

PP Let the Wise Hear

Part 4 Proverbs 22:6-Let the Wise Train Children

2/21-22/26

The Apostle John captured the joy of a parent when their children walk with God: PP ***“I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.”*** 3 John 1:4

But Solomon captured a parent’s grief when they don’t: PP ***“A wise son makes a glad father, but a foolish son is a sorrow to his mother.”*** Proverbs 10:1

The best known verse on parenting is what we are looking at today: PP ***“Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.”*** Proverbs 22:6

This verse seems to offer hope a wayward child will return, but also guilt because if that child leaves the faith, then maybe the parent didn’t do well enough when they were young

To help with this, experts tell us that Proverbs are not promises but rather principles of how things normally go, after all, *An apple a day doesn’t always keep the doctor away*

So what wisdom does **Proverbs 22:6** actually offer to us?

PP 1-Wise parents discern

Good parenting does not guarantee a child makes good choices as an adult and bad parenting doesn’t guarantee a child’s bad choices

The Heavenly Father Himself said, PP ***“Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for the LORD has spoken: ‘Children have I reared and brought up, but they have rebelled against me.’”*** Isaiah 1:2

King David had several kids who were unfaithful to God as did both Samuel and Eli

King Saul was a terrible father but his son Jonathon grew up to be a godly and faithful man

So as we approach **Proverbs 22:6**, perhaps we need to see it with fresh, discerning eyes

PP ***“Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.”***
Proverbs 22:6

To begin, the words, *‘should go’* are not in the original but added to aid in the interpretation

Literally, it says, PP ***‘Train a child in his way, and when he is old he will not depart from it.’***

‘Train a child in his way’ is to train a child according to his nature, his bent, *‘his way’*

Some take this as parenting according to the child’s personality, talents or even the stage in life

In other words, every child is different so wise parents must best discern the child’s needs

But this isn’t, I don’t believe, what Solomon meant and I’ll explain why

Proverbs 22:6 and **22:15** form a Hebrew inclusio which is where a bible passage begins and ends with the same context and verse 15 says, PP ***“Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline drives it far from him.”*** Proverbs 22:15

Look at your sweet newborn, and you are seeing a person with folly bound up in the heart, a born rebel against God

I learned this when one of my kids was 6 months old, trying to crawl and reached his hand out to an electrical outlet, and I said, ‘No! Dangerous!’, and he drew his hand back

Yet immediately, he looked at me, reaching his hand back toward it...a sinner like his mother!

Springsteen says we are born to run, the bible says we are born to rebel

But this biblical truth is in sharp conflict with our modern child philosophy which was heavily influenced by the 18th-century Swiss philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau

He argued that children are born as a clean slate, pure, untainted until society/families write on it

He argued children should be free of adult pressure and given freedom to explore who he is and

allowed to follow his curiosity of self discovery to determine his identity
Rousseau is considered the Father of early childhood education and what has emerged from the seeds of his philosophy is today's insistence that a child should determine his own gender
The parent, educator should *not* influence the child's self-understanding, let it emerge on its own
By the way, Rousseau had 5 children of his own and he gave each one up to the orphanage
His philosophy saturates Disney, for example, *Follow your Heart* from Cinderella 2
PP *'So reach for the sky, It's not high as it seems, Just follow your heart, Go as far as your dreams'* Follow Your Heart, Cinderella II

Solomon is saying here, and this is Hebrew sarcasm, *Go ahead, parent according to your child's foolish bent, and don't be surprised when that folly never leaves him*
Give your child whatever he wants and he will grow up not content in anything he has
Give in to your daughter's impulsiveness and don't be surprised when she amasses credit debt
Don't make your child do chores and you'll see how it forms an undisciplined entitled adult
Coddle your child and serve his every whim and watch him never leave your house
Try and be your daughter's best friend, and watch the honor she should have for you, disintegrate
Proverbs 22:6 is actually a promise after all, one wisely telling us that training a child to be a fool will be successful every time!
PP This is not a proverb meant to warm a parent's heart but warn a parent's heart!

PP 2-Wise parents discipline

Let's look at this again: **PP** *"Train up a child in [his way]; even when he is old he will not depart from it...Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline drives it far from him."* Proverbs 22:6, 15

Just as we must not train our children accord to their foolish bent, on the flipside, we must parent in a way that drives that folly far from him
Foolish parents indulge a child's whims, thinking, *'I don't want him to be left out of what all the other kids are doing.'*
They ignore rebellious behavior, reasoning, *'Oh well, boys will be boys.'*
They offer excuses, *'I know that's a problem, but she's really a good kid at heart.'*
Foolish parents selfishly want to be besties, *'I just want her to think I'm the cool mom.'*
There is nowhere in the bible where parents should aim to be their children's best friends
Parenting is never done, and correction, though it changes as kids grow older, never ends

Wise parents train, not according to the child's way of folly, but according to the way of wisdom that leads to life!

PP *'Train up'* means to give foundational direction in life, to dedicate, to initiate
Again, Solomon is saying, if you dedicate a child to his own foolish bent, he will never leave it
His sarcasm is stressing the point that wise parents know that folly is bound up in the heart of their children, and they begin to train, initiate ways to separate the folly from their child
And Proverbs repeatedly tells us that the way to do that is exercising well, the *'rod of discipline'*
"The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child left to himself brings shame to his mother."
Proverbs 29:15

Here we see wisdom for two different types of discipline with the rod (spanking) for when children are younger and verbal reproof when they are older
Probably not a good idea to spank your 20 year old even if you want to, and verbal correction

alone is not usually what will drive folly from the heart of a young child

PP *Every godly discipline you administer to your children is a rescue mission from their folly!*

PP The bible likens parenting to shepherding, and one of the tools of the shepherd is the rod

PP i. The rod was for protecting the sheep from predators and bandits

There is a war against the family going on all around us, aiming for our children

PP *"Ultimately, we want to destroy the three pillars of class and caste society—the family, private property, and the state."* Feminist Roxanne Dunbar

Trans parades with their chants, *'We're coming for your kids'* tells us that the war which at one time lurked in the shadows is now unashamedly out in the open

The rod of discipline is meant to protect our children from those who would destroy them

PP ii. It was for correction as he would firmly but gently strike a wayward sheep

Some young children are strong-minded and willful, and the rod cannot be spared

PP *"Whoever spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is diligent to discipline him."*

Proverbs 13:24

PP *"Discipline your son, for there is hope; do not set your heart on putting him to death."*

Proverbs 19:18

PP *"Do not withhold discipline from a child; if you strike him with a rod, he will not die."*

Proverbs 23:13

One ancient Egyptian proverb said that young boys have ears on their backsides

One study done at Calvin College revealed that kids spanked between the ages of 2 and 6 years old earned better grades in school and had a more positive outlook on life

Physical correction that does not spare the rod is important, but it must never be done abusively

PP iii. The rod was for examination and used to part the oily fleece to check its body for cuts, infections and parasites

PP *"Know well the condition of your flocks, and give attention to your herds"* **Proverbs 27:23**

If you see your daughter worried about her weight overly much, then you move to her in wisdom

If you see your son growing in pride, you move toward him in wisdom

Child, you are stepping foot on a path of folly and heading toward misery and ruin, turn away from it to the path of wisdom, and you will walk toward life

If you see what is harming them, you confront, warn, encourage, plead and boldly pray

PP iv. The rod was for keeping track of the sheep, making sure they were accounted for

The shepherd would dip the rod as he counted the sheep, like we would a finger

Wise parents often take stock of which path their children are walking on

Years ago a mother told me she trusted her teenage son and let him and his girlfriend hang out in his bedroom with the door closed only to discover they were having sex

She had ignored my warnings, forgetting that folly is bound up in her son's heart

Wise parents learn to have regular check ins with their children discerning where their hearts are

PP v. The rod was a tool of authority symbolizing his role of protector and provider of the sheep

Over and over Proverbs puts parents in the shepherding role and warns to not forsake discipline

A wise parent knows that folly is already bound up in the heart of the child, and he or she

skillfully learns to use the rod of discipline, to protect, correct, examine and keep account

Do nothing to correct your children, and folly will stay with them, but you have a shepherding

rod that when skillfully used, can drive it away from the heart of your child

Pray