

#193 “Train Up A Child”

by Brent Barnett

www.relevantbibleteaching.com

Proverbs 22:6 says, “Train up a child in the way he should go, Even when he is old he will not depart from it.” Biblical training is not just training of any kind. Unless we know what the Scripture teaches, we might think we are doing things right when, in actuality, we are doing just the opposite. We must know what God has to say on the matter if we want children that are a blessing to us and to others.

First, we must understand right theology about the nature of man. Pop psychology books teach that man is basically good and that he is not born with a sin nature. However, the Bible teaches that we are born of the seed of Adam rather than of Christ (1 Corinthians 15:22). It is when we repent and receive the gospel that we are born of the seed of Christ with a changed nature and a heart that can be molded into doing God’s will. Without salvation, child training is simply child management and behavior modification. This is all the world has to offer because they start from the wrong premise of man being born good. This leads them to false conclusions such as refusing to discipline, viewing acting out as exploration and creativity, and ultimately putting the parent in a position of being controlled rather than the one dictating to the child. This does not lead the child to the fear of the Lord. Correction and training in righteousness does not stymie children’s development or growth, but it leads them in the proper growth and development directions. Our modern world is full of children who never learned their boundaries, who refused to respect and obey their parents, and who have gone and done as they pleased. They weren’t trained in godliness, and there is no reason to expect them to live godly as adults. Christians must stand apart from this mess.

Ephesians 6:1-4 says, “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER (which is the first commandment with a promise), SO THAT IT MAY BE WELL WITH YOU, AND THAT YOU MAY LIVE LONG ON THE EARTH. Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.” The command for parents is to bring children up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. This means that there is **correction** that must take place and **teaching** that must take place. Children are born as sinners who tend to rebel, so they must be trained and taught to obey *in the Lord*. Ultimately, their willingness to obey must stem from the love of the Lord, or children will rebel once they are out of the watchful eyes of their parents. The best way to teach children the love of God is by modeling it for them, being consistent in teaching what they are supposed to do and why. God is neither a disciplinarian nor an enabler of poor choices, but He is a loving God Who cares enough to correct us when we are wrong. His kindness, even in discipline, is what leads us to repentance and to loving obedience (Romans 2:4).

Proverbs 13:24 says, “He who withholds his rod hates his son, But he who loves him disciplines him diligently.” As parents establish boundaries, it communicates care, concern, and love. Those who don’t take the time to discipline don’t care about their children, and they shouldn’t be surprised when they grow into rebellious, uncontrollable

teenagers. After discipline, the child should always be reassured of love and forgiveness. They need to understand that nothing they can do will change their parents love for them. The purpose of discipline is not wrath but love. Children must always know that love drives discipline, not discipline for the sake of discipline. Discipline is not a one-size-fits-all formulaic program, but it requires that we study our children and learn how they respond and what motivates them. Discipline is never fun for either the parent or the child, but, done rightly, it leads to righteousness and love for the Lord. As Hebrews 12:11 says, "All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness."

In addition to correction, parents must teach their children the things of God. Deuteronomy 6:6-7 says, "These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up." God's will is that parents would be the primary teachers of God's Word to their children. Certainly, the pastor and other believers play a role, but ultimately God places responsibility on the parents to teach their children God's principles according to His Word. Parents must understand that there is no wrong time to teach their children, for God's Word is relevant for all areas of life. As 2 Timothy 3:16-17 says, "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work." The road to being adequate and equipped for God's work starts with parents early on.

Children are not assets, projects, extras, inconveniences, or afterthoughts. They need extreme devotion and focus. They are the ultimate investment in the future of God's kingdom. We as parents must be willing to discipline and teach our children. It is a poor testimony to have out of control kids that run amok and are a threat to somebody else's property. Granted, even the best-trained children will have better days than others, but, as a whole, Christian parents can do better such that people notice and marvel at how well behaved our children are. May God give parents the discipline and understanding to properly train and teach their children how to rightly walk before Him for all the days of their lives.