

I'm not trying to put anyone on a guilt trip, but when you talk to people you get this response. "We did all we could do. We took them to church, had family devotion setc." If you really get to digging in their lives, you find real spiritual inconsistencies. It is that way every time. The Bible gives us commands. This is very important. God's commands are directed to our will. Whenever God gives us a command, He makes us responsible. God knows we can do that. God does not make us responsible for things we cannot do.

Proverbs 22:6 *Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.* Proverbs is a book about a father instructing his son. Much of the teaching of Proverbs is by contrast. If you really want to know about the subject of child rearing, read the book of Proverbs.

Notice here in the first half of this verse "Train up a child in the way he should go". This word training has to do with spiritual instruction. So many parents are concerned about the physical and social well being of their child that they are neglecting the spiritual well being of the child. Most parents have the idea if they bring their children to church, send them to a Christian school, and pray at meals; it will turn out okay.

Notice it says, "Train". This is like an athlete in training. Keep working at it all the time and do not let up. As parents, you need to set your mind to it. The first part of this verse deals with a command. *Train up a child in the way he should go.* Question? Who is the command to? Parents? More specifically, fathers! Just for the sake of reinforcing this, look at Ephesians 6:4 *And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.* How does a father provoke his children to wrath? By not bringing them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. The word *nurture* means training with structure. In the home, God has given an order. The order for the home is Christ, husband, wife, and children. This order is given for that basis, order. When God's order is violated, you have a problem. In fact I see this as being one of the biggest spiritual problems we have today.

Notice that the first part of Proverbs 22:6 is a command. This is commanded, it makes us as parents responsible.

The second part of the verse is *and when he is old.* My understanding of the Hebrew meaning for this phrase is when the child leaves the house. Not when he is seventy-five. He will return. It means, mom and dad, when the child leaves the home he will not depart from the training you have given him. Remember that the word training here is spiritual training. Remember this is a book of contrasts. He is the principle. If he is trained right, he will not depart from it. The Bible says if you do it right, train him up right, and the promise of God is he will not depart from living for God. My question: Is God a liar? No. Then what is the problem? I mean why are we having an epidemic of children who grow up in Christian homes and do not serve God?

The question is, can we rear spiritual children? Let me give you the classic answer that all preachers and I hear. "Well, Pastor, we did all we could do, but they still went the other way." If you start to believe that now, you're going to have some spiritual misfits and misery on your hands. Parents have had the mind set of thinking, well, we'll do the best that we can, but don't really put no effort in rearing their children.

Therefore, we have identified the source. **The training is wrong.** What is the correct training? I feel sorry for many parents. Many pastors do not know what it means to rear children for God. Consequently, it is like the blind leading the blind. Alternatively,

may be you were saved as an adult. The answers are going to say, "I know where you are headed. You services, read the Bible, pray, have family devotions and look what we have." Well, all those things are important, but they can be done mechanically; in essence, not with the right heart. If they are not done with a real heart for God, you cannot teach a child to have a spiritual relationship if you do not have a spiritual relationship yourself.

There is an interesting word in Proverbs 1:1-8. The word is *instruction*. Notice in **Proverbs 1:4, *To give subtilty to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion.*** This instruction deals with the training of Proverbs 22:6. What kind of training are we talking about? Spiritual training. Who is responsible? Dad. If the training is wrong, the child will depart.

Someone has said, "When a parent is involved in sin, it will always show up in the children." It always does. Some Bible examples: David, Solomon, and Eli. There are many others.

We have identified the problem, the training. Realizing, identifying the problem is easy. The difficult part is correction of the problem. The problem is the training and who does it. How many times is mom left with the spiritual training of the children? In most churches in our country, the mother is left with the spiritual training of the children. The question in the first message was where are the fathers? Do you know what the key verse is in this book? Listen carefully, **Proverbs 23:26, *My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways.***

Dad, you have to get the child's heart! ***And let thine eyes observe my ways.*** Do you know what the real problem is spiritually? The children are observing the ways of their fathers. We have dads all across this country that love their children, but they neglect their children's spiritual training. Your children look to you. When they see spiritual things you cannot fool your own children. They know if you are real or not. They know what takes first place in your life. They know if you have a real heart for God. Unfortunately, the devil knows as well and the devil know show to use it.

We have identified the problems:

The wrong kind of training and the way the training is done.

1. Who is doing the training?

2. The example in the training.

The remedy for wrong training is Dad has to have a real spiritual relationship with the Lord.

1. Dad has to commit himself to rearing spiritual children and has to get the child's spiritual relationship with the Lord.

2. Dad has to commit himself to rearing spiritual children and has to get the child's heart. You must pray for this.

This lesson is designed to identify, correct, and help a relationship with God and live for Him. Do not let failed in the rearing of their children spiritually company. Can we rear spiritual children? Absolutely. Because God says so. You must work at all the answers to raising children, but I know a Son of God.

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