

THE BIBLE VIEW

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In Through the Back Door

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“Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.”

Prov. 22:6

The Bible clearly gives the responsibility of rearing children to the child's parents. If the parents are Christians then their duty also includes raising their offspring to love, honor, and obey the Lord. Proverbs 22:6 says that if the child is reared to obey the Lord he will not depart from what he has learned.

“And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture [help grow, training, disciplinary correction] and admonition [cautionary advice about something imminent] of the Lord.” Eph. 6:4

Through the years I have seen many parents raise their children as scripturally as is possible. They have had daily devotions with them. They prayed with the children, got them to a good Bible believing church every time the doors were open, enrolled them in a Christian school, participated in the child's sports and activities, maybe even led them to the Lord, and most importantly, the parents had good, consistent testimonies. Yet many of these children went

wrong. The children left all they had been taught and engulfed themselves in the ways of the world. Many years later they are still living in sin and far away from God's plan for them and how they were trained.

The parents trained their children "in the way he should go" (Prov. 22:6), but when the child was on his own he went far away from God. So many are trusting in Prov. 22:6 in raising their child. Can it possibly be wrong?

After seeing some children of godly parents ruin their lives, I have given some study to this question. The Bible is NEVER wrong, so there must be something that is being missed. Here are some of what needs to be considered, when a "raised right" child goes in the opposite way God desires of him, and how he was reared:

1. Prov. 22:6 points out that when the child "is old, he will not depart from it." That does not just mean when he is older, that means when he is "old". Some may run from God their whole life until they finally realize what they have done and repent of their disobedience. Some stray for a shorter time as the parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-24) illustrates. Many return to the faith and do obey and even serve the Lord.

There is no guarantee, as the following points will show, but while the children are alive there can still be hope that the seeds of righteousness and godly living may one day flourish in the "old child".

"So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my

mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.” Isa. 55:11

2. As Moody’s Bible Commentary points out, the Proverbs are a “general rule of thumb, not an unmitigated promise. This is a proverb, and proverbs describe the common experiences of God’s people over long periods of time.” There are always exceptions to what should happen in a life. Many, many children who have been raised to love and live for the Lord have stayed close to Him, but there are those that have deserted God’s way of living and obedience. Sadly, some never turn back to the faith they were shown.

3. When a child is very young, their behavior often reflects the parental training or lack of it that they have received. However, when they are older, they do have a mind of their own. They can choose, especially when not under auspices of their parents, to live the way they want and flee obedience to the Lord.

Although their dodge of righteous living may have involved others, one usually cannot blame “the wrong crowd”; as it was the child’s choice to follow them and not the Lord. If he was really grounded and steadfast, he would not have fallen for the temptation. *“Who leave the paths of uprightness, to walk in the ways of darkness;” Prov. 2:13*

4. Another reason I believe is responsible for the drifting away of children raised correctly by godly

parents, is the ploy of Satan. The enemy of God may have tried to foil the father's walk for Christ, but the leader of the family withstood the temptations.

The second avenue of Satan's attack on the family is often the mother. If her righteousness stands against his temptations, he then moves onto other members of the family — our children. He attacks the "backdoor" of the family. Sadly, he is too often successful.

If he gets to pull our children away from serving God, it may hurt the parents. They may even quit the ministry they were involved in. Their testimony may also be hampered or weakened so their effectiveness for serving the Lord will not be the same. Through the "backdoor," Satan can achieve the damage he desires.

Outside-of-the-family observers may falsely assume that the parents were not raising the child right. Too many backseat "parents" judge another's testimony by how the children turn out and make their opinion known to the hurting parents. However, they have no clue to what really happened. It could even be that their judging further hurts the parents of a wayward child, which could be another victory for Satan.

Rearing a child has always been very difficult. There is no instruction book teaching a parent exactly what to do in every decision he faces. The parent who knows most about the child, his temperament and past experiences may choose to deal with the child in a certain way. He may be

right. He may be wrong. However, a godly parent is usually doing what he feels is best.

Unfortunately, it may not always be the parent's fault when the child strays. We all have a free will to obey or disobey the Lord. That mindset cannot usually be changed by discipline. It always has everything to do with the young person's heart. Because it is usually the child's choice to go the way he chooses to go, it is not beneficial for the parent to blame himself for what the child has chosen to do. All a parent can do is show the right way. It is the child's choice to walk it or not.

Just because some children drift away from serving God is no reason for the parent or other parents not to do their best to raise their children biblically correct. Do not compromise and back off in raising your children the way that is wise and biblical. Living for the Lord and being obedient is the best way for any to follow. They most likely will not know it if they are not shown it at a young age. Billions of young people have walked the righteous way, because of how they were trained. Train your child in the way they should go!

“Children have more need of models than of critics.”

— *Joseph Joubert*

What's a Child to Do?

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Children are expected to be saved!

*Romans 10:13 "For **whosoever** shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Also: Luke 18:16.*

Children are expected to obey the Lord too!

*Psalm 34: 11 "Come, ye children, **hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the LORD.**"*

Children are expected to obey their parents!

*Ephesians 6:1 "Children, **obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.** 2 Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) 3 That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth."*

*Colossians 3: 20" Children , **obey your parents in all things:** for this is well pleasing unto the Lord."*

*Proverb 23:22 "**Hearken unto thy father** that begat thee, and despise not thy mother when she is old."*

*Mark 7:10 "**For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother;** and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death:"*

... even when they are grown up, as did Ester.

Ester 2: 19 "Ester had not yet shewed her kindred nor her people; as Mordecai had charged her: for Ester did the commandment of Mordecai, like as when she was brought up with him."

Children are expected to make their parents proud.

*Proverb 10:1 "The proverbs of Solomon. **A wise son***

maketh a glad father: but a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother.”

Children are expected to have a good reputation (testimony) .

*Proverbs 20: 11 “**Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right.**”*

Children can be an example to adults.

*Matthew 18:4 “Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. 5 And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me. **6 But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.**”*

*Luke 18:16 “But Jesus called them unto him, and said, **Suffer little children to come unto me , and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.** 17 Verily I say unto you, **Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein.**“*

“I would rather plant one living truth in the heart of a child that will multiply through the ages than scatter a thousand brilliant conceits before a great audience that will flash like sparks for an instant and like sparks disappear forever.” — Pell