

GPS (Godly Parenting Skills) Class
“Shepherding Children’s Hearts”
Part One
Foundations for Biblical Parenting
Training Your Child’s Heart Prov. 22:6

Part A: Understanding the Training Process

Prov. 22:6 Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old,
he will not depart from it.

I. Correcting Misunderstandings About Training Prov. 22:6

1. That he will be a prodigal at some point.

Your child does not have to be a prodigal. As a general principle (and remember this is a proverb from a book of general principles of King Solomon’s wisdom). Take heart, children tend to stay true to wise training.

2. That if he is a prodigal, and he’s received the right training he’ll come back.

If he is a prodigal, and he’s received the right training, he may come back, but he may not. But he will never forget his training – he cannot depart from it, in that, it will stay with him, not that he will never make the choice to ignore it or go astray.

3. You can protect your child from evil (and harm) and he will not become a prodigal.

It is good to protect your child, but you cannot completely protect your child from evil and harm. It is even better to train your child to protect himself by making the right choices.

4. That the way (correct training) is the same for every child.

To properly train a child you understand that every child is different, so you need to know your child’s heart and adapt to their need and receptivity to training.

II. The Nature of the Training Process

1. Term originally referred to “the palate, the roof of the mouth, the gums”.
2. In the verb form – it was used for breaking a wild horse by placing a rope in its mouth and thereby bringing it into submission.
3. It is also used to describe the action of a midwife to start a newborn sucking.
4. So also, the parent is to bring the child into submission and create a thirst for the nourishing flow of the parent’s wisdom and counsel.

III. The Duration of the Training Process

1. The word child (H *na-ar*) invariably calls to mind a little one between infancy and four or five years of age.
2. However, the Scripture uses the term in a broader sense, ranging anywhere from a newborn to a person of marriageable age (cf. 1 Sam. 4:20-21; 1:22-23, Gen. 37:2)
3. In the second half of the verse, the root meaning of the Hebrew word for “when he is old” is “bearded” or “chin,” Solomon is not envisioning a seventy-year-old prodigal returning home.

4. A boy starts growing a beard on his chin during adolescence. The point is, when the child reaches maturity, he will not depart from the way in which he has been trained. Key time for training is pre-adolescence.
5. Therefore, the responsibility of the parents is to train up, create a thirst, build into the child this experience of submission, and to continue that training the entire time the child is under their care.

IV. This is the application of Deut. 6:4-9 (NIV2011)

⁴ Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. ⁵ Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. ⁶ These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. ⁷ Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. ⁸ Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. ⁹ Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

1. Teach your children to love the Lord with all you being and hold His teachings in their hearts.
2. Impress God's principles deep into their hearts (Hebrew *sanan* means to prick or sharpen – used in Deut. 32:41 for sharpening a sword) by keeping them before them:
 - a. in every moment of their lives – sitting, walking, lying down, rising up
 - b. In their action and their thoughts – sign on hands and foreheads
 - c. In their coming and going – write them on door frames and gates