

# *How to Make Life Work*



WISDOM FROM PROVERBS

# The **Father Absence Crisis** in **America**

**17.8**

**Million Children, Nearly 1 in 4, Without a Biological, Step, or Adoptive Father at Home<sup>1</sup>**

**Research shows<sup>2</sup> when a child is raised in a father-absent home, they are affected in the following ways...**



- ⊖ **Greater Risk of Poverty**
- ⊖ **More Likely to Have Behavioral Problems**
- ⊖ **Greater Risk of Infant Mortality**
- ⊖ **More Likely to Go to Prison**
- ⊖ **More Likely to Commit Crime**
- ⊖ **More Likely to Become Pregnant as a Teen**
- ⊖ **More Likely to Face Abuse and Neglect**
- ⊖ **More Likely to Abuse Drugs and Alcohol**
- ⊖ **More Likely to Suffer Obesity**
- ⊖ **More Likely to Drop Out of School**

**National  
Fatherhood  
Initiative<sup>®</sup>**

[www.fatherhood.org](http://www.fatherhood.org)

<sup>1</sup>U.S. Census Bureau. (2023). Living arrangements of children under 18 years old: 1960 to present. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Census Bureau.

<sup>2</sup>National Fatherhood Initiative<sup>®</sup> 2024. *Father Facts: Ninth Edition*. Germantown, MD: National Fatherhood Initiative<sup>®</sup>.

# The **Strengths** of **Father Presence**

Children with involved fathers  
have a **strong foundation**  
for **child well-being**.



They are at **lower risk**  
for a host of **poor**  
**childhood outcomes**.



- ✓ Infant Mortality
- ✓ Low Birth Weight
- ✓ Emotional and Behavioral Problems
- ✓ Neglect and Abuse
- ✓ Injury
- ✓ Obesity
- ✓ Poor School Performance
- ✓ Teen Pregnancy
- ✓ Incarceration as Juveniles
- ✓ Alcohol and Substance Abuse
- ✓ Criminal Activity
- ✓ Suicide

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Source: National Fatherhood Initiative® 2024.  
*Father Facts: Ninth Edition*. Germantown, MD:  
National Fatherhood Initiative®.

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# Some qualifiers for this message

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- Proverbs assumes the healthy family structure that lay at the heart of covenant obedience in ancient Israel.



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- Proverbs assumes the healthy family structure that lay at the heart of covenant obedience in ancient Israel.
- In fallen world, especially today, that ideal is rare.
- Proverbs provides wisdom, not guarantees



TYNDALE OLD TESTAMENT  
COMMENTARIES

TOTC

# PROVERBS



DEREK KIDNER

“Many are the reminders... that even the best training cannot instill wisdom, but only encourage the choice to seek it... A son may be too opinionated to learn (13:1; cf. 17:21). A good home may produce an idler (10:5) or a profligate (29:3): he may rebel enough to despise (15:20), mock (30:17) or curse (30:11; 20:20) his parents; heartless enough to run through their money (28:24), and even to turn a widow mother out of doors (19:26).”

# Proverbs 4:1-4 (NIV)

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Listen, my sons, to a father's instruction;  
pay attention and gain understanding.

<sup>2</sup> I give you sound learning,  
so do not forsake my teaching.

<sup>3</sup> For I too was a son to my father,  
still tender, and cherished by my mother.

<sup>4</sup> Then he taught me, and he said to me,  
"Take hold of my words with all your heart;  
keep my commands, and you will live.





# Proverbs 4:10-13 (NIV)

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<sup>10</sup> Listen, my son, accept what I say,  
and the years of your life will be many.

<sup>11</sup> I instruct you in the way of wisdom  
and lead you along straight paths.

<sup>12</sup> When you walk, your steps will not be hampered;  
when you run, you will not stumble.

<sup>13</sup> Hold on to instruction, do not let it go;  
guard it well, for it is your life.



# Proverbs 4:14-16 (NIV)

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<sup>14</sup> Do not set foot on the path of the wicked  
or walk in the way of evildoers.

<sup>15</sup> Avoid it, do not travel on it;  
turn from it and go on your way.

<sup>16</sup> For they cannot rest until they do evil;  
they are robbed of sleep till they make someone stumble.

<sup>17</sup> They eat the bread of wickedness  
and drink the wine of violence.



# Proverbs 4:18-19 (NIV)

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<sup>18</sup> The path of the righteous is like the morning sun,  
shining ever brighter till the full light of day.

<sup>19</sup> But the way of the wicked is like deep darkness;  
they do not know what makes them stumble.



# 1. Know the Way

*Proverbs 4:11-19*



# Proverbs 4:11, 14, 18-19 (NIV)

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<sup>11</sup> I instruct you in the way of wisdom  
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<sup>14</sup> Do not set foot on the path of the wicked  
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Commandments (Exod. 20:12-17)	Proverbs
Fifth: Honor father and mother	1:8; 4:1, 10; 10:1; 13:1
Sixth: Do not murder	1:10-12; 6:17
Seventh: Do not commit adultery	2:16-19; ch.. 5; 6:20-35; ch. 7
Eighth: Do not steal	1:13-14; 11:1
Ninth: Do not bear false witness	3:30; 6:18-19; 10:18; 12:17, 19
Tenth: Do not covet	6:18

—Adapted from Tremper Longman III, Proverbs: Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms, p. 81

# 1. Know the Way

*Proverbs 4:11-19*



## 2. Teach the Way

*Proverbs 4:1-4*





# Proverbs 4:1-4 (NIV)

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## 2. Teach the Way

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### Three features of parental training in Proverbs

- Affection (4:1-3)



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- Affection (4:1-3)
- Discipline (13:24; 22:15; 29:15, 17)



# Proverbs 3:11-12 (NIV)

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My son, do not despise the Lord's discipline,  
and do not resent his rebuke,  
<sup>12</sup> because the Lord disciplines those he loves,  
as a father the son he delights in.



## 2. Teach the Way

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### Three features of parental training in Proverbs

- Affection (4:1-3)
- Discipline (13:24; 22:15; 29:15, 17)
- Instruction (4:1-4)



# Deuteronomy 6:5-9 (NIV)

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Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. <sup>5</sup> Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. <sup>6</sup> These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. <sup>7</sup> Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. <sup>8</sup> Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. <sup>9</sup> Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.



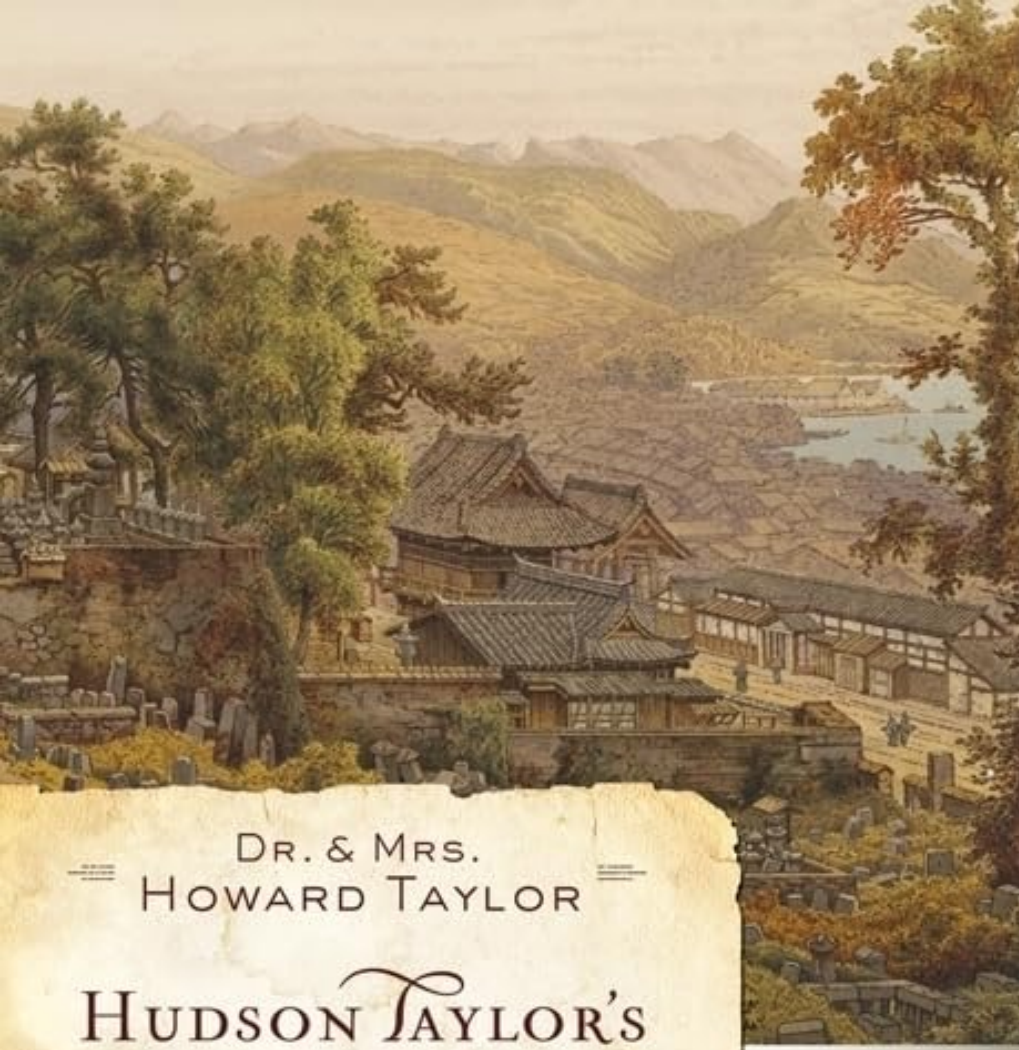
## 2. Teach the Way

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### Application

- To teach the way, you must know the way → *Dads, get in the Word*





DR. & MRS.  
HOWARD TAYLOR

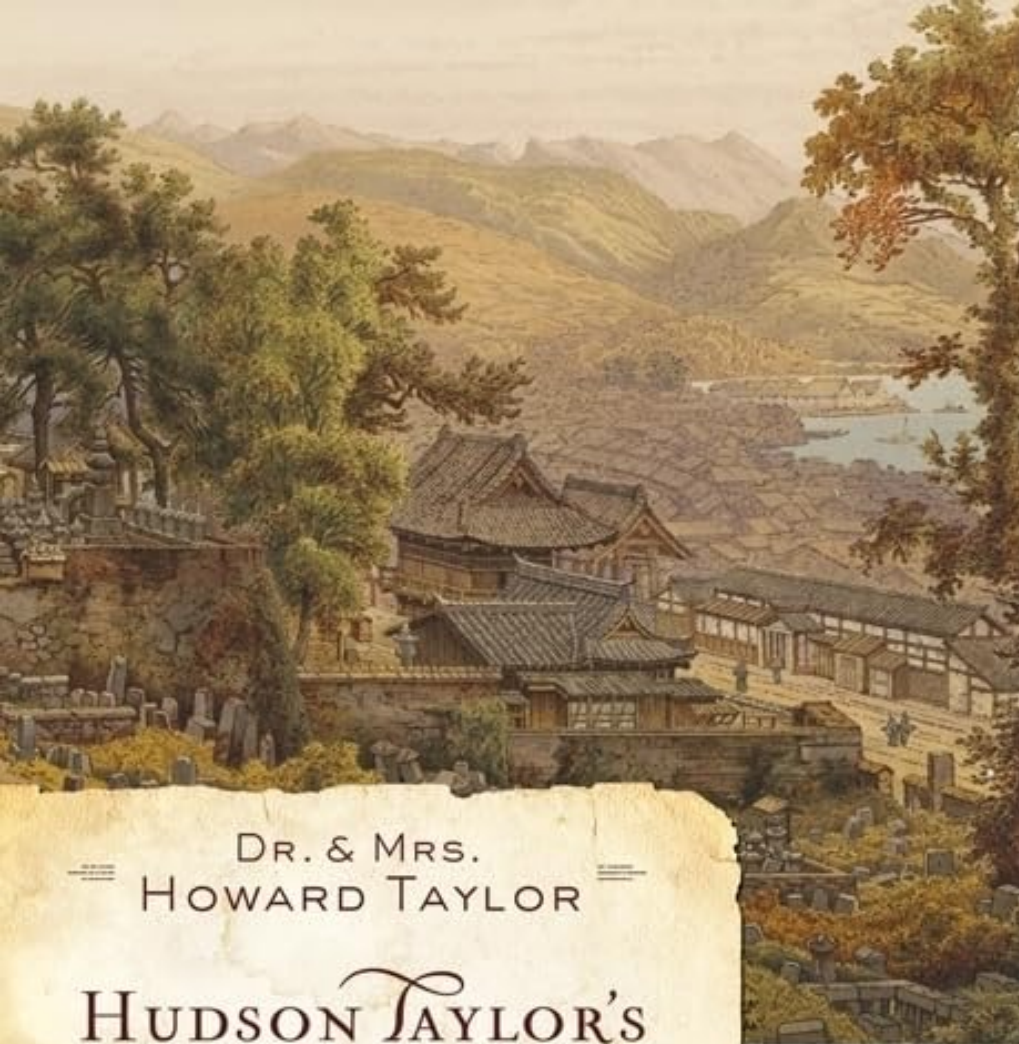
HUDSON TAYLOR'S  
SPIRITUAL SECRET

FOREWORD BY GEORGE VERWER

MOODY CLASSICS

It was not easy for Mr. Taylor, in his changeful life, to make time for prayer and Bible study, but he knew that it was vital. Well do the writers remember traveling with him month after month in northern China, by cart and wheelbarrow with the poorest of inns at night. Often with only one large room for coolies and travelers alike, they would screen off a corner for their father and another for themselves, with curtains of some sort; and then, after sleep had at last brought a





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measure of quiet, they would hear a match struck and see the flicker of candlelight which told that Mr. Taylor, however weary, was poring over the little Bible in two volumes always at hand. From two to four A. M. was the time he usually gave to prayer; then he could be sure of being undisturbed to wait upon God.

## 2. Teach the Way

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### Application

- To teach the way, you must know the way → *Dads, get in the Word*
- Teaching takes time → *Dads, prioritize your relationships with your kids*



# 3. Lead the Way

*Proverbs 4:11*



# Proverbs 4:11

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I instruct you in the way of wisdom  
and lead you along straight paths.



# 3. Lead the Way

*Proverbs 4:11*



# 3. Lead the Way

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## Application

- *Dads, we have to lead by example in our character, behavior, attitudes, relationships, devotion, commitments, and repentance.*



# Summary

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1. Know the way
2. Teach the way
3. Lead the way



# Summary

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1. Know the way
2. Teach the way
3. Lead the way

→ *Jesus is the way (John 14:6)*







If you had gone to Buddha and asked him, 'Are you the son of Brahmah?' he would have said, 'My son, you are still in the vale of illusion.' If you had gone to Socrates and asked, 'Are you the son of Zeus' he would have laughed at you. If you had gone to Mohammed and asked, 'Are you Allah?' he would first have rent his clothes and then cut your head off....



The things [Jesus Christ] says are very different from what any other teacher has said. Others say, "This is the truth about the Universe. This is the way you ought to go," but He says, "I am the Truth, and the Way, and the Life." He says, "No man can reach absolute reality, except through Me. Try to retain your own life and you will be inevitably ruined. Give yourself away and you will be saved."

—C. S. Lewis