

Dear Heavenly Father,

Praise

The depths of your knowledge and understanding are revealed in Solomon's proverbs in a unique way. If I could sit down and talk with you about life and living, these are the thoughts you would share with me. The more I meditate on your words, the more I marvel at your greatness! I worship you today and praise your name!

Today in Your Word

Today you told me more of Solomon's proverbs. One of the themes that is repeated throughout the book of Proverbs is the importance of disciplining children: "Whoever spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is diligent to discipline him" (Prov 13:24). Solomon linked *love* with "discipline," and *hate* with "sparing the rod." By this definition, many parents *hate* their children. What a sobering thought! This teaches me that a loving parent cares deeply about developing godly character in their children. A loving parent understands that negative behavior patterns that start small will have devastating long-term consequences. A loving parent realizes that although it takes hard work and diligence to discipline a child, it is vital to their future success. When I think about this proverb, I can't help but remember what you told me about Eli's sons. He scolded his sons, but he did not discipline them or remove them from service (1 Sam 2:22–36). If I coddle my children and excuse their sin, I am setting the stage for their destruction.

Reflection

When I think about how wise Solomon was, I sometimes imagine him as completely self-sufficient, needing no one. But actually the opposite was true. Solomon himself said, "The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but a wise man listens to advice" (Prov 12:15). If Israel's wisest king was willing to hear the counsel of others, how can I do any less?

Request

Father, you said, "Where there are no oxen, the manger is clean, but abundant crops come by the strength of the ox" (Prov 14:4). This means that if I'm only focused on keeping my life calm and care-free, I will miss out on the benefits that come from having people in my life who mess up my manger. Help me see past my frustration – to the great gain that comes from investing in others.

Thanksgiving

Thank you for encouraging me with the certainty that self-denial and righteous living is never in vain, for "the evil bow down before the good, the wicked at the gates of the righteous" (Prov 14:19). I'm sure Joseph's brothers would agree this proverb!

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Suggested Hymn: "O Wonderful Word!" – Frances J. Crosby.

Meditation Verse: Proverbs 13:1.