

## TRAIN UP A CHILD

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

This has been a problem passage through the years for those of us who are parents. We have many deceptions from the devil daily as to how to apply the passage. We have read after many learned men in this matter. Many have had some informative things to say while others have contributed little to nothing to the proper approach to this passage. Let us see if we can help with this subject. We do not offer this as the final word on the matter, but merely to stimulate our thinking on this subject.

Our children are important to us. They are an heritage from God. A gift, if you please, from Him to us. All human life is sacred in the mind of the writer. God gave it and He will also take away and takes away. Train up a child carries a responsibility for parents primarily. We know that Bible class teachers, elders, deacons, preachers, other Christian people, and the peers of the young person play a prominent role in their up-bringing. School teachers K--12 have an impact on their conduct. This is especially true in the formative years. After high school there is little benefit received in the general field of higher learning that will help them be what God wants them to be. We should all appreciate everyone who genuinely helps our children develop the proper traits and develop the proper goals. Parents, above all others, should be most thankful for every Bible class teacher, class room teacher, grandparents and others that might influence them for good. However, the full burden is squarely upon the shoulders of the parents. If our children are not getting the right kind of training, we as parents, are responsible. The child did not ask permission to come into this world. They are here now through doings of their own. What are we to do? Training that is in the Lord is obviously the proper way to do this. When does this training start? At birth would be my reply. Generally it is too late 18 to 20 years later, to teach them in the way that they should go.

Children are taught to obey their parents in Ephesians 6. Children play an important role in this matter of training. They must be receptive to that which is taught by word or deed before them. One of the first things a child learns is love. They understand security early in life. They learn the basic idea that father's are responsible for taking care of the family and that mother most of the time does the house work and takes day to day care of the child. We are certainly not leaving the father out of the picture. They have a grave responsibility as stated by Paul in Ephesians 6. It has been my conviction that father's will be judged more harshly than will mothers because of their over all responsibility. Many times the break down in training lies at the feet of the daddy that is too busy. When a dad gets this busy, he is just too busy in the sight of God. He should have thought of this before the child was conceived.



What if everything is done right, that is, to the very best of our knowledge and ability, and the child fails to walk in the right course? What do we do? This has been the question asked by so many parents over the years when they see their siblings no longer faithful to God and care little about spiritual matters. Have the parents automatically failed? I do not believe they have. Jesus taught as no other, but the most would not heed His teachings. Did he fail? Further, the parents may teach the proper course and set before the child the proper life, but on the surface it appears the child is a failure to his dad and mom especially and the church generally.

Read the passage again. It says, "...and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (under-lining added). What does this mean? A child starts by accepting the faith of his parents. One day that child is a young adult and they must make faith in God their very own. They can no longer believe just because their parents did. It must be their own faith. Right here is where the break down occurs. Many do not make the transition. Parents are disturbed as their heart's are broken. Remember, when he is old. When the person is old enough to start thinking about death, heaven and hell, what is the person to fall back on? I believe when this occurs they will come back to the way they were taught. Sometimes their parents may not be living to see it. We have seen the reformation at the death of a parent. Someday when both are in heaven there will be great rejoicing. I believe that the passage is very literal. We are not saying that the child will depart, but may depart for a period of time. Many never do! To God be the the glory for such children. This is not a "cop out" of some kind. I believe the thinking to be correct with all my heart. Think it over!

....Harrell Davidson