

“My Son, Give Me Your Heart...”

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Proverbs 23

Proverbs 23:26 is the plea of a father to his son. Parents must provide for their children. They guide and protect them. They train and teach them. Then comes the day when they must persuade them. They just can't give orders anymore. Somewhere in this process, parents hopefully learn to pray and give their children to God.

Proverbs 23:26 may also be applied to us as the voice of the heavenly father calling us, as His children, to submit our hearts willingly to Him. It is this application that will be the goal of this study.

How does Proverbs 23 teach us to give our heart to God?

Proverbs 23:1-9 First, a warning about the hearts of men.

You need discernment about the hearts of men (including your own). Only God can give it to you. See I Samuel 16:7; Jeremiah 17:9-10.

Proverbs 23:10-11 Second, a warning about God's heart

You need discernment about God's heart. If you seek His heart, you'll find that He has a special love for people that are simple (pure-hearted), poor (humble) and that fear Him (love and respect Him). See Jeremiah 9:23-24 (I Corinthians 1:26-31); Isaiah 66:1-2; Micah 6:6-8.

Proverbs 23:12,19 Teach and guide your heart.

Knowledge alone will not do. There must be continual follow-through: self-examination and self-correction. Consider Proverbs 4:23-27

- Keep your heart – Proverbs 4:23.
- Guard your mouth – Proverbs 4:24.
- Guide your eyes – Proverbs 4:25
- Give thought about your actions – Proverbs 4:26-27 cp. Psalm 119:59

Proverbs 23:13-16 Train and teach your children's hearts.

Before they can learn much, children need to be trained to respect authority and follow godly rules. There needs to be consequences for disobedience and disrespect. Consistent, orderly and loving discipline at an early age will spare the child enormous and devastating consequences when they are adults. “The rod” is referring to a small flexible switch which will inflict pain, but it will not cause injury. See Proverbs 13:24; 22:15; 29:15 cp. 10:13; 26:3. Also consider Proverbs 4:1-9; Ephesians 6:4; II Timothy 1:5; 3:15.

Proverbs 23:17-18 The heart must not envy the sinful enemies of the Lord.

We cannot be friends with the world and with God. We cannot serve two masters. See Proverbs 24:1-2; Psalm 1:1-3; Matthew 6:24; James 4:4. Consider also Romans 5:6-10.

Proverbs 23:19-35 Areas in which we should guide our heart in the way.

Proverbs 23:20-21, 29-35. Beware and avoid the drinking culture: drunkenness, gluttony, revelry and disorder. See Proverbs 20:1; Hosea 4:11; Isaiah 28:7-8; I Peter 4:1-5.

Proverbs 23:22, 24-26. Honor parents and care for family relationships/values. See Exodus 20:12-17; Malachi 4:5-6; Ephesians 5:1 – 6:9.

Proverbs 23:23. Invest your life in timeless, absolute truth. Don't sell out for earthly wealth, pleasure or popularity. See Proverbs 1:1-9; 2:1-22; 4:5-9.

Proverbs 23:26-28. Beware and avoid whoredom, fornication and adultery. Flee them (II Timothy 2:22). Do not entertain yourself with the idea. See Proverbs chapters 5-7; Matthew 5:27-30; Hebrews 13:4; II Peter 2:14 (cp. vs. 9-22).

How do you give your heart to God?

Proverbs 23:26; Deuteronomy 6:4-5; Psalm 27:4,8; 105:4; 119:1-2; Isaiah 55:6-7

- Believe on His Son, Jesus Christ – John 5:24; 6:27-29; 14:1-6; Romans 10:9-13; I Timothy 2:5-6.
- Listen to God attentively through His Word – Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Psalm 56:4,10; 138:2.
- Seek God's heart, not just His hand-outs – Psalm 27:8; 105:4; 119:1-11. Seek to please Him (Hebrews 11:6; Philippians 4:6-9).
- Yield your heart so that God can use it to love others – Romans 13:8; II Corinthians 5:14-15; Colossians 3:12-15; I John 3:16; 4:16; 5:1-3.
- Make God your greatest treasure. Satisfy yourself with Him – Psalm 16:11; 37:4; 73:25-26; Colossians 3:1-2; Matthew 6:19-24
- Keep your desire pure (unmixed with singleness of heart and mind) – Matthew 5:8; James 1:8; 4:1-10.