

“Train Up a Child!”

Proverbs 22:1-6

Intro. – Generally speaking most of us believe the Bible to be the Word of God. We believe when we read God’s Word it means just what it says. Not a matter of pick and choose, or weeding out the real from the fantasy. We accept what the Bible says. In Genesis 1:1 when it says, “*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth*” we believe that don’t we?! John 3:16 when it says... Acts 2:38... Acts 20:7...

Then there are other passages we like to qualify. And there are some passages that need qualification because they were written to be taken figuratively or were written for a specific dispensation. But there are some passage we claim need qualifying when in reality become excuses on our part. Such is the case of our text and specifically v 6... Why is it we say, “But I know exceptions to that verse...; thus, it must not be true! Again, don’t we believe what the Bible says?!

I am persuaded we *qualify* this text (verse in particular) that way because of laziness on our part. It is hard work to train up a child in the way he/she ought to go – to take God at His Word and do what He says. We also qualify this verse because there have been times we have failed. We’re not perfect. Why, there have been many times I have failed as a husband and as a dad...

I haven’t failed as miserably, however, had I been listening to the world. Modern psych0ologist tell us it’s wrong to use painful means in correcting kids. We are told to “reason with them.” My reasoning? “I’m your dad. I may not always be right but I’ll always be your dad.”

The “reasoning approach” reeks with being afraid of our kids. Are you afraid of your kids? Who is in charge at your home? The Duke of Wellington said years ago the following: “The thing that impressed me most about America is the way the parents obey their children.” I remember a close preacher friend telling of a MD in the church where he was serving say to him after preaching on this text: “Spanking was okay in the old days but these modern times taking something far more sophisticated.”

Can we given an unqualified “amen” to Proverbs 22:6?... Rearing up a child is like working a math problem. Go about it the right way and do all the parts correctly and come up with the right answer.

Purpose: to better realize the truth behind Proverbs 22:6

Someone has said: “You can’t change your ancestors, but you can do something about your descendants.” I believe with all my heart that any child trained up in the way he/she should go, when they are old they will not depart from it! Now, we’ll make mistakes and they’ll depart from it, or we’ll be a little lazy and try to treat each child the same and they will depart from it... But God speaks to us giving the following:

- I A Condition (Train up a child in the way they should go)
- II A Certain Result (They will not depart from it)

I A CONDITION is Given

- train up a child in the way he/she should go

A. Train Up a Child

- key word here is *train* = Hebrew word has to do with the will of the child...

1. Must present the ideal and goal for each child (note: matter of understanding the strengths and weaknesses of each child... understanding the child as an individual...)
 - a. unless moving toward a specific/definite goal we are not training, we are marking time...
 - b. too often our ideal is too low. What?! How do you mean too low?
 - 1) we want education, position, good jobs etc. in order to “get ahead in the world”...
 - 2) how then are we any different than the world if this is all we want for our kids?...
 - c. what is the ideal/goal we should have for our kids?
 - 1) that our kids have character/integrity... Illus. – we applaud talent/looks but rarely praise character/integrity – give examples of “aren’t they cute”... “man can he play ball”...
 - 2) education wise – that our kids would KNOW GOD!...
 - Illus. – Stewart Rogers: “What I want to leave my children with more than anything else is the wisdom and power to make right decisions.”

- our kids will never have the wisdom/power to make right decisions UNLESS THEY KNOW GOD!
- 3) position? – that our kids be KNOWN BY GOD. That He recognizes their words, their thoughts, their deeds as being of Him. That they be KNOWN BY GOD!
- 2. Personal discipline (example)
 - a. what we want our kids to be we (parents) must be – can't lead where we won't go and can't teach what we don't know!
 - b. we must personally discipline ourselves toward the right goal and ideal...
- 3. Certain facts concerning children (two in particular):
 - a. Proverbs 22:15 *"Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; the rod of discipline will remove it far from him."*
 - b. what two things are addressed in this verse:
 - 1) leave a child to grow as they see fit and you will have turned a monster loose...
 - Illus. – Samuel Coleridge (English poet and philosopher) was once talking to a man who told him he did not believe in giving little children any religious instruction whatsoever. His theory was that the child's mind should not be prejudiced in any direction; he should be permitted to choose his religious opinions on his own. Coleridge said nothing, but after a while asked his visitor if he would like to see his garden. The man said he would; so, Coleridge took him out into the garden where only weeds were growing. The man looked at Coleridge and said, "Why, this is not a garden! There is nothing but weeds here." Coleridge responded, "I did not wish to infringe upon the liberty of the garden in any way. I was just giving the garden a chance to express itself and choose its own production."
 - 2) every child has potential: for both good and evil...
 - 3) every child has vacuums needing to be filled. If we fail to fill them with the truth of the Gospel the Devil and his crowd will fill them with lies and hopelessness...

B. The Way He/She Should Go

- here is where Bible School/Church can't take the place of home
- 1. Every child is an individual – Illus. Abe Lincoln born God threw away the mold = true everyone!
- 2. Learned short time as a parent no two kids are alike:
 - a. Adam and Marah are two distinct individuals...
 - b. Illus. – if you have 3 kids = one loves chocolate, another can take it or leave it, and the other hates it and you give all three a piece of chocolate cake you haven't treated them alike!...
- 3. Positive and negative training:
 - a. positive = teaching kids they're child of the King, God is in control, His way is best... any other way is evil and wrong...
 - b. negative = Satan is the enemy and must be confronted and fought...

May this be our passion. Train a child to walk in the way of God, understanding each child individually as God created and made them...

II A RESULT is Promised

- when they are old they will not depart from it
- note: some parents miserably fail, but, some children still go right direction in spite of poor parents but because of Godly teachers and preachers...
- A. Parents Must be Stern Disciplinarians
 - 1. We spanked our kids – tried to always tell them before and after why getting it and that we loved too much to let them get away with bologna...
 - 2. Found no delight in having to spank... but we loved them and they needed it!
 - 3. Know of family in So. Bend, IN parents were teachers (highly educated with masters) solid Christian people to this day. Had four boys and all four turned out rotten – afraid to spank kids...

B. Parents Must be Tender Too

1. Velvet covered bricks – time when Dad instead of spanking said, “Son, I’m disappointed in you..”
2. Try a little tenderness – always tell your kids you love them... tell your wife same...
3. Give them your attention – play with them (do you play with your kids?) “No, don’t have the time...” Believe me, you will run out of time to play with your kids way before you think... Make and take time with your kids...

C. Parents Must Find a Happy Medium

1. Comradship/companionship with Christ is absolutely essential...
2. If so severe to be wisely true; yet, so tender as to hold my children, I must know Him!

Conclusion:

Recipe for Child Rearing

- 1 cup of Proverbs 22:6
- 2 tablespoons of Proverbs 19:13
- 1 dash of Proverbs 23:13
- 1 teaspoon of Proverbs 3:5
- ½ cup of Titus 2:5-7

Mix all the ingredients, add a pound of persistence, a cup of love and stir until right consistency.

P.S. – you may want to add a pinch of Ephesians 6:4

Train up a child in the way he/she should go and when they are old, you can count on it; they will not depart from it!