

Biblical Principles Of Parenting (Introduction) – Prov 22:6

Prov 22:6: We're starting a new series this weekend on parenting and raising kids

Part of our Built To Last theme that we started all the way back in September
I thought about calling it – Pulling Your Hair Out and 50 Other Ways To Madness, but
wisdom got the better part of judgment . . .
And I decided on something a bit more descriptive

- But doesn't it seem like that sometimes? (**Intro**) Doesn't parenting feel like an exercise in frustration some days? A constant draining of your batteries? And your patience? I think so; Not that it's all bad; At its best, it's awesome
But in between the peaks, it's trying, and taxing, and wearying
Requiring supernatural *help* if we're going to do it justice

And that's where this series comes in; B/c far too often, we not only don't *do* it like God wants, we don't know *how*; We don't know *how* to parent God's way
Sometimes b/c we haven't applied ourselves, and other times b/c we've never thought about it; We just parent like our parents; And their parents; And their parents
Or, we react against our parenting, and let the pendulum swing the other direction
Whatever the case, we end up parenting according to our *own* thoughts, and our *own* ways, and completely miss God's

So we're going to spend 5 or 6 weeks on this over the course of the next few months, with the goal of living it out in our lives; The goal of reinforcing our best practices . . .
And changing our worst

- And I want to start w/ the assumptions I'm making; Hoping you're on the same page

5 Assumptions

1. You love and value your kids

You intrinsically cherish them, and hold them dear; Like Jesus
“*Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven.*” (Mt 19:14); That's value; That's love
Summarized best by that age old chorus – Jesus Love The Little Children
And I assume you feel the same; Even at your worst

2. You consider your kids a gift from God

Or as Ps 127:3 says it – *children are a heritage from the Lord*; A means of blessing us from generation to generation; A means of perpetuating our lineage and impact
A means of creating godly offspring as God says in Mal 2 (v15)
Which means they're a gift; Not a guarantee, but a gift; Formed by him in the womb, and given in his timing for his purposes

3. You want to raise your kids God's way

I'm not speaking in this series to those with an attitude of *suspicion* regarding the precepts of the Bible; I'm speaking to those with an attitude of *assent*
Those who *accept* the truth of God's Word, and want it more and more
Those who take *seriously* the biblical admonition to raise their kids
Not that you don't have questions, but that you're looking for answers, and trust God's Word to provide them
So this isn't going to be an apologetic to try to *convince* you that God's way is best, but a presentation of what it is

4. Some of you don't have kids, but still want to learn

B/c you might have them yourself someday; Or you know people who *do* have kids, and want to be ready to help them, and bless them, and sympathize with them
Or maybe you just want to know everything you possibly *can* about the mind of God;
Just b/c it's God; Just b/c it's his Word; His truth; His way
Just b/c you want to think like him more and more; And grow in his perspective and his wisdom no matter *what* the topic
Would that not be reason *enough* to learn something that doesn't apply directly to you?
I think so; And I hope that's your mindset

5. Some of you have parenting regrets

You hurt, b/c you've failed; You've *failed* at parenting; You've *failed* at raising your kids God's way; You dropped the ball . . .
When it came to instilling the discipline and instruction of the Lord in them
Maybe b/c you didn't even *know* the Lord back then; Or you were too busy pursuing your career; Or too lazy to work at it
Or maybe you thought their development and upbringing would take care of itself
Whatever the case, you ache b/c it didn't turn out well, and you regret it terribly

If that's you, I want you to know right now, that God's grace is sufficient for that
God's mercy and God's love and God's blood covers that just like any other sin or failure in your life
And can even compensate for it in the lives of your adult kids; He can

And if you're open about it, he will *use* your testimony of failure in the lives of others
Especially so, as you share your regret for an opportunity *lost*, and urge them to seize *theirs*; He can use it; And will
If you acknowledge it, and repent of it, and share it (**Summary**)

Those are the assumptions w/ which I'm approaching this series; And hope that u are too

- With that in mind then, I want to talk a *little* bit about this verse, and a *lot* about proverbs in general; I'll start with this verse
Prov 22:6 is the foundation for this entire series; *Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.*
Each message is going to be based on the outworking of that verse; On the implications and application of what it means
What it means to teach them, impart to them, and develop in them – the knowledge, skills, and wisdom for how to live; How they should *go* or proceed in life

Every message; B/c that's the key to the 2nd part of the verse; *Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.*
She will not deviate from it; They won't forsake it; They'll continue to abide by it
That's the result, of fulfilling the prerequisites, the first part; They'll stay the course

- But I want you to understand before we get to that, that this verse is *not* a promise
Prov 22:6 is not a mathematical equation – “If I do A, then B is guaranteed; If you rub my lamp, I'll grant your wish;” That's not how it works; It's not a promise

Rather, it's a *proverb*; Something that's *generally* true; Something that's *usually* true

If you satisfy the conditions – *most* of the time the result will pan out; That’s the idea

And I say that, b/c that’s the idea of *most* proverbs in the Bible

The most notable exceptions being the ones where *God* is involved; Where *he* does something; Like Prov 15:3

The eyes of the LORD are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good.

That’s always true; God is everywhere, and always watching

But short of things like that . . .

A biblical proverb is a principle of life that’s generally true

It’s not a promise, but a likelihood; It’s *generally* true; And I want to spend the rest of our time on this, b/c many of the principles of parenting *come* from the Proverbs

And far too many people end up devastated or disillusioned, b/c they get them wrong

Devastated, b/c they wrongly assume that the sinful lifestyle of their teenage son or young adult daughter, is *their* fault

“I must have trained them poorly; I must have done a bad job of raising them”

B/c they certainly departed from what I taught them

And they end up devastated by guilt that’s not theirs to carry

Or, they get disillusioned; Thinking that God’s Word isn’t true after all

“What gives? I did everything right, and look what happened; My kid went off the deep end anyway; Can the Bible be trusted? Is it really true?”

And before you know it, disillusionment sets in, causing them to question *everything* about the Scriptures

It’s either devastation or disillusionment often times, and *neither* is warranted

➤ Especially when you consider that Adam and Eve fell into sin, with the God *himself* as their parent; If it can happen to him, it can happen to anybody

And what about Adam and Eve themselves? One of their sons *killed* a sibling; With God *himself* as their instructor and example

Or Jacob and Rachel, one of the *Patriarchs* of our faith; Whose sons sold one of their own into slavery

And Eli, the high *priest* in Samuel’s day; Whose sons were full of debauchery/deceit

The point being, wayward kids can happen to the best of us; And if it does, devastation or disillusionment need not be the result

B/c a biblical proverb is a principle of life that’s *generally* true . . .

• **But not absolute**

And I say that, not just b/c that’s the *idea* of a proverb, or b/c the Bible *itself* contains examples to that effect . . .

But b/c we’re raising kids, not robots; Little people, who grow into big people, and have a will of their own; Choosing to do what they want

IOW our actions as parents are not absolutely, 100% deterministic

Just b/c we fulfill *our* end of the bargain, the first part of the verse, doesn’t mean they will fulfill theirs, the 2nd part

It works that way *most* of the time, thank God; But not always

B/c when you get right down to it, it’s a heart issue, not an equation

Biblical proverbs are generally true, but not absolute

➤ And our life experience with *other* proverbs proves the point as well

Like **Prov 10:22** – *The blessing of the LORD makes rich, and he adds no sorrow with it.* Similar to v4 right here in ch22 – *The reward for humility and fear of the LORD is riches and honor and life.*

Have you ever met a humble, godly Christian who’s poor? Or one who died prematurely? I have

And I’ve definitely met rich believers with *plenty* of sorrow and heartache in their lives

Proving the point once again, that proverbs are not meant to be absolutes

➤ What’s more, the Bible *itself* bears that out; Take for instance **Prov 12:21** – *No ill befalls the righteous, but the wicked are filled with trouble.*

No ill befalls the righteous; Really? B/c Jesus said to his disciples in Jn 16:33 – *In the world you will have tribulation.* You will have *ill*

And the believers in Heb 10 experienced it; They *endured* [it says] *a hard struggle with sufferings, sometimes being publicly exposed to reproach and affliction* (v32-33)

Hardship and ill definitely befell the righteous

Or how about the church in Smyrna, modern day Turkey?

To whom Jesus said in Rev 2:10 – *Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.* I’d say that qualifies as ill

Showing once again, that proverbs are meant as *general* truths, not promises

Likelihoods, not absolutes; Including Prov 22:6 (**Summary**)

➤ So let me encourage you to do 3 things in preparation for this series:

1. Guard your heart from devastation and disillusionment; Think rightly about this proverb
2. Manage your expectations for the life your kids will lead; It’s not a promise, it’s a likelihood
3. Solidify your commitment to do everything you can to train them well; Even if it means changing your ways; Make the commitment

B/c if you’re going to have any hope of experiencing the *second* part of this verse, and all the joys that come with it, you *have* to satisfy the first; That much, *is* absolute

Pray – Lord, would *guard* our hearts and *prepare* our hearts for this? Would you do a work in each and every person, regardless of their station in life? And would you literally change the generations to come, b/c of it?

Special Announcements

Before we close (worship at 9), I have some great things to share with you; Things that are cause for praise and thanks, and cause for great rejoicing among us

1. This is the **3rd Anniversary** of the launch of our West Campus
We praise God for how he's used it in the lives of those who worship and serve there
We thank God for the doors it has opened into the school and community
It's been a stretching work of ministry, but a good one, and a sanctifying one
Pastor Jeremy's leadership has been so critical in it all, and there's little doubt that God has blessed the work of his hands

2. The time has come for **Jeremy and Autumn** to plant a church
He's almost finished with the first leg of his education
God has grown and developed his preaching and leadership gifts
And has put a desire in him to go out and plant another Bible-believing, Bible-preaching, Christ-exalting church; A desire we agree with

So in August, their family will be going to the Harvest Training Center For Pastors in Elgin, IL and stay there for 4 months
After which, they will go somewhere yet to be determined, to plant another HBC
It's been a long time coming, and we're thrilled that it's finally here

3. We have a new Campus Pastor on his way – **Dean and Wendy Sternik**
Dean comes to us from HBC West Olive in MI, where he's been a pastor for 14 years;
And 10 years before that in upstate New York
Serving faithfully and fruitfully in various family ministries, for almost 25 years
They will arrive sometime in March, and we're super excited to welcome them into our family

4. **AJ Reynolds**, our Men's Pastor, is also headed to the Harvest Training Center this fall
He and Rebecca will be in the same class as Jeremy and Autumn, along with about 40 others this year; But that's just part of the news about AJ

The other part is that he has already stepped in to the Lead Pastor role at **HBC Monmouth**
Monmouth is a church we've been working w/ for about 4 years now, to transition to a Harvest, and with the retirement of their previous pastor . . .
They asked if AJ would consider the role; Which we were all about it

So we put a plan in place, the church made the transition January 1st, and AJ began preaching there January 3rd; Which he will do until August . . .
And then, Lord willing, return there in January of 2017 after the Training Center*****

➤ Super exciting on all fronts, and something we *all* share in; B/c none of this would be possible without a church who's passionate for the kingdom of God
So join me in praising and thanking him, will you?

Pray – Thank you for these things; From the 3rd anniversary of our West Campus, to these men you've raised up to go out, and for Dean and Wendy who are coming in; We praise you for your goodness, and sovereignty, and blessing to be a part of such things;

And ask that you would continue to go before them, preparing the way, *and* the lives of those they will meet; For your glory God, and their joy
The same reasons we give now of our tithes and offerings (*not at West Campus*)

Close – Don't forget the presidential **Caucuses** coming up Feb 1st

It's not that we trust in political processes to solve our issues, but that we have a responsibility as God's people, to shape to the government he has put in place

Info at TheFamilyLeader.com

Don't forget our **Pre-service prayer**; Visitor Bags; Elder/Deacon