

Transcription of 18TM843

Proverbs 22:6 "Hope for Two Generations" November 25,  
2018

All right. Let's open our Bibles this morning to  
Proverbs Chapter 22 verse 6.

I'm just going to stick with one verse this morning,  
where we read these words: "Train up a child in the way  
that he should go, and when he gets old he will not  
depart from it."

Solomon was the wisest man that ever lived, aside from  
Jesus. Certainly the wisest man that ever lived upon the  
earth, or will ever live. We know that because the Bible  
tells us that God made him that wise. In that wisdom  
much of the Proverbs are written, and so we get this one  
verse. And it has a lot to say, and I think we can make  
a couple of observations that maybe -- a couple of  
outlines that would help us to apply them.

I know they apply to everyone, because if you don't have  
kids, you are a kid. You're somebody's kid. You're  
either a disappointment or a joy. I won't ask your

husband or wife, but we'll just go with your own assessment. But here is one verse that promises hope for two generations, both for the parent and for the child. And it is a calling upon parents to raise their children well. It uses the words "when he gets old he won't depart in the ways that he should go." If you leave a kid alone, there's a way that he will go, but then there's a way that he should go. A life not of ruin, but of life. A life not -- that is wide, but one that is narrow. So from the wisest guy that ever lived comes this bit of promise and hope, and I wanted to give you just a couple of things to think about.

The word "train," by the way, here in Hebrew means to choke. I'm not sure you should take that literally. But it means to constrict or to educate or to inaugurate, if you will. It is a word that speaks about guidance, training, showing someone else the path that they should go, that they would not discover that path on their own without direction, without wisdom.

Man will follow the least resistance path of sin. It's where he's bound to go. But that's not where God would have him to be. It says that "The rod and the rebuke will give wisdom, but a child left to himself will suffer

shame." So train up a child in the ways that he should go, when he gets old he doesn't depart.

The word "child" here is a word that means youth. It literally just means young. It would tell you and I that the first point we want to think about as far as parenting is that you should start raising your kids in the ways of the Lord when they're young. In fact, I think Charles Bridges wrote on his commentary on this chapter, "The earlier, the better. The easier the work, the more encouraging the results." Because convictions and patterns of life are developed pretty early in our lives. And it is true that our characters are molded oftentimes in the cast that we've been poured into from the beginning.

There's a great verse in Isaiah Chapter 28 as the Lord is speaking to the children of Israel and really encouraging them to straighten up. But He says through the prophet in Chapter 28, "Whom will He teach knowledge to? And who will be made to understand the message? Is it not those who are weaned from milk and drawn from the breasts? That precept can then be upon precept, and line can be upon line. Here a little, there a little."

Start early. Start as early as the children can begin to watch what's going on. The old saying, you can't teach an old dog new tricks? Pretty much works in humans too; right? We develop a lot of our outlooks before the -- you know, we want to get to our kids before the cement starts to harden.

Moses is a pretty good example of that. I mean, Moses was born to a couple who decided to have kids at a time when the government they were under was putting to death Hebrew children in the hopes of paring down the population. They were threatened by their captive tribes of Israel that lived amongst them. But they had a child. The Lord even told the parents what this child's future would hold. They couldn't have been more excited. They hid Moses for three months before they had to put him in the Nile, because that was the rule, but they put him in a little bulrush basket. They let him go right up above where Pharaoh lived. His daughter found the little baby, took him, her heart went out to this little one. And Miriam, Moses' sister, ran over and said, "I can get someone to nurse that baby for you." And she said, "Well, I'll pay them." And so Moses' mom got paid for taking care of her own kid, at least for the first four or five years of his life. But in those five years,

those formative five years, the weaning process, Moses got to hear from mom and dad what God's plans for him were, what God intended to do in his life. And so that's what he had when he was taken and placed into the opulence and the sinful life of the Pharaoh's home. They were the richest family on the planet. They could have whatever they wanted. And for the next 35 years, Moses was raised there with the finest of everything. But at 40 years old, according to Hebrews, he looked around and he realized that he wasn't a part of this family, and he really was a child of God, and so he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh anymore. He chose affliction with the people of God rather than the passion pleasures of sin. He esteemed the reproach of Christ greater treasures than the treasures of Egypt. He wanted a reward that was longer lasting. And he walked. Why did he do that? Well, for five years his mom spoke to his heart about God's purposes and plans for his life. "Train up a child in the ways that he should go, and when he gets old he doesn't depart from it."

It is quite a different story for a guy like Eli. He was the high priest in the days of Samuel. He had two boys at least, maybe more, but when you read I Samuel Chapter 3, the Lord says to Samuel, "I'm going to bring judgment

upon the house of Eli. I've told him around that already, because of the sin in his family that he knows. His sons made themselves vile. He didn't restrain them." If you read just a chapter before that, I Samuel Chapter 2, it tells us of Eli's sons being priests and the people coming to give their offerings according to the law to the Lord, but instead of taking the portion that was there for the priest, the priest started pushing people round. They said, "We don't want you to give us that boiled meat. We don't like that. We want raw meat. We're going to roast it ourselves and we're going to take what we want." And they threw their hooks into these offerings and took it from the people that had brought it to the Lord by obligation, as well hopefully by love, to give as God required. But these guys began to rip people off, and the people hated coming. In fact, you will read there in that scripture that it says that they abhorred the offerings of the Lord. They didn't want to come anymore. These folks that they ran into at the tabernacle were just crooks. And the Lord judged them accordingly. They served themselves. They said to the people, "If you don't give it to us, we will take it by force." And nothing was done. And Eli's sons were judged.

At that same time, Hannah, a very godly woman, had been going every year to pray for a child. She couldn't have them. She was barren. One year the Lord answered her prayer, and she had said to the Lord that year, "You give me a son, I'll give him back to You to serve all the days of his life." And eventually Samuel was born, and she stayed home with him. She nursed him, took him through this weaning period, and then she did what she promised to do: She took this boy to live under the care of the priests there at the tabernacle so he could serve the Lord and dedicate himself to the Lord. The priest that he went to work for? Eli, the wicked guy who couldn't raise his own kids. But because of the raising of Samuel by his mother in those formative year, Samuel became the greatest prophet that Israel had seen. In fact, Eli would get news from the Lord from this young man that was now serving with him. He turned out just fine.

When Paul sent Timothy to be the pastor of the Ephesus church, lots of problems in the church, lots of things to take care of, but Timothy was a little shy and he was a little bit reserved. Paul in both letters he wrote to him kind of cheered him on. Timothy wasn't one of those Type A personalities. But he said to him in the first letter that he wrote to him, "I want you to remember the

genuine faith that is in you, how it dwelt first in your grandmother Lois, then was found in your mother Eunice, and I trust that it is now also being found in you." And he referred to Timothy's upbringing, both from grandma and from mom, the examples that he saw.

When Paul wrote his last letter to Timothy before Paul was killed, he said in Chapter 3 of second Timothy, "You got to remember the things that you've been taught, and that you've learned, the things you've been assured of, and that you've come to know from your childhood about faith; that is able to make you wise unto salvation through faith in Christ." You've known this since you were a kid, Timothy. This isn't new to you. This has been bred into your heart and into your life. And Timothy was prepared early and he became a pastor over the Ephesian church for years.

Would it be a comfort to you or a frightening reality if you knew that your kid was going to turn out spiritually exactly like you? Would that be, "yes!" or "no, please no"? How many services would have to be canceled due to your lack of attendance? Or how many missionaries would have to be brought home for lack of support? How many prayer meetings would have to be shut down for lack of

interest? How many ministries would disappear for lack of participation? If the kids turned out just like you, would that be a good thing or not? Because ultimately it is important that we realize that kids are going to need to be more than told what to do; they're going to have to be shown what to do. They're going to have to develop their own convictions watching your convictions. Raise up a child and train them up in the way that he should go. When they get old, they won't depart.

We have, and we had to deal with a couple of times, parents who brought their kids to church on Wednesday night, dropped the kids off in their class, and then went out to dinner. They used us as a babysitting service. Well, from a liability standpoint, that's a bad thing for us to have to deal with. Your kid falls down and hurts themselves, you can't find the parent. But more important than that, it's a horrible way to parent.

My father's greatest word for years was, "Don't do like I do. Do what I tell you." Not a really approved biblical method of training. Later he got saved and he was a different father. But train them up, not with empty words, but with lifestyles that can be emulated.

So train them early, point one. Second of all, train them with purpose now. You have to have a goal. Anything you do just have an end game. What is the greatest desire this morning that you have for your kids? Or what is the greatest desire your parents have for you? Most parents, if you ask them what their primary goals of life were, you get almost the same answers: We want them to get a good education, we want them to grow up to be good people, we want them to have a good job, we want them to find a good husband or a wife, we want them to be happy and successful. All good desires. If the kids are littler, we want them to make the soccer team, we want them to score a goal, want them to learn self-esteem, want them maximizing their potential. All good desires. But if that's where you stop, what makes you any different than an unbelieving parent? Because that's exactly what they want for their kids. They love them too. They want, just like you, all of those things. The thing that distinguishes you is that your desire more than anything else ought to be how well your kids are doing spiritually. You got to leave them that legacy, that their walk with the Lord, their love for Jesus, their surrender to His will, their trust in His control has to be the most important thing of all. That's what makes you different. You are now raising them up in the

ways of the Lord. More important than all other worldly and temporal success is their eternal and their spiritual well-being.

Look at the prayer of Samson's parents. Samson was born as a result of the Lord's will in raising up a deliverer from the Philistines for the nation of Israel, but God sent an angel to his -- first to his mom, then to his mom and dad. But when He laid out to them what God's intentions for this boy that was to be born were, Manoah, his father, said "Oh, Lord, let Your words come to pass and tell me what the rules of life for this boy should be. And how should his work go? Guide me. Help me to understand what he needs to do to get to where You want him to be." That was his greatest concern. He wanted God's will for his boy. He prayed before he was even conceived. Look, if your only desire for your children is materialistic and temporary, then I would remind you that Jesus said, "What profit is it if he gains the whole world and loses his soul?" That can't be your greatest goal or purpose for your child raising. In fact, Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount, "Look, don't worry so much about what you're going to eat or what you're going to wear, what you're going to drink. The Gentiles, that's their problem, man. That's what they worry about

night and day. That preoccupies their concerns. Your Heavenly Father knows you need all of those things. Look, seek first the Kingdom of God." It's a priority issue. And if you'll do that, God will give you all of those other things. Your job is very singular: Be spiritual in your pursuits.

You should be more concerned with what your child becomes rather than what he might accomplish. Proverbs 31, and we'll get to that in a few weeks, starts with the words, "The words of King Lemuel, the utterances which his mother taught him." He's a king now. He is a big shot. He's got power. What are the wise things you can tell me? Well, let me tell you some things my mom taught me, because that's the influence. Training should begin early. It should be pursued with purpose and goal, so that you're firmly established along the path. "Train up a child in the way that he should go."

I think training needs to be practical and applicable, and I'll tell you what: Training, in the Bible at least, is primarily by example. Lecturing isn't sufficient. Discussions about a verse at the table are not sufficient. Quoting a verse when it suits you is insufficient. You need to practice what you preach. Or

practice what I preach if you like. Go do that. Imagine having a son and having this great desire because "I always wanted a boy. I'm going to teach him how to play baseball, because I played ball and I want the boy to play ball." And so your method of teaching is to take him into a classroom and draw pictures on the blackboard. "And then the velocity of the arm will equal the arc and -- that's the way you play baseball, son." He's going to fail at it. In fact, he's going to look silly on the mound. But if you take him out and throw the ball back and forth and help him to develop his form, he'll do good, or he'll do as best as he can. But you draw a picture on the wall, that's not exactly going to help him to make it forward. It's not going to help. You need to have a practical and real applicable approach.

Kids need to grow up in an environment at their home where they can actively apply godliness because they see it in your life. They want a walk with God that they can emulate. They are going to be like you in devotion for quite some time. There's an old line that says you can learn a lot more with your eyes than you can with your ears, and I think that's so. We learn by behavior. And I'll tell you what: A poor behavior can excuse a lot of disobedience. I used to hear a lot from my mother, "Do

what your dad says." And I would say, "He doesn't do it. Why should I?" To which she went, "Eh. I've raised a smart son." No, that's not at all what she said.

When Moses sat the children of Israel down to send them off to follow Joshua, he chastised them in Chapter 4 and he said, "Look, what other nation that is as great as ours have the statutes and the righteous judgments of God in the law like you've had set before you today? Look, take heed to yourself. Be diligent about these things. Don't forget what your eyes have seen. Don't depart from the things that you have learned. Go and teach them to your children and your grandchildren." You've been given such an advantage. Pass them along. Give them to your kids so that they can do well, because you're privileged to know God, and they should see that as well.

I'm shocked at how many Christian parents are unwilling to make the time out of their busy schedules to take their own kids to church, or to excuse the fact that they have no time to worship God. Even with best of intentions, "Oh, we have no time." When Solomon wrote early on in this book to his son, he said, "Son, listen to my words, and your years of life will be many. I've taught you in the ways of wisdom; and I've led you in the

right paths. So you can walk in it, your steps won't be hindered, when you run, you won't stumble." But he uses both of those words, "I've taught you" and "I've shown you." I've told you and then I've modeled it for. You can have the best of both worlds: Taught and led. There's no logic in trying to believe that somehow your kids are going to have different attitudes about God than you have. Your kids, in their eyes you're their hero, at least for a while. It would behoove you to be a godly man, a good husband, a faithful model, a dedicated saint, because if you train up the child in the way that he should go, when he gets old, he won't depart.

Many parents express the sentiment that they hope their kid turn out better than them, to which I always say this: That's a nice thought. That's only going to work if you hand them to somebody else who is better than you, or else they're going to turn out just like you. A child will at best be more often than not just like you, and inconsistency will work against you. The Bible would teach us, and in 100 places, that parental influence or parental figure influence is the most important thing that turns the heart of the people as they grow up.

There are two kings in the Bible named Azariah. One is

in the north, one is in the south. If you read not carefully, you'll mix them up, but in -- all that to say that there was a fellow named Azariah in I Kings Chapter 22. He became king after Ahab, his father. He ruled for, I think, 17 years -- no, no. He only ruled for two years. But he did evil in the sight of the Lord. And then it says this: "Because he walked in the ways of his father and he walked in the ways of his mother and he walked in the way of Jeroboam, the fellow who had taught him, and he made Israel to sin. He worshipped Baal, he provoked the Lord. He lived according to the ways of his father." In II Chronicles 22, another Azariah -- different guy, same name -- we read of him these words: "His mother raised him to do wicked things. He did evil in the sight of the Lord. Because she was his counselor after the death of his father, to his own destruction." It is the early influence that is constantly referred to in the lives of these that would be just wicked kings in Israel's history. They ended up turning against God and the blame, or at least the influences, is where the Lord places great blame.

It's important that we hear it and we understand it.

You're a tool of deliverance for your own children. And you're going to have to lead the way by example, because

whether good or bad, to their detriment or to their blessing, your life is the most impactful thing that they have to go with. We actually have people that bring their kids to church and think that somehow in 34, 40 minutes, our Sunday school teacher once a week is supposed to develop and do everything you don't do at home. They inherit your problems is what they get, for 45 minutes, and then at the end of class they go, "Take him away. Please, take him."

In many ways parenting is a watchful, anxious-filling, painful prolonged period of waiting. It can take years for fruit to develop. You know that. You survive by hanging on to promises like this. We read, "And when they get old, they won't depart from it," and we say to ourselves, "What does the word 'old' mean? How old is old?" Well, the word "old" means to age. It's devoid of time in terms of definition. It just means growing older. As they grow older. That's really as far as we can go. It takes time. And the best opportunity you have in training is while your kids are still at home. We hear from parents sometimes, and kind of shake our heads to hear that parents -- we will say to them, "Man, I haven't seen you in church." And they'll say, "Oh, the kids are going through a time right now. They don't like

church." Yeah, I didn't like Brussels sprouts either, but I ate them. It's only when you get out of your house that you never have to eat them again. I've discovered this. It's in the book. There's just certain things that you just have to tell your kids, "This is what we're doing. This is how it works. This is what matters to us." You don't let them make the rules, you make the rules. Don't have them determine how the house runs. You run the house, or I hope you do. How old is old? Older. So maybe you have kids that are 20 or 30 or 40 years old, and they are not doing so well yet. Don't give up. They're getting older. The promise remains.

It seems to me that there are some folks in the Bible, as you read and look at their example, who seem to grab hold of early the spiritual integrity that you want your kids to have, and they seem to do it permanently and there doesn't seem to be any struggle or any side trips at all. It just seems to work out. It seems to be really well done and it goes well. We read that -- we didn't read it today, but Psalm 92, it says, "Those who are planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God, and they'll still bear fruit in their old age, fresh and flourishing to declare that the Lord is right."

Yeah, some people just -- the kids start off early and

you -- you usually hate those parents, because their kids are perfect. And they'll walk around, "Yeah, I got perfect kids." "You shut up. My kids will be perfect eventually." The normal pattern, however, is Psalm 25 verse 7 where David says, "Lord, don't remember the sins of my youth." That's the more likely; right? That transition from dependency upon you to independence can be very difficult.

I went to a Catholic high school, with lots of rules. All boys school. Lots of rules. Did I say that? Lots of rules. And then I went to U.C.I. I had no rules. Lived in the dorms, like a rock star. Just about lost my scholarship the first quarter because I was just messing around. No rules at all. There was three years in my life when I loved -- if I could make a deal with the Lord to give Him the three years I messed up so much, I think -- it was a concentrating three years of horribleness. I would have liked to avoid those.

So that's usually the way that things go. The transition is fraught with difficulty. Everybody has to find their own relationship with the Lord. Growing up is not instantaneous. It takes time.

Start early. And if you've done your best and the kids are now walking around and maybe they're not doing as well as you would hope to do, then I would go back to hang on to a promise like this one. There's a scripture that Solomon wrote in Ecclesiastes, he wrote, "Cast your bread upon the water. You'll find it after many days." In the context it literally speaks about, you've done your best. Now let it grow. Let it ferment. Let it set up. Give it some time. And I would encourage you with kids, if they're older or not doing well, look, you've done all that you can. Now you leave it with the Lord. And hang on to this verse. It's not too late.

When Habakkuk received that word from the Lord in Chapter 2, the Lord said, "Habakkuk, what I've shown you is a vision for an appointed time. In the end, it will speak and it won't be late and it won't tarry. Just wait for it. It's coming." But the whole issue was wait. Sometimes you just have to wait. And what is the promise? That when he is older, the convictions once impressed and modeled in his heart will satisfy him, will overwhelm him, will lead him back home. The conscious will be stirred and the sin will seem empty, and it won't satisfy, and the Holy Spirit will lean heavily upon his heart and God's word will churn from within. Train up a

child in the way that he should go.

The original prodigal son lived in a home that had everything. He was blessed beyond measure. He had anything he could want. He was a rich man in a rich household with great influence. His demand to his father was to give him the money that he would eventually inherit so that he could live it up while he was still young, and his father said, "All right. Take it." And he took it all right, and bailed out and went and lived the way that he thought he should live. Eventually he ran out of dough, because that life will never satisfy. Though he didn't think he could go home again to be a son to his father, he was convinced that his father would employ him. "I'm sure I can go back and find grace there that I can't find in this world that I tried to pursue with all that I had." And God met him, as we see the picture, with open arms and with great joy. And He'll do that for your kids as well. Or for you. Maybe you're the kid. I know parents sometimes will say, "I hope it happens before I die." I can't guarantee you that.

I think about Samson. We mentioned about how his birth was so miraculous, right? How many of you had an angel announce you to your parents. Great potential. Great

plans of God. He fulfilled literally none them. Oh, he had a victory or two, but his heart didn't please the Lord. And his parents' heart broke. He married women that his parents hated. They tried to talk him into it, he told them, "Shut up and leave me alone. I'm an adult." It's right in there in your Bible. I don't know if the word "shut up" is in there, but. . . Yet -- read the whole story -- in the end, the dying wish of Samson was to please the Lord. It cost him his life. You might say too little too late, and I'd agree with you. However, I fully expect to meet Samson in heaven one day. I really don't expect to see Saul there at all.

So is it a promise? I know sometimes when we get to the book of Proverbs, people will say, Well, these are general truths of God, and the influence early will certainly outweigh the one who has none, and so there's a practice there, but there's no promise there. Well, you read it however you want. I need a promise like that from God. And I'd be in a difficult spot if I started to tell you, this is a promise, this is a generalization, and this is a promise, but this is a generalization.

Train them early with purpose, practically leading by example, and then waiting prayerfully, and I think that

you'll make it down the road.

Hope for two generations. Here's something to think about, and we'll close with this: From what I can gather from the Bible, most kids will be reunited with their parents in eternity.