

## Instructions for the Game of Life (Part 4)

### Instructions for Guiding Children

(Proverbs 22:6)

**Introduction:** Christian sociologist and author James Dobson in his book “The Strong-Willed Child” said, “*Child rearing is like baking a cake. You don’t realize you have a disaster until its too late.*”

So, what are parents and grandparents to do today? Well, aren’t we glad that God has provided us with a book like Proverbs where we can find the instructions to the game of life and its struggles like, “how do we guide our children and grandchildren in a godly way?”

### I. Train them up:

#### A. **The nature of training –**

1. The Hebrew term behind the phrase “*Train up*” originally referred to the palate or the roof of the mouth.
2. The word *child* gives us the idea of anything from infancy to 4-5 yrs. Old. But the word actually covers the child from *infancy* to *adolescence*. The point is this principle applies to any dependent children still living under the parents’ roof.

**Some of us are thinking –** Well my kids are too old for that now and I don’t want to meddle in my kid’s families so, what can I do? (Let me remind us...)

1. **Life is not about serving ourselves.** – it is about serving the Lord and others.
2. **This next generation wants and needs our help** – I am suggesting we take a pairing approach (not manipulation or domination).
3. **Millennials love being around older adults** who are interested in them, and are wide open to insights, questions, and conversations about faith and life.
4. **This requires sacrifice on our part** – Given the current decline in church attendance and passing of our the faith onto the next generation, the need for this sacrifice has never been more urgent.

#### B. **The necessity of training –**

1. The manner of training is suggested in the word “*in*” which means “*in keeping with.*”
  - a. The Hebrew term *way* – means “road or path.” In a figurative way it means “characteristics” for example notice how it is used in (Prov. 30:18-19)
  - b. In Prov.22:6 the underlying idea is that the child’s characteristics are performed by God, distinct and set.
  - c. So, if we want our training to be meaningful and wise, we must observe our child’s way and adapt our training accordingly.
2. **Right away we see two errors to avoid:**
  - a. Don’t try to raise your children like you were raised.
  - b. Don’t compare your children to each other.

**Maxwell:** “*The most unfair thing we can do is to treat everyone the same – they are not the same, they are each different!*”

**II. Teach them right:** The Jesuits used to say, “Give me your child until he is 12 yrs. old, and I care not who has charge of him afterwards.”

**Cal Marx, the father of Communism said,** “The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world.” (No one can argue the importance of right teaching.)

**A. Teach them right discipline** – Proverbs is noted for its praise of the rod; (Prov 13:24) - *He who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is careful to discipline him.*

- This is the outcome of the more serious doctrine of wisdom.
  1. For wisdom itself is life; Prov.8:35,36
  2. And though the way to wisdom is hard; Prov 19:18; 23:14
  3. There are two reasons why Proverbs supports such discipline:
    - a. *Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child.* (Prov 22:15)
    - b. *character* (in which wisdom embodies itself) is like a plant that grows sturdier from being cut back. (Prov 15:32-33; Prov 5:11-12; Heb 12:11)
    - c. Right discipline is never done in anger and is to be used to develop wise habits of thought and action.
  4. Right discipline incorporates training – Our goal is to raise responsible adults; with godly values and the skills they need to succeed in life.

#### B. **Teach them right direction –**

1. Go back and read Psalm 139 – there you will discover that:
  - a. Each child is a package of pre-sifted, pre-measured ingredients, that determine whether they will turn out like cake or like bread.
  - b. Discovering these ingredients is the hard part; but Prov. 20:11 tells us a child’s *character* will make itself known by its actions.
  - c. Every child has tendencies for *good* and *bad*. (Ps.139 good; Ps 58 bad)
2. We must be involved with our children and grandchildren.
  - Mom’s - Prov 29:15
  - Dad’s – Eph 6:4
- Godly admonition must be accompanied by godly living for it to work at all! Above all we need to teach our children and grandchildren in love.

### III. Turn them over:

**A. The idea that good parents always produce good children and bad parents always produce bad children is just not true.**

- *When he is old* – means a child raised under godly principles in his way, will continue to build on the foundational principles on which he has been raised.

**B. Scripture gives us governing principles for training our children, not guarantees.** Parents and grandparents who apply these principles are far more likely to produce godly children and grandchildren than those who do not.

**Conclusion:** Our families acknowledge and appreciate all our long years of love, work, and investment. No one will deny we deserve a rest. But let’s not disengage. Our kids and grandchildren need our godly influence, voices of reason and wisdom from living, whether they act like it or not. Our role as a parent and grandparent hasn’t changed because we or they have gotten older.