

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

**Part B: 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.

**Introduction: In last week’s lesson we talked about:**

1. Understandings of the meaning of Prov. 22:16 as it fits our theme to put God’s principles into the hearts of children.
2. That the nature of this training is to teach children the heart of submission and thirst for God’s will
3. That the key time to train the heart is in primarily during pre-adolescence childhood.
4. This fits the application of Deut. 6:4-9

<sup>4</sup> Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. <sup>5</sup> Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. <sup>6</sup> These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. <sup>7</sup> 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. <sup>8</sup> Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. <sup>9</sup> Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

**a. Applying Deut. 6:4-9**

- i. Teach your children to love the Lord with all you being and hold His teachings in their hearts.
- ii. 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
  - 1) in every moment of their lives – sitting, walking, lying down, rising up
  - 2) In their action and their thoughts – sign on hands and foreheads
  - 3) In their coming and going – write them on door frames and gates

**I. 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.

**A. The Implementation of the Training (in)**

1. The manner of training is suggested by the word in.

2. The term means “in keeping with, in cooperation with, in accordance to something.”
3. The literal rendering is “according to his way.” If you want your training to be meaningful and wise, be observant and discover your child’s way (personality) and adapt your training accordingly.

**B. The Implementation of the Training (way)**

1. Strengthening this idea is the word way. This Hebrew term literally means “road” or “path”.
2. Metaphorically, it is “his path, direction, bent.”
3. In Proverbs 22:6, the word way is used in the same sense: “Train up a child in keeping with the path, direction, bent of his characteristics.” There is a bent of personality already established within every child God places in our care.
4. Psalm 7:12 confirms this usage of bent to describe a “way” or “characteristic.” The word bent is the verbal form of the word “way” and is here used of God who “has bent His bow and made it ready.”
5. Your child is not a completely pliable lump of clay, he is more a bent twig, prescribed according to a predetermined pattern. Examples? When a parent takes the same approach with each child trying to force them to be the same, they make serious mistakes. It is vital for parents to know their children’s bent and approach their training accordingly. What happens to a child when we try to train them contrary to their natural bent?

**II. Understanding Your Child’s Nature - 3 Things revealed in Scripture concerning the bent of every child:**

**A. 1. A general bent toward good.**

1. Coined in the image of God, the child bears a certain imprint of divinity (Gen. 1:26-27).
2. From this, each person derives a dignity and worth that is to be known and protected (cf. Gen. 9:6; James 3:9),
3. The child also has been given a unique personality and distinctive abilities that can be used for good.

**B. 2. A general bent toward evil.**

1. Children are also human, descendants of Adam, with a sinful nature Rom. 5:12
2. While born innocent of personal sin, they begin to make selfish choices, thus need to be “born again” (John 3:3)
3. Ps. 51:5 is probably dealing with this bent toward sin.
4. Not “inherited original sin,” but inherited sinful nature (Rom 5-8)
5. Psalm 58:3 conveys the same thought: “The wicked are estranged from the womb. These who speak lies go astray from birth.”

6. You have to instruct children to tell the truth, but you never have to sit down and teach them to lie. That's part of their bent toward evil (Gk *sarx*), inherited from Adam.
- C. **3. A specific bent toward evil.**
1. Aside from their roots in Adam, all children have a specific bent toward evil which is inherited from their immediate family (Ex. 34:7).
  2. In some strange genetics of the soul, sin and its effects pass through the family tree like sap. We will deal with this more in future lessons.
  3. "A pupil is not above his teacher; but everyone, after he has been fully trained, will be like his teacher" (Luke 6:40). In other words, once you've fully trained your child, he's going to be like you. Now that's a sobering thought.
  4. Our children are a reflection of us and of the dynamics at work in our home. Take a good look – an honest, non-defensive look – at your children. What do you see in them that reflects you? What do you need to change for the good of your child?
  5. Watch the Casting Crowns music video of "Home of Their Dreams" (Craig Smith video)