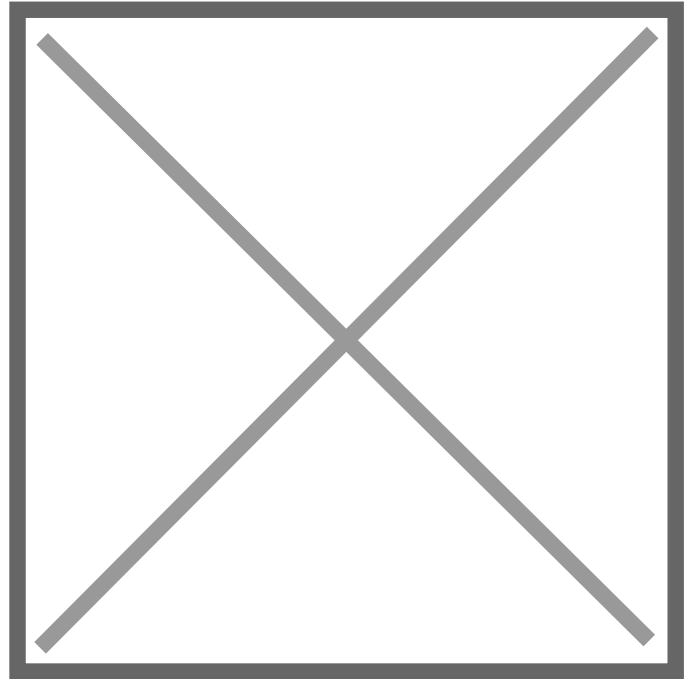


Father knows best

Sharper Focus

by Victor Leslie, Major –

Proverbs was "...written down so we'll know how to live well and right, to understand what life means and where it's going; a manual for living, for learning what's right and just and fair; to teach the inexperienced the ropes, and give our young people a grasp on reality" (Proverbs 1: 2-4 The Message).



God has blessed us with two daughters who are absolute gems. Now, our oldest daughter is leaving home, armed with a multiple subject teaching credential, ready to teach the "inexperienced the ropes." This time, the transition is a bit emotional and tears flow as we pray together and trust God to help her navigate the challenges that come with being a new "head of household." Teaching school is important, but she acknowledges that life's principles are not necessarily learned in school. She thanks us for providing a sure foundation to help guide and provide the under girding of her decision-making. I cheer her on and dedicate some fresh wisdom to her. An apprentice must ultimately break from the master and steer their own course, and leaving home does not include a universal zip-connect retractable cable to parents. So many things to say! With her in mind, and all those who stand at the water's edge, I share some simple truths and hope that they will act as a compass for the soul.

Start with God: You have heard it so many times – God is the Creator, Provider and Governor of all things (Nehemiah 9:6). He knows best. So love God, worship God and trust God. He is your refuge and strength, a very present help.

Crystallize your values: Create your life, relationships, and world in harmony with them. Being clear on your values will keep you anchored with who you want to become as both a human and spiritual being. Read Philippians 4:8.

Be a "peacock among penguins": Do not become for other people what they need or want you to be. You are who you are with your original herbs and spices, so never lose yourself through fear of the judgments of others. Like a Lego ® block, your product will undergo extensive development over the years, but the foundational "you" must remain.

Treasure your freedom: You were born free, so live free and die free. Remember that freedom is not independence from all authority and all commitments, or doing what you want. Rather, true freedom allows you to choose between good and evil and to align yourself with what is loving, true, and beautiful.

Lift up others: You were not born just for yourself but also to enhance the lives of others. In a global society we must work together to ensure survival, equality and sanctity of all people. Make the best of your time on earth by helping others.

Diet-food is not a solution: Take care of your health. Rigorously guard your physical, emotional, mental and spiritual well being.

Laugh a lot, live a little ... longer: Use your sense of humor, share your unique giggle, allow yourself freedom to express your uniqueness and laugh with life.

You are responsible: To grow in understanding of yourself, your personal calling and life's real purpose; for your choices and actions; to be courageous and enthusiastic, to be loyal and determined, to show integrity and live justly.

End with God: Live according to a rhythm and purpose. Be full of excitement and hope, for with God, the world becomes a playground. Enjoy the hidden horizons and spiritual experiences. As you are mapping the days ahead, allow God to use the ordinary everyday experiences to shape your creed and bring color, beauty and value to life's sacred journey.

Everything we taught our daughters was with the future in mind. Now the future has begun! Capture each moment in time and reflect on the pictures. Stay forever young and "pay close attention, to what your father tells you; never forget what you learned at your mother's knee. Wear their counsel like flowers in your hair, like rings on your fingers" (Proverbs 1: 8, 9 The Message).

Keep in touch with your Father's values. God bless.