

**Text: Proverbs 13:22**

**Title: “Street Smarts ... For Your Legacy”**

Let's open our Bibles to Proverbs 13:22. While you're turning I'll just say that I'm looking forward to our PraiSingers leading us in worship tonight in the presentation of “Alleluia.” We have a multi-generational church. It's a blessing, not a curse. I hope you'll be here to support our seniors, but more importantly, to worship with them. **Read Proverbs 13:22.**

The book of Proverbs contains “Street Smarts” for living the life of wisdom and the life that honors God in every season of life. Today we'll discover “Street Smarts ... For Your Legacy.” This proverb talks about someone making a multi-generational impact ... on their children and on their children's children. Look at the verse again.

**Proverbs 13:22 - A good man leaves an inheritance for his children's children, but a sinner's wealth is stored up for the righteous.**

A “good man” is a person who is right, just and fair. He's/she's the opposite of the “sinner” referred to later in the verse. This good man leaves an inheritance, that is his possessions and wealth will endure to be divided among his/her children. We're talking here about making a multi-generational impact. The challenge is...

**We should all be concerned about living and leaving a legacy.**

While this proverb is not addressed specifically to those of us in the senior years of life, I can't think of a more important time to be concerned with my legacy than in the latter years of life. And the Proverbs have a lot to say *to* people and *about* people with gray hair. What is our biblical responsibility toward our elders ... parents, grandparents and seniors in general? Proverbs says to...

## **HONOR OUR ELDERS**

**ILLUSTRATION** – I heard about a senior adult lady who was carefully driving through a parking lot looking for a place to park. She found a spot and started to pull into the space when suddenly a young man in sports car darted in front of her and took her parking space. He jumped out of his car, winked at the lady and said, “That's what you can do when you're young and fast.” As he was walking toward the store he heard the sound of crunching metal and breaking glass. He turned around to see the senior lady ramming his sports car with her big sedan. He ran to the car and knocked on her window, shouting “What are you doing, lady?” She rolled down her window and calmly replied, “Sonny, that's what you can do when you're old and rich.”

We should honor our elders.

**Proverbs 15:20 - A wise son brings joy to his father, but a foolish man despises his mother.**

This is a basic value in the heart of God. The fifth of the Ten Commandments says that we are to honor our father and our mother.

**Proverbs 16:31a - Gray hair is a crown of splendor...**

**Proverbs 17:6 - Children's children are a crown to the aged, and parents are the pride of their children.**

Notice here that there are three generations acknowledged ... grandparents, parents and children. And there is mutual respect. We should honor our elders, but also we should...

## **HELP OUR ELDERS**

**Proverbs 19:26 - He who robs his father and drives out his mother is a son who brings shame and disgrace.**

One of the best ways to honor our elders is to help them. It's a disgraceful culture that neglects the elderly. They should not be taken advantage of or ignored. And then we are to...

## **HEED OUR ELDERS**

**Proverbs 23:22 - Listen to your father, who gave you life, and do not despise your mother when she is old.**

Our elders have wisdom that we should heed. Seek their counsel. Ask for their advice. So we are to honor, help and heed our elders.

But the other side of the coin is that elders should be concerned about living and leaving a legacy of faithfulness of God. Often when we think about leaving an inheritance, it's something that is left after a person dies. What we're talking about today is what you're leaving to the next generation as you live. Often seniors become self-centered in the later years of life. But the "good" man or woman is thinking about those who will come after them. Certainly we think about our own family who will come after us, but as Christ-followers we have to think about the good of future generations in the church.

**ILLUSTRATION** – I ran track in high school and I was on different relay teams. We spent hours every week practicing the handoff. It doesn't matter how fast you run your leg of the race if you don't hand off the baton well. We have to run our race well, and but then the handoff is so important. So let's talk about...

## **STREET SMARTS FOR LIVING AND LEAVING A LEGACY:**

### **1. LEAVE A LEGACY WITH YOUR WEALTH.**

This is the most immediate application to this verse.

### **Proverbs 13:22a - A good man leaves an inheritance for his children's children...**

The assumption is that the good and righteous man will be blessed by God so that he or she will be able to leave an inheritance for their children.

### **Proverbs 19:14a - Houses and wealth are inherited from parents...**

Circumstances of life may not afford you much wealth. You may have something tangible to leave your loved ones or you may not. Certainly following the biblical wisdom found in Proverbs and other places about earning, spending, saving and giving will be blessed by the Lord.

Here's something else to think about. If the Lord blesses you and you have wealth to pass along to your children and grandchildren, have you trained them to use that wealth the way you would use that wealth. Remember we talked about Proverbs 3:9 that says we are to honor the Lord with our wealth. Will your children do that? If not, it may not be wise to hand off a lot of wealth to children who will squander it and not use it to glorify God. We're not just leaving a financial inheritance ... we're living and leaving a legacy.

## **2. LEAVE A LEGACY WITH YOUR WALK.**

*Leaving* a legacy starts with *living* a legacy. What kind of man or woman leaves an inheritance (legacy) to their children? Proverbs 13:22 speaks of a "good man" who is righteous. The opposite would be the "sinner" ... the one who misses the mark.

### **Proverbs 22:1 - A good name is more desirable than great riches; to be esteemed is better than silver or gold.**

Are you passing along to the next generation a "good name" and an esteemed name? That's more important than any wealth you can pass along.

**ILLUSTRATION** - I heard about a man who was on a city bus going to an appointment. Traffic was heavy and the bus was behind schedule and this guy became very impatient. He was so mad that he began to complain and use profanity. When he finally arrived at his stop and got off the bus, the bus driver said, "Sir, you left something behind." The man turned to look back to see if he had left his briefcase. The bus driver said, "No, sir, you left behind a bad impression." What kind of impression are you leaving for those who are watching you?

A big part of living and leaving a legacy is intercession for the generations to come. Our prayer life is a powerful way to invest in the future. Our prayer for our children and grandchildren may

not be answered in our lifetime. But the Bible teaches that the fervent prayer of a righteous man accomplishes much.

**Proverbs 15:29 - The LORD is far from the wicked but he hears the prayer of the righteous.**

The New Testament teaches the valuable role that seniors play in the life of the church. In fact, let's look at it together. Turn to Titus 2:2-5. Paul wrote to his pastor friend Titus about the role of seniors in the church. **Read Titus 2:2-5.**

So the walk or lifestyle of older men and women allows them the standing to instruct younger men and women. That leads me to the next way to leave a legacy.

### **3. LEAVE A LEGACY WITH YOUR WISDOM.**

Proverbs is part of the wisdom literature of the Bible that also includes Job and Ecclesiastes, along with Psalms and the Song of Solomon.

**Ecclesiastes 7:10 - Do not say, "Why were the old days better than these?" For it is not wise to ask such questions.**

**Ecclesiastes 7:11 - Wisdom, like an inheritance, is a good thing and benefits those who see the sun.**

Are we speaking words of wisdom, or do they just hear us complaining? We have some of the most positive and forward thinking seniors in our church, and they inspire me. With their deteriorating health and other things happening to them, they could easily be self-centered, but instead their lips are loaded with wisdom. I love that. So leave a legacy with your wisdom.

### **4. LEAVE A LEGACY WITH YOUR WITNESS.**

I'm not talking about just preaching to or lecturing your kids or grandkids. That may not be the best way to pass your faith to the next generation. In fact, the biblical times the elderly told stories. They told of the trials they endured and how God was faithful to deliver them. Do your children or grandchildren know how you came to know the Lord? Tell them the story of how Jesus saved you.

**Psalm 71:18 - Even when I am old and gray, do not forsake me, O God, till I declare your power to the next generation, your might to all who are to come.**

And it's never too late. Maybe your relationship with your kids or grandkids isn't all that great. Some of you know the heartbreak of children who don't want anything to do with you. Never stop loving them and praying for them. Maybe reconciliation needs to happen. You can be the

one who starts the process by saying, “I’m sorry our relationship isn’t what it should and could be. Forgive me. I forgive you. Let’s start new.” That’s the love of Jesus.

**ILLUSTRATION** – I recently heard a Christian university president talk about this matter of living and leaving a legacy. He talked about the virtues we want in life. There are basically two kinds of virtues ... *resume* virtues and *eulogy* virtues. Resume virtues are just that ... things you would put on your resume to show others what you’ve accomplished in your life. Eulogy virtues are what your loved ones talk about at your funeral that have to do with your character, compassion and faithfulness to God. That’s what we’re after. So...

**Proverbs 13:22a - A good man leaves an inheritance for his children’s children...**

The best thing we can do for others is to live the Gospel ... pass Jesus to the next generations. In fact, Jesus is our example in this. He left an inheritance for us.

**2 Corinthians 8:9 - For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.**

Jesus was rich. He was there in the presence of the Father before time began. He possessed all the riches of the glory of God because He was and is God. But the Father saw our peril and our poverty because of our sin. He saw that as sinners we deserved judgment and to be separated from God for eternity. So the One who was rich, Jesus, became poor. That is, Jesus stepped out of the glory of heaven and came to this earth, taking upon Himself a human body. He lived a sinless life perfectly satisfying the righteous demands of God’s law. Then Jesus went to the Cross to suffer and die for the penalty for our sins. He became poor ... He gave everything ... so that we might become rich in the love and fullness of God.

Live the Gospel and leave a legacy to the people who come after you.