

Train up a Child

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

This Proverb is such a wonderful promise from God regarding the raising of our children. How important is it to us as the Family of God to shepherd the little ones among our flock? What does God have to say about His children's need to acquire knowledge? Just for the moment, we'll focus on the very young among us as we are all God's Children. This lesson is inspired by the article Kirsten sent to me from the Forerunner we just read. Feel free to comment or discuss any points along the way.

Just from the visits I've experienced with other groups of the Church of God, we have seen so very little offered to the youth and not very many actually young people attending and faithfully keeping the Sabbath. Granted, the wee ones have a short attention span, but those seeds of obedience to Sabbath keeping are weekly displayed by mom and dad. We are blessed to have Pam put out weekly studies for our young adults as well as having Erika, Kirsten and Mallory instilling values into the tiny ones while they're here.

Sometimes it is difficult in teaching adults as most think they know it all or have no interest in the subject matter presented. They are more interested in being right than righteous. Most will firmly defend a position in the face of all of the evidence to the contrary. That is pride at work. Such people cannot learn because they are always trying to convince others rather than receive instruction. Children on the other hand are like dry sponges waiting for water, eager to learn.

As we've just read, there will come a time when "my parents said no" will no longer be a valid answer. They will stand alone and make life's decisions on their own. The years of learning and preparation we can share and provide will yield yet another promise from God.

Philippians 1:5-6- "For your fellowship in the gospel from *the* first day until now; Being confident of this very thing, that He Who began a good work in you will complete *it* until *the* day of Jesus Christ." God will finish what He begins. It is critical we do our parts as "shepherds" to care for the littlest lambs among us.

Proverbs 8:32-33- "And now therefore hearken unto me, O you children, for blessed *are those who* keep my ways. Hear instruction, and be wise, and do not refuse it." If they're here, they're learning to keep the Sabbath. Their normal will to have been raised away from the lies taught in Sunday School, Halloween, Christmas and Easter, etc. While they may have questions along the way, we have God's assurances in His Word. It will not be as strange to them as it was to us who

were called later in life. Praise God He doesn't have an age limit on accepting His invitation!

Matthew 20:1-16- “The kingdom of heaven shall be compared to a man, a master of a house, who went out early in *the* morning to hire workmen for his vineyard. And after agreeing with the workmen on a silver coin *for* the day's *wage*, he sent them into his vineyard. And when he went out about the third hour, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace; And he said to them, ‘Go also into the vineyard, and whatever is right I will give you.’ And they went. Again, after going out about *the* sixth hour and *the* ninth hour, he did likewise. And about the eleventh hour, he went out *and* found others standing idle, and said to them, ‘Why have you been standing here idle all the day?’ They said to him, ‘Because no one has hired us.’ He said to them, ‘Go also into my vineyard, and whatever is right you shall receive.’ And when evening came, the lord of the vineyard said to his steward, ‘Call the workmen and pay them *their* hire, beginning from the last unto the first.’ And when those who *were hired* about the eleventh hour came, they each received a silver coin. But when the first ones came, they thought that they would receive more; but each of them also received a silver coin. And after receiving *it*, they complained against the master of the house, Saying, ‘These *who came* last have worked one hour, and you have made them equal to us, who have carried the burden and the heat of the day.’ But he answered *and* said to them, ‘Friend, I am

not doing you wrong. Did you not agree with me on a silver coin *for the day*? Take *what* is yours and go, for I also desire to give to the last *ones* exactly as I gave to you. And is it not lawful for me to do what I will with that which *is* my own? Is your eye evil because I am good?’ So the last shall be first, and the first *shall be* last; for many are called, but few are chosen.” So all of this discussion is just as applicable to the youngest as it is to the oldest.

This scripture is certainly pertinent to all of us in this fellowship. What a blessing to have been chosen after all the years of wandering and at this stage of our lives to have been given God’s Truth and understanding of His way of life. Would our lives have been different if we had been raised in His Truth (Sabbath keeping and Holy Days)? I’m sure we would have had quite a different path. However, God in His infinite wisdom knew us before we were born.

Isaiah 49:5- “And now, says the LORD—Who formed Me from the womb *to be* His servant, to bring Jacob again to Him, (though Israel is not gathered, yet I shall be glorious in the eyes of the LORD, and My God shall be My strength)—”

Jeremiah 1:5- “Before I formed you in the belly I knew you; and before you came forth out of the womb I consecrated you, *and* I ordained you a prophet to the nations.”

He permitted us to “wander” if you will, experiencing the trials of life we mainly created for ourselves. This shaping was the Potter molding His clay for His purpose.

Isaiah 64:8- “But now, O LORD, You *are* our Father; we *are* the clay, and You *are* our potter; and we all *are* the work of Your hand.”

Jeremiah 18:4-6- “And the vessel that he made of clay was ruined in the hand of the potter; so he made it again into another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make *it*. Then the Word of the LORD came to me, saying, “O house of Israel, can I not do with you *even* as this potter?” says the LORD. “Behold, as the clay is in the potter’s hands, *so are* you in My hand, O house of Israel.”

Romans 9:20-21. Yes, indeed, O man, who are you to answer against God? Shall the thing that is formed say to the one who formed *it*, “Why did you make me this way?” Or doesn’t the potter have authority over the clay to make from the same lump of clay one vessel unto honor, and another vessel unto dishonor?”

We are equipping our little ones with the Word of God and His Way of life. What better preparation can we give to them for the world they’re now facing? We didn’t have Pride Month, Juneteenth and the myriad of abominations they are bombarded with when we were kids. John Wayne may have actually said “hell” in a couple of movies and TV sitcoms displayed family values. Married couple always had

separate beds! Nowadays, we have TV shows that herald the alphabet perverts and nothing but lie based sitcoms. Even one of the kids cartoon shows has a gay “dad” married to another man in it. Way to go! Except our satanic lifestyle and like it! Everything is focused on the self and getting what you can without earning it. Implanting God’s absolute truths, learning and growing in His type of wisdom is far more valuable than gold! Wisdom is skillful application of what we learn.

Proverbs 3:13-14- “Blessed *is* the man who finds wisdom, and the man who gets understanding, For the merchandise of it *is* better than the gain from silver, and its produce more than the gain of fine gold;”

It will establish a base for the one true source of Truth, the absolute Truth on which they can stand. Teaching them by example to look and search for God.

Amos 5:4- “For thus says the LORD to the house of Israel, “Seek Me, and you shall live.”

Jeremiah 29:13-14- "And you shall seek Me and find *Me*, when you search for Me with all your heart. And I will be found by you,’ says the LORD...”

Learning truth and wisdom are nearly things of the past in today’s society. There isn’t a hunger for truth, much less a thirst for righteousness (**Matthew 5:6**). Not that these issues weren’t around in Biblical times, they perhaps weren’t “in your face” as much as it appears to be today. God has been all but removed from our

nation and the majority of any acknowledgment of Him is watered down to fit man's narrative.

Ezekiel 3:7- “But the house of Israel will not be willing to hearken to you, for they will not be willing to hearken to Me; for all the house of Israel *are* of a hard forehead and a stubborn heart.” Fairly descriptive of today as well as back then. We are implanting God's way of life and His Word into the hearts and minds of the “littlest ones” amongst us as well as growing ourselves.

Ezekiel 3:10- “And He said to me, “Son of man, receive all My words which I shall speak to you. Receive them to your heart, and hear with your ears.” What better time to start a crop than with fertile and unspoiled soil? Exposing them to the Truth, filling in the blanks at an early age provides the opportunity we didn't have at that age.

As we read, the beliefs we teach will become “convictions.” According to Merriam-Webster, their definition seemed to provide a spot on meaning for the word, conviction. Aside from a verdict in a court of law, conviction means: a strong persuasion or belief, the state of being *convinced*.

We can say we believe in God, but unless this belief becomes a conviction, we're just providing lip service.

James 2:19- “Do you believe that God is one? You do well *to believe this*. Even the demons believe—and tremble in fear.”

If we have a sustained desire for understanding and a strong interest to know more about God, we must draw closer to Him in our everyday lives. He desires to have this relationship with us.

Philippians 2:13- “For it is God Who works in you both to will and to do according to *His* good pleasure.”

While we may not have witnessed the Biblical miracles the Apostles did, we are “convinced” of His Truth at baptism. Being baptized and receiving His Holy Spirit brings greater understanding and awareness.

John 20:29- “Jesus said to him, “Because you have seen Me, Thomas, you have believed; blessed are the ones who have not seen, but have believed.”

The “little lambs” will learn to fear God as we do, with the reverent fear gained through Sabbath and Commandment keeping, daily prayer and Bible Study.

Learning to listen as well is an asset that will follow them throughout their lives.

God gave us two ears and one mouth for a reason. He wants us to listen twice as much as we speak.

Psalms 25:10-14- “All the paths of the LORD are mercy and truth to those who keep His covenant and His testimonies. For Your name’s sake, O LORD,

pardon my iniquity, for it is great. What man is he who fears the LORD? He shall teach him in the way that He shall choose. His soul shall dwell at ease, and his seed shall inherit the earth. The secret of the LORD is with those who fear Him, and He will show them His covenant.”

How do we respond to our children? Having children was something I had always wanted. Being blessed with a “Brady Bunch” and now 5 grandchildren to me is like hitting the lottery. Having children is one of God’s first tests for us to see how we’ll do as being teachers as He is to us. Are we truly teaching and molding them or are they controlling us? It’s okay to discipline your kids.

Proverbs 13:24- “He who spares his rod hates his son, but he who loves him is diligent to discipline him.”

Proverbs 19:18- “Chasten your son while there is hope, but do not set your heart on his destruction.”

Proverbs 22:15- “Foolishness *is* bound up in the heart of a child, *but* the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.”

Proverbs 13:14- “Do not withhold correction from a child, for *if* you beat him with the rod, he will not die. You shall beat him with the rod, and shall deliver his soul from the grave.”

This certainly doesn’t mean you can physically abuse your children but discipline is a must. If it is done when young, you shouldn’t have to do it when they’re old.

You may have heard me speak of an incident when Rob was little and one of his little friends hauled off and smacked his dad right in the face at the neighborhood swimming pool. The dad's glasses went flying off and his only response to the little b@#%*##* was, "now that was uncalled for." If they learned it is okay at such a young age, how will they behave when they are older? I always expected to see that kid on a booking report at some point. My mom's weapon of choice was a flyswatter and my dad used his faithful and trusty belt. They worked.

There are benefits from following God's instructions on disciplining our children.

Proverbs 29:15-18- "The rod and rebuke give wisdom, but a child left to himself brings shame to his mother. When the wicked are multiplied, transgression increases; but the righteous shall see their fall. Correct your son, and he shall give you rest; yea, he shall give delight to your soul. Where *there is* no vision, the people perish; but happy is he who keeps the law." (**Hosea 4:6**).

Society is full of examples of those who never received any correction whatever growing up.

Having God's green light to discipline your children isn't Carte Blanche to dispense punishment at will. Wisdom always plays a part.

Colossians 3:21- “Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they be discouraged.” As we are to edify others, this especially includes our children. Do we communicate well with them? Do they love, respect, and honor us? Do they come to us for advice and counsel? Or are they afraid or rebellious? World goes in, world comes out. God goes in, God comes out. If we’re not teaching them, who is? We have a tremendous opportunity to teach our children in the ways of The Lord. We know they will, like us, face trials throughout life. The travails of growing up, the death of our parents, choosing a mate, dealing with children, becoming old and sick, etc. We know that these big trials are coming.

If we haven’t established enough reasons for teaching our children in the ways of The Lord in our lesson today, we’ll close with a Commandment.

Deuteronomy 6:1-7- “Now these *are* the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments which the LORD our God commanded to teach you so that you might do *them* in the land where you go to possess it, That you might fear the LORD your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, you, and your son, and your son’s son, all the days of your life, and so that your days may be prolonged. Hear therefore, O Israel, and be diligent to *observe* it, so that it may be well with you, and that you may greatly multiply, as the LORD God of our fathers has promised you, in the land that flows with milk and honey. Hear,

O Israel. Our one God is *the LORD, the LORD*. And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words which I command you this day shall be in your heart. **And you shall diligently teach them to your children**, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise up.”

May we learn and grow with them. God bless and keep our little lambs. Amen.

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