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“ An hour’s industry will do more to produce cheerfulness, suppress evil humors, and retrieve your affairs, than a month’s moaning. Sloth makes all things difficult, but industry all easy.”

Benjamin Franklin

“ I believe that withholding children from work will benefit neither the family, the child, nor the adult that the child will become.”

David Barton

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1 PROVIDING FOR A SINGLE-INCOME FAMILY

“The labour of the righteous *tendeth* to life . . .”
Proverbs 10:16

We have known Troy for many years. As a homeschooled student in high school, his first job was as a two-week temporary assistant to the most junior employee in the company. Troy was hired to move heavy archive boxes in the basement. Since this was his first real job, Troy determined to do his best regardless of how menial the tasks. Hauling boxes doesn't sound like an impressive start to a career, does it? However, it was amazing to see how God was working. While doing his work assignments, Troy was diligent in learning the archiving system of the company. He also tried to perform each task quickly so he would be available to do other “little” things for his boss.

His temporary position was extended, and after a couple of months, he replaced his “boss” as archiving manager for the company. Throughout the next year or so, he completely redesigned the archive system from the

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bottom up. This included designing a new database and tracking system for more than 4,000 boxes of information.

Computers have always interested Troy, and he found himself helping various people in the company with small projects in his spare time. While not an expert in formulas or the financial aspects of spreadsheets, his desire to learn enabled him to create, fix, and modify spreadsheets. Thus he began to be used in the process of converting the company's spreadsheets from Lotus 1-2-3 to Microsoft Excel. After a while he was doing spreadsheet and database consulting full time. He completely redesigned the company's largest financial spreadsheet (which was made up of seventeen inter-working spreadsheets) in a three-month-long development project.

Troy began working for minimum wage, and while still in high school his hourly rate had climbed to twenty-five dollars per hour. Our experience has been similar. I have seen that if a young man is prepared properly, he will excel in the workplace.

Training a son to provide for a one-income family begins long before he writes his first resume hoping to be hired for a full-time job! The skills, character, education, and spiritual foundation necessary for supporting his family will be established throughout his childhood. As a parent, you will be the most important factor in your son's preparation for his future as a wage earner. Are you ready for this task?

I have yet to meet parents who don't want the best for their children. That is certainly a wonderful, God-given desire. As you raise your children, you are making decisions that will affect them

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for the rest of their lives. Do you ever have concerns as to whether you have made right or wrong decisions?

Some of these decisions have far greater consequences than others. Maybe a child wanted to quit playing a musical instrument, and you let him stop. What will that mean ten years from now? If a son didn't want to pursue a foreign language or a difficult math course, what are the ramifications of that choice during his lifetime?

Of even greater concern might be decisions regarding whether a child pursues higher education. What if you don't have the funds to put your son through post-high school education? Will you have ruined his chances of success in life? Is a checkbook the only meaningful way parents can help? How can you prepare a son to support a family?

Two Are Better Than One—Unless You Mean Two Incomes

Most of us have seen moms at the grocery store with children who are terrors. Observing those children makes me thankful for a wife who is able to devote all of her time to nurturing our children. As a result, I have never been concerned about taking my five youngest children with me on an errand. Teri's folks have expressed similar gratefulness that they are able to take our children anywhere without fear of making a scene. They report the children are always well behaved for them.

Raising godly children is a difficult, full-time job. It takes a great deal of time and effort. Will your future daughter-in-law be able to stay home with the children, or will she have to work full time? Will she want to stay home with the children?

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The answers to those questions will likely be determined by how you raise your son and by the values you impress on his life. This affects the type of woman he is attracted to for his wife. In addition, it has much to do with the type of leadership he provides for his home. We must purpose to instill in our sons the desire to have their wives home nurturing their children. Now is the time to be working with our sons and developing them according to God's Word and His leading.

The Cast

Through the years I have had the opportunity to observe many people working in their vocation. It is no surprise why some do well in life while others do not.

I have renamed a partial list of characters who will be referred to throughout the book. These are real people whom I have known personally with their names and details modified to protect their privacy. As you read the following biographical profiles, evaluate each man and see if you can spot why he didn't do as well as he could have or what factors made him successful. We will look at each example in depth later in the book. For now, see what you glean from reading these snapshots.

Bob is one of the hardest working men I have ever known. He worked two jobs to support his family. He fell into bed at 1 a.m., having to rise for work again by 6 a.m. During this time, his teenage daughter gave birth out of wedlock, and his son found himself in serious trouble with the law.

Kevin is a good worker but known to be somewhat moody. If you ever want to snap him out of a bad mood, bring up duck hunting

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or bass fishing. They are his passions! He admits to having a good marriage as long as he doesn't spend too much time with his wife. If they are together for long, they begin to argue. Therefore, he spends all of his free time hunting, fishing, or maintaining his sports gear.

Larry tried college after high school but then quit. He worked in his parents' business for several years until it closed. His income averages one hundred thousand dollars a year as a self-taught programmer. His wife is home full time with their large family. They give everything that he earns over their needs to missionaries.

Eric had his own graphic design business for two years. He loved throwing his heart into making it successful. Unfortunately, he would have starved had he not been living with his parents. His father wanted to teach Eric programming, but Eric only had eyes for graphic design and wasn't interested.

Herb is a professional with an advanced degree, a wife, several small children, and an extremely good income. He eagerly became involved in a pyramid marketing business. The goal was to work less and have more income. Neither resulted.

David has a four-year college degree and just received an excellent job offer from another company. However, it would mean moving his family away from extended family, longtime friends, and the church that they love.

Steve has an electrical engineering degree. He spent twenty years in good corporate jobs. The last three years of his corporate work, Steve's oldest, homeschooled son, who had not gone to college, earned a significantly larger salary than his father.