependent Parents* (P&R, 2026), 88–90.

Robert kissing their mother. **What would you want your children to do if you were Nina (and why)?**

6. Stewart is 81 years old and still physically strong. Stewart lost his wife, Zena, six months ago. Stewart and Zena had a close relationship. Their children agreed that Zena was the only person Stewart would allow to correct her. And she did it often. Since Zena died, Stewart has been spending money on strange things. He bought riding lawn mower even though his yard has no grass. He purchased a ten-year supply of dried food and a generator “just in case.” Stewart’s children have never understood their parents’ financial situation, and this spending seems crazy. When they tried to ask Stewart about it, he calmly said, “It is none of your business” and firmly changed the subject. **What would you want your children to do if you were Stewart (and why)?**

Please send questions or suggestions to Bill Davis at bill.davis@covenant.edu.