

Friday, October 14, 2016 - Train Up Your Child...

One of the best-known passages in Scripture, and one often quoted, is this: "Train up a child in the way he should go, And even when he is old he will not depart from it." (Prov. 22:6). This incredibly wise advice of Solomon gives both a principle and a promise. The principle is: train your children regularly, faithfully, and consistently. The promise is: "he will not depart from it." The word "train" means "to instruct, guide, educate, discipline, and correct." It necessitates love and care, almost endless patience, and countless hours of instruction by both word and example. It begins in infancy and continues throughout life (2 Tim. 1:5; 3:15-17). Solomon's words, however, do not guarantee parents the proverbial "rose garden." In other words, it will not always be easy. There is no such thing as a perfect parent or child. Both parents and children make mistakes.

The teaching of Solomon on child-training may be supplemented by Paul's remarks in Ephesians 6:1-4: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honor thy father and mother, which is the first commandment with promise; that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

Notice in each of these passages, and many others, the responsibility of raising our children lies with THE PARENTS!

We have become a society of latch key children. These are children who return from school to an empty home because their parent or parents are away at work, or a child who is often left at home with little parental supervision. Too often the training of these children is passed off to "street knowledge", or some other person(s). Unfortunately too many people have bought into the ignorant concept of "it takes a village" in bringing up their children and tend to abdicate their God given responsibility.

The church has not been spared. Many parents expect the 45 minutes on Sunday morning and/or the 40 minutes on Wednesday night to be sufficient to build a life changing faith in our kids. How terribly wrong this thinking is. Parents are instructed to "bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Note the sphere of importance: "in the Lord." This involves consistent discipline, faithful training, and daily instruction. Paul's words also remind us not only of the significance of disciplining our children when they do something wrong but they also point out the value of remembering to praise them when they do something right. But children must be listening to their parents and influenced by their instructions. Children honor their parents when they obey them and listen to their counsel. They dishonor them when they stubbornly rebel and refuse to be shaped by the Master's hand lovingly administered by their parents (Prov. 29:15, 17; 27:11; 30:11-13).

Parents MUST be there and take the lead! As a rule, no one can take the parents rightful, godly place in the lives of their children with the degree of success parents can. That is because the Godly parent/child relationship is the best way for spiritual success. Paul reminds us that the Christian family includes spiritual responsibilities. The parent-child relationship and the exercise of the parental role are designed by God to mature a person who is sensitive to a person who accepts his own spiritual responsibilities.

"Tell your children of it, and let your children tell their children, and their children another generation" (Joel 1:3).