

**PP Twisted Scriptures: ‘Train up...and’...A promise??**

**Text Part 10-Proverbs 22:6**

**August 27-28, 2016**

We are coming to the end of Twisted Scriptures series, which I have thoroughly enjoyed!  
We have tried to straighten out scripture verses known by most, yet misunderstood by many  
Today’s verse is ***“Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.”*** Proverbs 22:6

In its twisted form, a formula emerges that goes like this:

**PP Right parenting = Children walking with the Lord**

How I parent will *‘determine’* my child’s relationship with God as an adult  
If my child turns away from God, then I must have failed in my parenting  
What grief and guilt this can bring to parents when their child walks away from the Lord  
But it can also create in us a sense of pride in our parenting skills if our kids do walk with God  
This surfaces when we see a child in a Christian family rebel against God, and the first thought we have is, *What did the parents do wrong?*  
Let’s be clear, poor parenting can certainly lend itself to children wanting nothing to do with God and godly parenting is incredibly influential to a child’s view of God  
Yet when this verse gets twisted, it creates the false notion that parenting is deterministic, and will either fill the heart with despair or at the other extreme, possibly pride  
With that introduction, let’s begin to untwist this verse

**PP 1-This is a discipleship command**

The book of Proverbs was a training manual for two main purposes  
One was to prepare young people to serve in the king’s courts  
Israel’s teachers were passionate in their concern to lead their students in the right path  
They were training and shaping generations of leaders whose obligation was to practice the fundamental virtues of Israel as revealed in the Law and proven by experience  
But Proverbs also contain a father’s instructions for his children  
98 times we see the phrase ***‘my son’***, pointing to the need for older, wiser men and women to teach, disciple and mentor the younger into maturity  
So we have in the book of Proverbs, a very intentional discipleship manual, to prepare people for service to the king as well as to help young people find their way to wisdom and maturity  
It is the greatest discipleship manual in the entire bible, and it is this thought that undergirds are approach to straightening our twisted verse

**PP i. The Command**

**PP** The word ***‘train’*** is found 4 times in the OT, usually meaning to dedicate and entrust  
As a verb, it includes the idea of narrowing a way to guide a child in a particular direction  
But there is another nuance of meaning for the word ***‘train’*** and that is *motivate*  
A similar Arabic word was used for the process of crushing dates and using a finger to coat the jam on the gums of an infant to stimulate and encourage sucking  
***‘Train up a child’*** has to do with dedicating the boy or girl to God, entrusting them to Him, and using your own example to produce a desire in them to follow that same path

Have you heard of Susanna Wesley, who married Sam, a preacher who couldn't manage money?  
 They disagreed on nearly everything and Sam would often leave her for long periods of time  
 They had 19 children, 9 of which died in infancy  
 One of the surviving children was crippled, another couldn't talk until he was 6, and Susanna herself struggled with constant sickness  
 Twice their house burned to ground, and it was assumed the church people did it because they didn't like what Sam preached  
 He was thrown into debtor's prison, the udders on their cow slit so they couldn't be milked, their dog killed and their flax field burned  
 But Susanna was driven to God in prayer and the study of his Word, and she taught her children that when she had the apron over her head, often two hours a day-and it wasn't to sleep-she was to be undisturbed  
 Two of her sons, John and Charles were powerhouses for the glory of the Lord  
 They each said their mom influenced them more than anyone else  
 John preached to nearly a million people while Charles wrote over 9,000 hymns  
 Yet one of her daughters got pregnant out of wedlock and the man refused to marry her  
 Behind the door of their home was chaos and suffering, and a mother who made most of Christ and initiated a hunger in her children for God...underneath her apron!

**PP** *"Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord."* Ephesians 6:4

## **PP ii-The Means**

We tend to read each verse in Proverbs in an isolated way, rather than part of an entire training manual for young people  
 This has caused many to miss what it means, *'in the way he should go'*  
 Children and teens have different learning styles, as some are visual and experiential learners while others learn better in a classroom lecture setting  
 Some cannot sit still in a classroom and others do well at learning from a book  
 So the popular, modern understanding of 'the way he should go' is that parents are to know their child's natural bent, personality, and learning styles and parent accordingly  
 Or parent according to the stage of development that the child is in  
 As helpful as it is to understand our children, this phrase speaks of something different  
**PP** The word *'go'* in the original has a very interesting meaning...*mouth*  
 A literal translation of *'in the way he should go'* is, *According to the mouth of the way*  
 Think mouth of a river, where the river begins  
 Young people are to be dedicated to and led to the beginning of the *'way'*

**PP** There are two *'ways'* in Proverbs: the *'way of wisdom'*, the path of life that leads to righteousness, or the *'way of folly'*, the path of life that leads to wickedness and death  
 Chapter **9** clearly describes each, as does **verse 5** in this chapter: *"Thorns and snares are in the way of the crooked; whoever guards his soul will keep far from them."* Proverbs 22:5  
 The program for the training parents are to give to their children is the *'way of wisdom'*, which is revealed through the Word of God

**PP** *"the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus."* 2 Timothy 3:15

**PP** *“How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word.”*

**Psalm 119:9**

There is a beautiful picture of this in Isaiah, describing God’s way of training His children Israel

**PP** *“And your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, ‘This is the way, walk in it,’ when you turn to the right or when you turn to the left.”* **Isaiah 30:21**

We cannot make a child take that path, but do all you can to show them the path in a way that by your own example, it is beautiful

We are to train up in such a way that our children hear our encouraging voices in their minds

Our training guide is not the *‘way of folly’*, it is not the wisdom of the world, but God’s way

Our training is the eternal perfect Word of God seen through our godly, loving example

Jewish discipleship is rich and on the right side of their doorposts was nailed a small piece of parchment, rolled and inserted into a case called a mezuzah

On the front of the parchment are the 22 lines of the Shema while on the back is inscribed Shaddai, a name for God that means Almighty

As one entered or left the house, it was customary to touch the mezuzah and quote **Psalm**

**PP** **121:8**, *“The LORD will keep your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forevermore.”*

It was an anchor that served as a constant reminder that nothing endures in eternity like the knowledge of God

The most ordinary and mundane act of leaving and arriving at home was a constant reminder of the love and glory of God who enable you to go and return safely

Parents, every moment is a teachable one, so let us turn it into an opportunity to weave into the very fabric of our children the love and knowledge of our God

**PP** *“So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”*

### **PP** iii-The Goal

I recently came across a little parenting nugget that I have noticed in my own life

**PP** *“I once had no children and six theories on child-raising. Now I have six children and no theories on child-raising.”*

There is nothing like parenting that can reduce our view of our own wisdom

So we may find it helpful to understand the purpose and nature of a proverb

**PP** A *‘proverb’* is a simple, moral statement or illustration that highlights and teaches fundamental realities about life

They are short sayings packed with life’s teachings, easily able to be memorized

They aren’t promises guaranteeing if you do something, this will be the result

*‘An apple a day keeps the doctor away’* teaches that eating well helps us stay healthy, not a promise that if you eat well you will never need to go to the doctor again

*“He who loves purity of heart, and whose speech is gracious, will have the king as his friend.”*

**Proverbs 22:11**

**PP** The statements of Proverbs are often safe guides to what will usually happen, snapshots of life showing the normal outcomes of a life of wisdom and a life of foolishness

The second stanza of this verse wasn't given as a promise or guarantee, but as a principle of what normally will happen when we train young people according to the **'way of wisdom'**

The goal of this training is ***"even when he is old he will not depart from it."*** **Proverbs 22:6**

Sometimes we raise our children with Christian parenting but they depart from the paths of faith

Parents can get angry feeling that God has let them down, dropping His end of the bargain

They had taken this verse in a way that was not meant to be understood

**PP** **'depart'** means to turn aside, something Moses did in **Exodus 3:3**, ***"And Moses said, "I will turn aside to see this great sight, why the bush is not burned."***

Parents, if I can comfort you with anything, maybe this will be it

**Proverbs 22:6** is not asking you to produce godly children for that is not within your control

It is encouraging us to dedicate our children to God, teaching them the **'way of wisdom'** letting our example motivate them to want to walk the same way

We cannot control the choices of our children as they grow up, yet we can bring them to the *mouth of the way*, showing them what blessings lie on the path of wisdom and what destruction is on the path of folly

We can breathe into them God's Word yet all the while, entrusting them to God for parenting is an act of faith in the God of grace

If they veer away they will not silence in their minds your familiar voice showing them the way!

One of my favorite songs is *Carry on Wayward Son*, by Kansas, which has these lyrics:

*"Once I rose above the noise and confusion, Just to get a glimpse beyond the illusion  
I was soaring ever higher, but I flew too high, Though my eyes could see I still was a blind man  
Though my mind could think I still was a mad man, I hear the voices when I'm dreamin',  
I can hear them say, Carry on my wayward son, For there'll be peace when you are done  
Lay your weary head to rest, Now don't you cry no more"*

This is a verse calling parents to put our faith and trust in God, not our parental abilities

And it is here that I want to conclude with one more point, but now aimed at our young people

## **PP 2-This is a challenge to Young people**

Most understand **Proverbs 22:6** to be directed toward parents, and hopefully by now, you understand that it was written for parents as well as those in charge of preparing young people to serve the king of Israel

But what seems to be overlooked is that Proverbs is a training manual for young people

***"The proverbs of Solomon, son of David, king of Israel: To know wisdom and instruction, to understand words of insight, to receive instruction in wise dealing, in righteousness, justice, and equity; to give prudence to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the youth"***

**Proverbs 1:1-4**

Young people, you are often given a free pass because of your age, but the Bible expects great things from you and Solomon wrote his proverbs to help you walk the **'way of wisdom'**

Joshua was an assistant to Moses from a young boy and became the leader of Israel

God called Samuel into ministry when he was a boy, David was anointed king as a young man

Josiah, the reformer king, was eight years old when he began to rule

Daniel, experts say, was a late teen who stood against massive pressure to stay true to God

Timothy was a young pastor of the church at Ephesus

Spurgeon preached his first sermon at 15, pastored at 16, and preached to crowds of 5,000 people in London at 19

Jonathon Edwards had mastered the biblical languages of Greek and Hebrew by 13

Billy Graham began preaching at 19, and has preached to over 90 million people

So let me end by encouraging you to understand a few important truths

**PP i.** *Who you make your closest friends will influence which path you will walk*

**PP** *“Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm.”*  
Proverbs 13:20

**PP ii.** *How you listen to your parents will influence which path you will walk*

**PP** *“Hear, my son, your father’s instruction, and forsake not your mother’s teaching, for they are a graceful garland for your head and pendants for your neck.”* Proverbs 1:8-9

**PP iii.** *What your attitude is toward God’s Word will influence which path you will walk*

Young people, you can learn to love God’s Word!

It is the means by which God has shown you Who He is and what He is like

It is God’s means as the Great Potter, to shape you, giving you right desires, and strengthening you to overcome your sinful ones, and opening your eyes to danger and truth

Without exception everyone who has done great things for God has loved and trusted His Word

Learn now to serve your King, Jesus Christ watch Him use you for great things in His kingdom

Parents...train, dedicate and entrust your children to the *‘way of wisdom’* the path of righteousness, letting them see your own example as an encouragement

For all of us, Proverbs is the most excellent discipleship training guide

Amen?

Pray