

PARENTING BY THE BOOK
KNOWING OUR CHILDREN'S BENT

1. REVIEW

A. **ONE OF THE PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTING IS TO KNOW THEIR CHILD ... THEN:**

B. **TO HELP THAT CHILD DISCOVER WHO THAT UNIQUE, PRESCIOUS PERSON IS... BEFORE GOD AND IN THE WORLD AROUND THEM.**

1. **WHEN THAT OBJECTIVE IS ACCOMPLISHED AND THE TIME COMES TO RELEASE THAT CHILD TO LIVE INDEPENDANTLY, THEY CAN LEAVE HOME WITH A STRONG SENSE OF IDENTITY, WHICH WILL PROVIDE BOTH SECURITY AND DIRECTION FOR THE REST OF THEIR LIVES.**

a. **AND... REDUCE THE CHANCES OF REBELLION WHEN THEY ARE ON THEIR OWN.**

C. **NOTE: FOR ALL THE GOOD TRAINING WE GIVE OUR CHILDREN, IF WE DO NOT REALLY KNOW AND UNDERSTAND THEM... HOW CAN WE HELP THEM KNOW WHO THEY ARE BEFORE GOD AND IN THE WORLD AROUND THEM?**

1. **ANSWER: WE CAN'T!!**

D. **Proverbs 22:6 (NASB) Train up a child in the way he should go, Even when he is old he will not depart from it.**

1. **THE STANDARD INTERPRETATION OF THIS VERSE IS:**

a. **REAR YOUR CHILDREN AS MORAL, UPRIGHT, GOD-FEARING, CHURCH GOING KIDS.**

b. **BE SURE THEY CARRY A BIBLE TO CHURCH, ATTEND LOTS OF SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES, AND GO TO CHRISTIAN CAMPS EACH SUMMER.**

c. **ENFORCE YOUR RULES AND REGULATIONS WITH CONSISTENCY AND DISCIPLINE.**

d. **MAKE SURE THEY LEARN THE TEN COMMANDMENTS, THE GOLDEN RULE, AND SEVERAL KEY VERSES OF SCRIPTURE.**

PARENTING BY THE BOOK

KNOWING OUR CHILDREN'S BENT

- e. TEACH THEM TO PRAY, AND BE SURE THEY COME TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.... AFTER ALL, THEY'RE EVENTUALLY GOING TO SOW THEIR WILD OATS AS THEY ARE CERTAIN TO REBEL.
 - f. THEN THEY WILL LIVE THEIR REBELLIOUS LIFESTYLE FOR A WHILE... AND ONCE THEIR WILD OATS ARE SOWN AND THEY TIRE OF THEIR FLING WITH THE WILD SIDE OF LIFE (WHEN THEY ARE OLD AND DECREPIT) THEY WILL COME BACK TO THE LORD... BUT ONLY IF YOU RAISED THEM RIGHT!!
2. THAT POPULAR INTERPRETATION OF PROVERBS 22:6 IS NOT VERY COMFORTING, AND MORE... IT IS NOT TRUE!
- a. YOU AND I BOTH KNOW PEOPLE WHO WERE REARED LIKE THAT, THEN RAN WILD, BUT NEVER CAME BACK.
 - b. THEY GREW UP WITH CHRISTIAN PARENTS IN A MORAL, CONSISTENT, STRICT HOME... ONLY TO RUN WILD WHEN THEY GRADUATED AND LATER DIED IN THEIR REBELLION.
 - 1) THEY NEVER STOPED "DEPARTING FROM THE WAY THEY SHOULD GO".
3. IF... WE DIG BENEATH THE SURFACE AND LOOK AT THE HEBREW LANGUAGE TO DISCOVER WHAT THE HUMAN WRITER, UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, WAS SAYING TO HIS HEBREW AUDIENCE... WE WILL FIND SOMETHING VERY DIFFERENT FROM WHAT MANY OF US HAVE BEEN TAUGHT.
- a. WHAT THIS VERSE MEANS IN THE ORIGINAL HEBREW IS A VERY REFRESHING, COMMON-SENSE APPROACH TO CHILDREARING THAT OFFERS HOPE... BUT MORE IMPORTANT, PRACTICAL GUIDANCE TO PARENTS.
 - b. HEBREW is a LANGUAGE OF ARTISTS AND POETS.
 - 1) ALMOST EVERY HEBREW WORD HAS A METAPHORICAL CONNECTION TO SOMETHING IN THE EXPERIENCE OF THE HEBREW PEOPLE.

PARENTING BY THE BOOK

KNOWING OUR CHILDREN'S BENT

- i. HEBREW LANGUAGE USES WORD PICTURES THAT CONVEY MEANING BY ANALOGY.
 - c. BECAUSE EACH HEBREW WORD HAS SO MUCH CULTURAL MEANING THAT DRAWS ON WORD PICTURES WE ARE GOING TO CAREFULLY STUDY EACH WORD OF PROVERBS 22:6 TO DISCOVER WHAT THE WRITER WAS SAYING TO HIS HEBREW AUDIENCE.
- E. "TRAIN UP"
1. "TRAIN UP" COMES FROM THE HEBREW VERB HANAKH, WHICH MEANS "TO DEDICATE OR CONSECRATE".
 - a. IT'S ONLY USED FOUR TIMES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT – THREE IN REFERENCE TO DEDICATING A BUILDING.
 - 1) AND, ONCE, HERE IN REFERENCE TO A CHILD.
 - b. THE NOUN FORM OF THIS VERB LITERALLY MEANS "MOUTH".
 2. The ARABIC VERB, A VERY CLOSE COUSIN TO THE HEBREW WORD IS A TERM USED TO DESCRIBE THE CUSTOM OF A MID-WIFE AT THE BIRTH OF A CHILD.
 - a. MID-WIVES DIPPED THEIR INDEX FINGER INTO A BOWL OF CRUSHED DATES OR GRAPES IN ORDER TO MASSAGE THE PALATE OF A NEWBORN'S "MOUTH".
 - 1) THAT ENCOURAGED THE BABY'S SUCKING INSTINCT, SO THAT NURSING WOULD COME MORE EASILY.
 - b. AND, IN KEEPING WITH THE "MOUTH" IDEA, THE TERM IN ARABIC ALSO MEANS "TO MAKE EXPERIENCED AND SUBMISSIVE" AS IS DONE BY PUTTING A BRIDLE IN A HORSE'S MOUTH.
 3. SO..... THE TERM HANAKH INCLUDES THE MINGLED IDEAS OF "DEDICATE", "TRAIN", "MOUTH", "MAKE EXPERIENCED", AND FROM THE HORSE'S BRIDLE ALLUSION, A SENSE OF SUBDUING FOR THE PURPOSE OF TEACHING AND GUIDING.
- F. "A CHILD"

PARENTING BY THE BOOK

KNOWING OUR CHILDREN'S BENT

1. The HEBREW WORD **NA'AR** TRANSLATED "CHILD" IS INTERESTING.
 - a. MOST TRANSLATIONS LEAD US TO BELIEVE THAT THE VERSE HAS A LITTLE BOY OR GIRL IN MIND.
 - b. BUT... THE TERM **NA'AR** IS MUCH BROADER REFERRING TO YOUNG PEOPLE IN ALL STAGES OF GROWTH.
2. In 1 Samuel 4:21, **NA'AR** is a NEWBORN.
 - a. In Exodus 2:6, MOSES is a THREE MONTH OLD **NA'AR**.
 - b. IN 1 Samuel 1:22, SAMUEL, a **NA'AR**, has YET TO BE WEANED.
 - c. 1 Samuel 3:1 uses the TERM **NA'AR** to DESCRIBE SAMUEL AS A YOUNG LAD SERVING ELI IN THE TEMPLE.
 - d. In Genesis 21:12 **NA'AR** pictures ISHMAEL as a PRETEEN.
 - e. In Genesis 37:2, JOSEPH is a SEVENTEEN year-old **NA'AR**.
 - f. In 1 Samuel 25:5 the YOUNG MEN who SERVED AS DAVID'S MESSENGERS ARE CALLED **NA'AR**.
 - g. In GENESIS 34:19 a YOUNG MAN of MARRIAGABLE AGE is called **NA'AR**.
3. While **NA'AR** CAN BE A LITTLE CHILD, IT CAN ALSO BE A YOUNG MAN OR WOMAN OF ANY AGE STILL LIVING IN THEIR PARENT'S HOME, OR IN THE CARE OF AN AUTHORITY FIGURE.

G. "THE WAY HE SHOULD GO"

1. THE MEANING OF THIS VERSE TURNS ON THE PHRASE "IN THE WAY HE SHOULD GO".
2. PARENTS OFTEN THINK THERE IS JUST ONE WAY TO GO... THEIR WAY.
 - a. WE MAY THINK "THE WAY" WE WERE REARED WAS, AND STILL IS, THE "RIGHT WAY".
 - b. OR, WE MAY THINK SOME METHOD WE FIND IN A PSYCHOLOGIST'S BOOK.

PARENTING BY THE BOOK

KNOWING OUR CHILDREN'S BENT

- c. OR, IN A BOOK BY A FAMOUS THEOLOGIAN OR PASTOR IS "THE WAY".
 - d. WE READ THE PHRASE "THE WAY HE SHOULD GO" AND ASSUME THAT MUST BE "THE WAY".
 - e. ... W R O N G !
3. THE LITERAL HEBREW READS "IN ACCORDANCE WITH HIS WAY".
- a. THE KEY WORD IN THIS PHRASE IS DEREK WHICH MEANS "WAY" OR "ROAD".
4. MANY PARENTS BELIEVE THAT WE RECEIVE OUR CHILDREN FROM THE HAND OF GOD AS PLIABLE LUMPS OF CLAY READY TO BE MOLDED INTO WHAT WE THINK THEY SHOULD BECOME.
- a. BUT... EACH CHILD COMES WITH A SET OF ABILITIES, INTELLECTUAL CAPACITY, AND A WAY OF PERCEIVING AND THINKING... ALL OF WHICH WERE ENDOWED BY GOD!
 - 1) PARENTS CAN INFLUENCE AND EVEN MOLD THEIR CHILDREN TO A CERTAIN EXTENT... BUT, OUR EFFORTS HAVE LIMITS.
 - i. ON ONE HAND, IF PARENTS IGNORE OR DISCOURAGE A TALENT... IT MAY NEVER RE-EMERGE.
 - ii. ON THE OTHER HAND, IF PARENTS CULTIVATE A TALENT... IT WILL LIKELY BECOME A PART OF THE CHILD.
5. NOTE: CHILDREN ARE AS UNIQUE AS SNOWFLAKES.
- a. EVEN WITHIN THE SAME FAMILY, TWO CHILDREN BORN OF THE SAME MOTHER AND FATHER AND REARED IN THE SAME ENVIRONMENT... CAN BE COMPLETELY DIFFERENT.
 - 1) ONE IS STRONG AND DETERMINED... WHILE THE OTHER CAN BE EASILY PERSUADED.
 - 2) ONE IS ORGANIZED... THE OTHER IS MESSY AND DISORGANIZED.

PARENTING BY THE BOOK

KNOWING OUR CHILDREN'S BENT

- 3) ONE IS ACADEMICALLY GIFTED... THE OTHER EXCELLS IN SPORTS, ART, OR MECHANICS.
- 4) ONE MIGHT BE A NATURAL-BORN LEADER... WHILE THE OTHER PREFERS TO FOLLOW AND SERVE OTHERS IN A SUPROTIVE ROLE.
- 5) SOME CHILDREN ARE GENERALLY OPTIMISTIC AND UPBEAT... WHILE OTHERS ARE MORE NATURALLY MELANCHOLY AND ARE DREAMERS.