THE WAY

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FROM THE CHAPLAIN

When my kids were teenagers, they rarely listened to a word I said. The moment I began to speak - whether it was advice, encouragement, or just a passing comment - I could see their eyes glaze over. Every suggestion felt like it disappeared into thin air.

Here's where the frustration really set in: more than once, they'd come home from youth group excited about some powerful insight they'd just learned. They'd talk about it like it was the most profound thing they'd ever heard. And the kicker? It was exactly what I had been telling them for months. So why did it stick when the youth leader said it, but not when I did? The answer's simple: I was the parent.

Have you ever experienced that?

I want to share a passage with you that reminds us of the beautiful partnership we share in helping guide your child:

The words of the wise are like goads, their collected sayings like firmly embedded nails - given by one shepherd.
Ecclesiastes 12:11

I love this verse. It uses three powerful metaphors to help us understand what wisdom is - and it reminds me of my role as a teacher, a chaplain, and a father.

First, wise words are like a goad - a sharp stick that shepherds used to prod their sheep back on

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track. Students, like all of us, sometimes wander. They need gentle but firm prodding to keep going in the right direction. These aren't always comfortable words - but they are necessary for growth.



Second, wise words are like firmly embedded nails. We can hang things on them. They give structure, stability, and a point of reference. They help hold us together.

Finally, while wise words may come from many voices (parents, teachers, youth leaders) they are all guided by one Shepherd. Even when it feels like your words aren't landing, trust that God is at work in the timing and delivery of every piece of wisdom.

So, stay consistent. Your children need your wisdom, even when it doesn't seem like they're listening. And take heart - here at Thomas Hassall, we are walking alongside you, partnering in the sacred task of shepherding your child.

Reverend Denis Oliver
College Chaplain

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