



Life Principles Notes

Practical Lessons for Understanding the Word of God

TRAINING OUR CHILDREN

KEY PASSAGE: Proverbs 22:6 | **SUPPORTING SCRIPTURE:** Deuteronomy 6:1-9 | Exodus 20:15-16 | Psalm 119:105
Proverbs 3:12 | 1 Corinthians 13:8

SUMMARY:

What is your goal in raising children?

Is your main desire for them to be happy? Or do you dream of seeing them excel in sports, the arts, or another one of your interests?

The Bible teaches that parents' top priority in raising children should be spiritual. Proverbs 22:6 says, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." Our primary task is to prepare them to walk according to God's plan, will, and purpose for their lives. We are to instill in them an unshakeable faith that will protect them from the assault of the Devil.

You have an awesome responsibility to train your children to follow Jesus Christ. Teach them the ways of God from an early age, and you will be amazed at their resistance to sin and the strength of their faith.

SCRIPTURAL PRINCIPLES:

What does Scripture say?

In Deuteronomy chapter six, God instructed the Israelite families to teach their children His commands: "Talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, and when you lie down and when you rise up" (v. 7). That means parents should talk daily to their children about the things of the Lord.

You may feel too busy with your career, chores, and hobbies to invest in your children. But don't

leave this important task to someone else. If you don't train your kids, then the television set, their peers, or their school will. And while the church can be a great help to families, it is not designed to take your place in teaching your child about Jesus. God has trusted parents with a unique role in their kids' lives.

How should you teach your child?

- **By investing quality time.** Nothing can take the place of a mother and father. Small children want to be just like their parents—the most important people in their lives. By the time a child is five, 85% of their personality is already set. So be sure to invest in your kids early and often.
- **By listening to them.** Many teens stop listening to their parents because their mom and dad didn't pay attention to them when they were small. When your children are ready to talk to you, give them your undivided attention. They will be more likely to do the same for you when the time is right.
- **By admitting when you are wrong.** Parents often believe that if they confess mistakes to their children, the kids will lose respect for them. But don't be too prideful to admit you're wrong. You'll be surprised at how confession removes barriers to intimacy and trust. And your kids will have an easier time admitting when they've sinned too.
- **By loving them unconditionally.** Don't make your acceptance contingent upon their appearance, personality, or performance

(1 Cor. 13:8). Shower genuine affection on your kids, and they will do their best to please you.

■ **By disciplining your children.** Many modern parenting books discourage correcting, punishing, and—especially—spanking children, even when they willfully disobey. This idea is diametrically opposed to the clear teaching of Scripture (Prov. 3:12). If you don't set limits on your children, their lack of self control will likely bring destruction to every area of their lives. Some will fall victim to the temptations of sex, drugs, and alcohol. Others may avoid these but still ruin their careers, close relationships, or finances through self-indulgence.

■ **By encouraging them to fulfill their potential.** Time after time, my mother said to me, "Charles, you need to look your best; do your best; and be your best." Although I only had two pairs of bib overalls when I was small, my mother made sure one of them was clean and ironed every day. I believe that the way a person dresses indicates his or her commitment to doing a quality job. Without criticizing or shaming your kids, challenge them to rise to their full potential.

■ **By teaching them to be accountable to God.** When my kids didn't like one of my decisions, I told them to talk to the Lord about it. Until your children understand that their heavenly Father watches all they do, they are likely to rebel when you aren't around.

■ **By emphasizing the importance of a relationship with Jesus.** Through your words as well as your lifestyle, teach your children the importance of committing to one-on-one time with the Lord.

■ **By encouraging them to read the Word.** The answers to life's questions are found in Scripture. Daily Bible reading and prayer will give your children a strong moral compass. But rather than being tied to the translation you prefer, buy them a version of the Bible that they can easily understand. Unless the light of God's Word shines on their paths, your children will stumble through life (Ps. 119:105).

■ **By teaching them that God has a plan for their lives.** I told my kids that the Lord had the right spouse, a particular career, and a specific calling for them. When children are raised knowing that God has planned their future, they are motivated to seek Him for direction. By the time they finish college, kids should have a pretty good idea of their calling.

■ **By telling them to obey God and leave all the consequences to Him.** In this one statement, you are teaching them to recognize the sovereignty of their Creator, His personal interest in them, and that they can trust Him to take care of the consequences.

CONCLUSION:

Parents have a special opportunity to influence their children for Christ. But children today are surrounded by temptation and danger. The world, the Devil, and their own desires war against God's purposes for them. If you are a mother or father, you must be willing to build a close relationship with your children so they will trust you and listen to your instruction. You must also model a godly lifestyle, so that they will see the value in committing every aspect of their lives to Christ.

Train your kids in such a way that when they are old, they will continue to follow Jesus faithfully (Prov. 22:6). With your guidance and support, your children will be ready to overcome attacks from the Enemy, courageously defend their faith, and take a stand for truth. Despite a world that is hostile to our faith, they will be able to reach their full potential—both spiritually and in every other way. ✨



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