

The Old Paths

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“Train Up A Child”

Jarrold Jacobs

There are several families here with children in the home. Seeing this is true, it behooves us to revisit a theme that we have studied in the past. Why do this? First, as a reminder of what we need to do. Second, that we might examine our actions and deeds and make sure we are training our children in a way that pleases God (Eph. 6:4). Third, that we might then teach God’s way to our children, so that they can teach God’s will to their children one day. Someone has said that as parents, we are responsible for training our grandchildren’s teachers. I like that. Perhaps this will help encourage us to not be lazy in the training of our children when we think they will one day train our grandchildren!

The need for training our children in the way of the Lord should be evident in a society which has many fathers who neglect their duties; either by running out on their responsibilities and leaving their family, or by simply shirking their duties in the home! Christians who are fathers need to weigh their decisions carefully as they work to train their children. Remember, a great part of parenting work is to equip your children so that they can be independent! Fathers, how are you doing along this line? Can your children make right and proper decisions before God

without your prompting? Yes, small children need prompting/coaching, (“Say, ‘please,’ ‘thank you,’ ‘here is how we pray,’” etc.) but adults do not! How are you doing at equipping your child for adulthood? That is a question we parents must answer every day that our children are under our roof. After they leave, all parents can do is ask, “How did I do?” The lives of our children then bear the results of our training AND their listening (It takes both!). When children have been trained properly, and then they listen and obey the instructions, they will reap physical and spiritual benefits (Eph. 6:1-3)! This “reaping” then is a result of their own faithful life before God; just as parents reap blessings due to their lives before God (Eph. 1:3).

Let us look at Proverbs 22:6. This proverb teaches great lessons for all parents. Please read this passage, and then consider some vital lessons found in this passage.

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

Some lessons found in this verse:

1) **“Train Up”** - Parents (not others, TV, the government, etc.) have the responsibility to “train” their children. Children cannot be left to themselves to “figure it out”. Training a child not only means to teach the child the facts, or rules of the

house, but it also means the parents must make sure the children obey! *“The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame”* (Prov. 29:15).

2) **“A child”** - Training must start while young! Spiritual instruction today helps to avoid problems later.

3) **“In The Way”** - Shows us there is only one way that God considers the correct way. Man gives us options, God doesn’t! (Jn. 14:6; Matt. 7:13-14)

4) **“Should Go”** - Small children do not know right from wrong. Parents must show which path is the correct path in which to walk in this life! Parents know the correct path when they follow God’s word (Jer. 10:23; I Pet. 4:11).

5) **“When He Is Old”** - Ultimately, experience will bear out that the best way is God’s way. (Col. 3:17) If parents are teaching their children God’s way, the children will see the truth.

6) **Being A Parent Requires Action!** - In order to do what Proverbs 22:6 says, parents must be active. One cannot be a passive parent and expect to be pleasing to God. This passage makes that clear!

7) **A Child In This Household Must Be Active!** - In like manner, the reason Proverbs 22:6 says a child *“will not depart”* from the teachings of the parents is because this child was active! He must respond to the parents’ teaching and be obedient to them in order to receive blessings in his old age.

“Not to know is ignorance, but to refuse to learn is pride.”

-- L.E. Sloan

"The Dash"

Jarrod Jacobs

We find a very interesting writing located on almost every headstone. Between the dates of a person's birth and death is a dash. This short line represents the time one has lived upon this earth. Yet, more than this, the dash represents our actions, words, spouse, children, grandchildren, goodness, love, mistakes, sins, missed opportunities, successes, failures, etc. Basically, the impact I have made upon my little corner of the world in those few years is represented in this "dash."

A great deal of meaning is associated with this "dash". At the same time, I find it interesting that folks will sometimes use the word "dash" in a different context. At times, "dash" is used to describe something happening very quickly. When we consider a man's life, we also see that it passes very quickly. For example, James said, "Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away" (Jas. 4:14). David said his days are consumed as smoke (Ps. 102:3)! Job said his days, "are passed away as the swift ships: as the eagle that hasteth to the prey" (Job 9:26). Yes, the days "dash" by, and soon we are gone from this earth, allowing someone to carve the "dash" on our headstones!

Knowing that this is the case, is this all there is to life? Is our only purpose on earth to live, consume space and resources, reproduce and die, so that another generation can do the

same? Solomon considered life from this perspective for a time, and he saw that life was a waste (Ecc. 1:4-11, 14, 2:11, 17, etc.). When we consider life only from the perspective of life upon this earth, we would probably come to the same conclusion! Yet, there is more to life than just eating, sleeping, and ultimately dying. The "dash" between our birth and death dates needs to represent more than that.

Jesus said, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33). All the things we worry about "under the sun" (to borrow a phrase) are provided when we put first things first! Some 1000 years before Christ, David wrote, "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread" (Ps. 37:25). Therefore, as we contrast Solomon's observation under the sun with Christ's statement, we see that what makes life meaningful is not what we might amass or possess in this life. In the conclusion of the book of Ecclesiastes, Solomon correctly "sums up" life's purpose and meaning (Ecc. 12:13-14). In like manner, it is what we have done on a spiritual level that is the true measure of a person's life! Are we saved from our sins or not (Mk. 16:16)? Are

we living a selfless life of service to God (I Cor. 15:58)? Again, the words of Christ speak clearly on this subject. He said, "Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth" (Lk. 12:15). On another occasion, Jesus told His disciples, "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matt. 16:26).

Friend, what will the "dash" mean when it is carved on your headstone? In connection with this thought, when your death comes to pass (Ecc. 9:5), will you be ready? This is the true test of a life; namely, are you ready to die? Have you followed the Lord's plan of salvation (Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38)? If you have done so, are you living faithfully for Christ (Rev. 2:10)? When the "dash" is on your headstone, could someone stand at your grave and say that they are a Christian now because of the example you showed and the words you said while you were on earth? (I Tim. 4:16; II Tim. 2:2; Eph. 6:4)? Like a lot of things in this life, it is often the small things in life that mean the most. So it is with the "dash"! "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobrates?" (II Cor. 13:5)



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