

FBC POWELL, 5-6-18 AM NOTES  
"Wisdom for Parenting"  
Proverbs 22:6  
# 4 in Series, "Proverbs: Wisdom for the Family"

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- Adrian Rogers

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I. The Necessity for Training Children

"Invariably parents ask about Proverbs 22:6. 'Isn't that a biblical promise that if we raise our children right, we can guarantee they will walk faithfully with the Lord?' That notion is based on a misunderstanding of the nature of the Proverbs. These are wise sayings and truisms – not necessarily inviolable rules."  
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II. The Pattern for Training Children

**Luke 2:52 (NASB)** "And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men."

III. The Prayer for Training Children

"I discovered that prayer is the secret weapon of the kingdom of God. It is like a missile that can be fired toward any spot on earth, travel undetected at the speed of thought and hit its target every time... Satan has no defense against this weapon; he has no anti-prayer missile."  
- Ron Dunn

A. Pray in Jesus' Name

**John 14:13-14 (NASB)** <sup>13</sup>"Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. <sup>14</sup>If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it."

"To pray in the Name of Christ is to pray as one who is at one with Christ, whose mind is the mind of Christ, whose desires are the desires of Christ, and whose purpose is one with that of Christ... Prayers offered in the Name of Christ are scrutinized and sanctified by His nature, His purpose, and His will. Prayer is endorsed by the Name, when it is in harmony with the character, mind, desire, and purpose of the Name."  
– Samuel Chadwick

B. Pray in Faith

"One way to get comfort is to plead the promise of God in prayer, show him His handwriting; God is tender of His word."  
– Thomas Manton

**Psalms 119:36-37 (NASB)** <sup>36</sup>"Incline my heart to Your testimonies and not to *dishonest* gain. <sup>37</sup>Turn away my eyes from looking at vanity, and revive me in Your ways."

## Chapter 4: Wisdom for Parenting

### Proverbs 22:6

The words “wise” and “wisdom” are found over one-hundred times in the book of Proverbs. Wisdom, as it is used in Proverbs, is basically the ability to see all of life from God’s perspective. Until we see life from God’s perspective, we are led by emotions, the opinions of others, and man’s wisdom (which is not true wisdom at all). Not only do we need to understand wisdom, we also need to understand the nature and purpose of proverbs. In the very first message in this series we saw that proverbs are not promises. The inspired Proverbs of Scripture are nuggets of wisdom that God has given to us through divine inspiration to show us how to live wisely. Listen to this great summary by Adrian Rogers: “So, these proverbs are gems of wisdom that are principles meant to be God’s guide to living. Remember they are just that – principles and guides. They are not meant to overrule any special plan that God may have for His saints. They are not meant to be iron-clad contracts [promises] but principles and guides.” [Adrian Rogers, *God’s Way to Health, Wealth, and Wisdom*, page iv]

Many of the proverbs are gems of wisdom including dealing with parenting, and how to raise children. Whether you have young children at home or not, I remind you that this is God’s Word and as such, it is important that you know it.

Children are not meant to be a burden we bear, but a blessing we enjoy. Psalms 127:3-5: “Behold, children are a gift of the Lord; the fruit of the womb is a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, so are the children of one’s youth. How blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them; they will not be ashamed when they speak with their enemies in the gate.”

Parenthood is God’s gift to many of His children! One of the reasons that most new parents do not enjoy their children is that they make some parts of parenting too complicated. For instance, so many insecure frightened first-time parents are caught up in the latest book or internet article that give the latest “newly discovered” approach to parenting that is guaranteed to produce successful children, teens, and adults. These authors imply or even boldly state that if you don’t use their method, your children will be colossal flops! It is amazing to see all the programs that have popped up, especially relating to young children, which actually contradict each other. Young Christian parents seem to be especially gullible. Some books offer detailed plans for feeding infants that contradict each other. Plan A is written by an “expert” who says feed infants only on a strict schedule no matter how much they cry. Then another book by another “expert” says feed your child on demand. If they fuss just let them eat. If you don’t follow their plans perfectly your children will be warped, probably end up in jail, and it will be your fault! After your children are weaned, then the experts will tell you how to potty train them and if you mess this up, they will be warped, no ruined for life. No wonder so many parents, especially young parents, are so uptight, stressed out and insecure about parenting. The internet only exacerbates the tensions. All too often, the result is that parents forget to enjoy and rejoice in this precious gift that God has given them.

As children grow older, parenting is admittedly more complicated than feeding times and potty training. Even as children get older, I am convinced that we are still to enjoy our children as “a gift from the Lord” (Psalm 127:3). To balance that truth that we are to enjoy our children, we also need to understand that to “train up a child in the way he should go” requires commitment and tenacity to the level that no other task I know of requires. Ted Tripp in his really good book, *Shepherding a Child’s Heart*, says that the child’s heart is the world’s smallest battlefield and the

conquering of it calls for all out hand to hand combat. Having said that, you should still enjoy your children, commit to obey what the Scripture says and then watch God work!

One reason that raising children is never boring is because each child is a unique creation of God and thus, they are all different. As our five children were growing up, Kathy used to say, “How did these five children come out of the same gene pool?” Because they are so different, parenting is not as simple as “read a book (or books) and raise a child.” There is “THE BOOK” but even the Bible is not a book of formulas. It is primarily a book of principles and the principles related to raising children are more than opinions; they are words inspired by God.

## **I. The Necessity for Training Children**

Perhaps the most familiar passage related to training children is Proverbs 22:6. Let me reiterate that this is not a promise; it is a proverb. In our first church, our elderly next-door neighbor was a sweet widow in probably her eighties who had a son who lived with her. He was probably in his late fifties. He had been married and divorced multiple times, had a drinking problem, and he was too lazy to work. He had drained his mother financially and emotionally. Almost every time we would talk with her, she reiterated that she was trusting God to keep the “promise” of Proverbs 22:6. While God could certainly have saved this evil man, I didn’t have the heart to tell her that she was taking the verse out of its context. John MacArthur has a wise word about this specific Proverb: “Invariably parents ask about Proverbs 22:6. Isn’t that a biblical promise that if we raise our children right, we can guarantee they will walk faithfully with the Lord? That notion is based on a misunderstanding of the nature of the Proverbs. These are wise sayings and truisms – not necessarily inviolable rules.” [John MacArthur, *Successful Christian Parenting*, page 17]

Before we delve into Proverbs 22:6, let me give you a statement that can do away with a lot of false guilt that Satan often uses to pull good parents down. “Success in parenting is measured by what the parents do, not by what the child does.” [John MacArthur, page 17] I want to tie that statement to the Proverbs – especially Proverbs 22:6. Typically the parents that “Train up a child in the way he should go, even when he is old he will not depart from it.” The task of parents is to “train up a child in the way he should go.” The vast majority of times when that is done by the parent, the child does not depart from their training. However, some people who were raised in a godly home turn away from the Lord. On the other hand, there are some adults in our church that were raised in horrible homes with drunken parents, immoral parents, absentee parents, or even abusive parents, and yet they grew up loving God and as adults they live lives that honor God. If our children grow up to honor the Lord, it is the grace of God and we cannot boast. If we sought to raise them in a God glorifying way and they went astray, we don’t beat ourselves up. We just keep praying and trusting Him to bring them to Himself. The point is that parents should focus on training up a child in the way he should go and pray that God would draw the children to himself and conform them to the likeness of Christ.

Let’s examine Proverbs 22:6. The phrase “Train up a child” was used of a rope that brought a horse into submission of the rider. It also had another meaning. It was used in Solomon’s day to describe what a mid-wife did shortly after a child was born. She would grind up some dates and squeeze some of the juice in a bowl. She would then rub the date juice on the baby’s gums which instigated a sucking action and also activated the sense of taste. She would then hand the infant to the mother and the baby would begin feeding from the mother’s breast. The word came to mean “developing a thirst.” That really opens up what this verse is saying. There is the discipline of the child to train them to obey their parents and then to obey God, but there was also the modeling of the joy that comes from a life of loving obedience to the Lord. Parents, when your

children observe your life, do they see a joyful obedience to the Lord out of love for Him or do they see a legalistic “obey the Scriptures or you will reap the consequences” approach. Do they see church and worship as a time of joy that you don’t want to ever miss, or simply a duty you must perform?

Let’s examine the phrase “in the way he should go.” There are some Hebrew scholars who translate that phrase “according to his way or his bend.” In other words, every child is different, and we learn our children and how they are motivated and the type of discipline they respond best to. I think that has some merit, and I think there is some truth in that. But the more I study this passage, the more I believe that it is simply speaking of the way of the Lord that we should go. In other words, Solomon is saying that we are to train up a child to live a life of joyful obedience to the Lord. Most of the uses of this phrase, “in the way he should go” in Proverbs are referring to the Lord’s way in contrast to our own rebellious way. In other words, Solomon is saying train up a child to obey God.

Before salvation, the motive for that is that He is God, He has all authority, and there are consequences of disobeying the Lord. After salvation, the motive changes. Saved people desire to obey the Lord, primarily out of love and not just the fear of punishment. When you send your children out from under your roof and your authority, success is when you have been faithful to “train them up in the way they should go” and have modeled a life of obeying God because you love Him and delight in pleasing Him.

Proverbs 22:6 is, in reality simply, a description of loving your child. Loving your child is training him/her up to obey God’s way. Training is way more than teaching. Training is teaching, modeling, and bringing about consequences when disobedience occurs. The norm is that when that training happens consistently, children will live a life that honors God and that results in God getting all the glory.

## **II. The Pattern for Training Children**

When our children were young, I developed a method of disciplining them based on Luke 2:52: “And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.” I spent a lot of time on a document built on training them in these four categories. I lost all of my research, so you will have to develop your own. The point I want you to get is that Mary and Joseph trained Jesus as a child in a balanced way. These four categories include all of life.

Wisdom in this context as we said earlier is to see every circumstance from God’s perspective. It is the capacity to not only understand something, but to order their behavior accordingly. Pray for your children to not only know God’s acts, but to also have wisdom to know His ways.

Stature refers to physical maturity, physical growth. Train your children to care for their body. That includes eating correctly and exercise and physical labor. I remember with my boys especially, teaching them to exercise. As they got older, we would exercise together (with loud music from the movie *Rocky III The Eye of the Tiger*).

In favor with God refers to spiritual maturity. The word translated “favor” also means joy, grace, and acceptance. As they grow in the Lord we should teach them about the joy of the Lord, the grace of the Lord, and the acceptance we have in Christ.

In favor with man involves training children to accept people as God made them, rejecting racism, showing tolerance and acceptance with those who are “different.” I would challenge you to develop your own “curriculum” to “train up your children.”

### **III. The Prayer for Training a Children**

Which seminar would draw the biggest crowd: “How to Pray for Your Children” or “Twenty Things You Can *Do* to Transform Your children”? I guarantee you that most would go to the “do” seminar. The reason we see prayer in such a bad light is that it caters to our pride to fix a situation by something that we “do”. True prayer involves humbling ourselves and admitting that we are helpless and totally dependent on God. That’s not real popular! If we could see through God’s eyes, we would see that prayer *is* where the action is. It is in prayer that the real work is done. One man said, “I discovered that prayer is the secret weapon of the kingdom of God. It is like a missile that can be fired toward any spot on earth, travel undetected at the speed of thought and hit its target every time... Satan has no defense against this weapon; he has no anti-prayer missile” [Ron Dunn, *Don’t Just Stand There, Pray Something*, pages 19-20]

The most important thing you can do as a parent is to pray for your children. Grandparents pray for your grandchildren. Pray diligently, pray biblically, pray through the day and as you wake up at night. I’m not speaking of “worrying with your eyes closed” prayer. I am talking about praying Scripture, praying specifically, and praying throughout the day – pray, pray, pray!

#### **A. Pray in Jesus’ Name**

To pray in Jesus’ name is to ask for what glorifies the Father. John 14:13-14: “Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do *it*.” To pray in Jesus’ name means to pray for that which glorifies God. To bring glory to God must be the ultimate motive for everything we ask in Jesus’ name. This requires some real examination of our motives. Are you praying for your child’s salvation so that he or she will go to heaven and not hell, or are you praying for his or her salvation so that their life will bring glory to God? Are you praying for your child to make a high grade on their college entrance exam so that they can get into the best school in order that they can have a prestigious job making lots of money or so that they can glorify God?

To pray in Jesus’ name also means that we pray for what He desires. No one gives the use of his name to another who does not share His desires, interests and goals. Unless you are surrendered to the Lordship of Christ you cannot pray in His name. To pray in His name is to use His power and authority to ask for what He desires. To pray in the name of Jesus is practically synonymous with praying in the will of God.

To pray in Jesus’ name is to pray based on His merit and deservedness. I am praying in His Name when I come humbly before the Father admitting that I have no merit or right to even be heard by Him based on my own merits. I come boldly, however, because I come based on Jesus’ merit and worth and life.

Dr. R. A. Torrey tells about speaking in a conference on prayer and after the conference a man came to talk to him. He lamented that he had been praying about a matter for a long period of time and the Lord had not answered. Dr. Torrey asked him a simple question. He said, “Why should the Lord answer your prayer?” The man said something like this: “He should answer because I have been a faithful elder in my church; I have taught a Bible class for years; I tithe,

and I witness for Christ.” Dr. Torrey said, “Sir your problem is that you are coming before the Lord in your own name and not in Jesus’ Name!”

Are you praying for your family in Jesus’ Name?

## **B. Pray in Faith**

Prayer that is faithless is fruitless. Let’s not make praying in faith something that is always mystical. It doesn’t usually involve hearing an audible voice; it does not usually involve a vision or dream. Faith involves finding God’s will in the situation for which we are burdened, praying God’s will back to Him, and then living in expectancy that God is telling the truth and will keep His word in his timing. The Puritan, Thomas Manton said, “One way to get comfort is to plead the promise of God in prayer, show him His handwriting; God is tender of His word.” [*Puritan Quotes*, page 216]

A consistent life of answered prayer is impossible apart from an ever-growing knowledge of and meditation upon God’s word.

There is certainly a persevering and pleading aspect to prayer. It’s not that we simply read a promise, say, “Father I claim this for my rebel child” and then never bring it up again. We continually bring Scripture after Scripture before the Lord, personalizing for our family member and continue to expect God to act. Yet in all our pleading we live with the expectancy that God is tender to His word. In my prayer journal, beside my family, is Scripture after Scripture that I pray for them. In my Bibles that I use for my quiet time, in the margin there will be numerous notations with a date that says, “Prayed for Kathy,” “prayed for one of my children or sons-in-law or daughters in law.” I pray for all my children and their spouses Psalms 119:36-37: “Incline my heart to Your testimonies and not to *dishonest* gain. Turn away my eyes from looking at vanity, and revive me in Your ways.” As you read the word and meditate on it, apply promises and Biblical truths to your family and their needs. The word comes alive as we begin to see it as the content of our prayers. Then all we are doing is living in expectancy that God keeps His word.

## **Conclusion**

Parenting is not for wimps. Proverbs 22:6: “Train up a child in the way he should go, even when he is old he will not depart from it.” Train your children; pray for your children. Pray for one another’s children. A book was written several years ago by a well-known Politian entitled *It Takes a Village to Raise a Child*. I do not recommend that book. However, in some ways, it takes a church to raise a child. Pray for one another, pray diligently, seek counsel from older people if you have young children. We are together on this journey and our children need a church that is coming alongside the parents and bringing up children who glorify God.

**NASB** (New American Standard Bible)

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