

Train Your Child to Stay with God

Proverbs 22:6

I. The Positions

- Some say this passage is a promise that's always true.
- Some say it's a proverb that's generally true.

II. TLP's Position: We believe it's a promise!

- We stand by the position that God's Word always says what it means and means what it says. Therefore we believe that all the Proverbs communicate exactly what they mean, and a studied understanding will remove any confusion.
- As an example, look specifically at the Hebrew word translated "Train up."
 - The Hebrew word here is interesting. It's only used *four* times in the whole Bible, and three of those times it's translated "dedicated." But here is the only time it's translated "train up." Consider that for a minute.
 - The three times the word's translated "dedicated" it's referring to the dedication of an inanimate object . . . specifically a house or the temple. You see, something inanimate can be dedicated for a special purpose without it arguing about its use or trying to do something else.
 - But the one time this word is used of a human being, it's translated "train up."
 - Here's my point, this word is complicated because it's meaning in this one verse is unique in the entirety of Scripture. But it's a right understanding of the phrase "train up" that will unlock our understanding of parenting.
 - You see, the English word "train" was a fantastic translation. Notice, that it doesn't say teach or instruct.
 - Here's why: I can teach without my student learning. I've been a teacher for over ten years, and I've taught hundreds of kids in that time. And I guarantee you not all of them learned.
 - But the word "train" has a completely different connotation. If I told you I was a classically trained violinist, you would understand a few things about me. You would immediately assume A. I know how to play the violin, and B. I know how to play it well. So, you ask me to play for you, but I can barely squeak out a pathetic rendition of "Twinkle, Twinkle." Then you ask me, "*I thought you were a classically trained violinist?*" and I reply, "*Well, my teacher taught me what I needed to do, I just didn't practice.*"
 - There's not a single person listening to my voice today who would agree that I should consider myself a "classically trained violinist." The same goes for someone who claims to have had martial arts training, someone who's training for the olympics, and someone who says their a trained surgeon. The words "train" and "training" assume a participation and even an element of completion.
 - Training means something very different than teaching does. Teaching is one-sided. The idea of training requires that the student actually learn the material and be able to use it.

III. A Biblical Example: II Timothy 3:14-17

- First, Timothy's training started as a child. This Greek word refers to a *very* young child, even an infant. In fact, it generally refers to a new-born but can also refer to an unborn child. What's the takeaway? It is never too early to start training your children.
- Second, we see what he was trained in. He was acquainted with the sacred writings that held the message of the gospel. Paul then takes an additional step to unfold the beautiful doctrine of Inspiration in order to assure Timothy of the power of the Bible. Because it's perfectly inspired by God, it's useful for teaching, reproof, correction, and training in righteousness. We'll study those four amazing words at a later date, but please realize that this isn't referring to a parenting manual written by Dr. Spock. This isn't the four love languages. This isn't any invention of man. The holy Scriptures are the only thing that's able to make the man of God complete and equip Him for every good work. Even our youngest children must be acquainted with the fear of the Lord and the Truth of God's Word. It is never too early to start training your children about the Bible. Teaching them to memorize Scripture. It's never too early to get them involved in service and ministry.
- But here's the kicker: Many people are acquainted with the Bible and have had it used to teach, reprove, correct, and train them . . . and yet they still reject God. And this is why. They were taught, but because of their lack of participation, they weren't trained.
- Look again at what Paul said to and about Timothy: Timothy was urged to continue in what he learned. This isn't merely a passive listening or acquisition of knowledge. And this isn't something Timothy's parents could do for him. He had to consciously choose to continue in Truth. Also notice that it's said Timothy "firmly believed" the Truth he received "through faith in Christ Jesus." This point is so important, I must not rush over it . . . so I'm going to discuss in great detail during our Merest Christianity series. But for now, realize that faith is a decisive choice to accept and act upon the Truth we receive. Only by Timothy's participation can it be said that he will "continue in what he learned" and become a man of God who's complete and equipped for every good work.
- I don't know about you, but that sounds an awful lot like "*even when he is old he will not depart from it.*"
- Here's point: Proverbs 22:6 is a promise. If you train your children in the fear of the Lord and the Truth of His Word, and if your children choose to participate in that training by learning what God teaches, believing it, and continuing in it, then yes . . . they will not depart from it.
- This is a branch of another doctrine called the Perseverance of the Saints, or the Preservation of the Saints. Once saved, we cannot lose our salvation.
- But we also can't be born again and remain stagnant. Our justification is going to work in us — sanctifying us — which is a process that changes us into the image of Christ from glory to glory. Romans 8:30 says, "*And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.*" The stage between justification and glorification is sanctification where we move from our lost state to a growing in Christ-likeness state to — eventually — a perfected in Christ state. This is the necessary end of everyone who is a genuine child of God.