

Key Scripture:

Psalm 127:3-5 (NLT)

3 Children are a gift from the Lord; they are a reward from him. 4 Children born to a young man are like arrows in a warrior's hands. 5 How joyful is the man whose quiver is full of them! He will not be put to shame when he confronts his accusers at the city gates.

Deuteronomy 6:6-9 (NLT)

6 And you must commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these commands that I am giving you today. 7 Repeat them again and again to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are on the road, when you are going to bed and when you are getting up. 8 Tie them to your hands and wear them on your forehead as reminders. 9 Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

Proverbs 22:6 (NLT)

6 Direct your children onto the right path, and when they are older, they will not leave it.

Start **talking**. Find a conversation starter for your group.

- What did parenting, and specifically parental discipline look like for you when you were a kid? How does this compare to parenting styles today?

Start **thinking**. Ask a question to get your group thinking.

- **Read Psalm 127:3-5.** Why does the psalmist refer to children as both a gift from the Lord and arrows in a warrior's hands? What does having children have to do with being able to confront one's accusers?
- **Read Deuteronomy 6:6-9.** The author is calling us to commit wholeheartedly to these commands on instructing our children, to never stop doing so and to even create physical reminders around our homes and on our bodies of the commands. What does this passage tell us about the importance of parenting? How does parenting today compare to the seriousness implied in this passage?
- **Read Proverbs 22:6.** What does it mean to direct children onto the right path? Why do children still often leave the path? (Got Questions article on pg. 2 discusses this issue)

Start **sharing**. Choose a question to create openness.

- The 5 main parenting "How To's" from the message were: 1) *Instruct*, 2) *Discipline*, 3) *Protect*, 4) *Provide* and 5) *Be Present*. Discuss why you agree or disagree with this list. What does your own list of main parenting How To's look like?
- Discuss the following findings: According to the Bark.us 2021 annual report: 68% of tweens (aged 9-12) and 90% of teens encountered nudity and sexual content on the web and social platforms.
- Clay gave us some examples of instruction for children: *Teach them God's Word, Prioritize Church Attendance, Pray with your Kids, Show them what Respect looks like, Admit when you are wrong, Forgive Quickly, Think before you Speak*, and *Lead by Example*. What would you change about this list? In which of these areas do you think parents today most struggle or succeed? Do any of these stick out as impactful from your childhood?
- What does it look like when parents prioritize being present in the lives of children? For those who aren't parents, how might you support those efforts of parents or be present in the life of a child?

Start **doing**. Commit to a step and live it out this week.

- Identify one of the instruction examples, i.e. *Teach them God's word, Forgive Quickly*, etc. and commit to take a step to improve in that area.

Start **praying**. Be bold and pray with power.

- God, we are so thankful to be loved by you as your children, to be able to know you and to call on you as our heavenly father. Please encourage and guide us through our respective parenting roles, so that we may be mindful of and obedient to your commands. -Amen

Start **digging**. For further study.

- Read the 2nd page and discuss it.

Question: "Does the Bible promise that godly parenting will always result in godly children (Proverbs 22:6)?"

Answer: Proverbs 22:6 notes, "Train up a child in the way he should go; / even when he is old he will not depart from it" (ESV). Does this verse promise that raising children in a godly manner will always result in children who follow God as adults? What about all the godly parents whose children rebel?

Proverbs, as a literary form, are not direct promises; rather, they are general observations of life that are typically true. This helps to explain why some parents faithfully raise their child to follow God, yet the child rebels against God as an adult.

Proverbs 22:6 teaches that it is generally true that a child raised to love God will continue to do so as a grown-up. This was the observation of life from 3,000 years ago, and it continues to prove itself today. Most Christian parents who raise their kids in a godly manner will leave a legacy of children who love God as adults. Bringing up a child in "the training and instruction of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4) dramatically increases the likelihood that the child will hold to Christ in later life.

A great biblical example can be found in the life of Timothy. In 2 Timothy 1:5 Paul says, "I am reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also." Timothy's mother and grandmother both loved God and raised Timothy to do so as well. Timothy joined Paul as a missionary associate as a young man and became one of his most trusted companions. The New Testament mentions Timothy by name twenty-five times as a missionary, aide to the apostles, and pastor.

Godly parenting is essential today, just as it has been throughout history. Fathers and mothers are the key to raising godly young men and women who love God and live for Him. Despite the blessing that pastors, youth leaders, and other godly influences are, no one can replace the role of godly parents who live out their Christian faith and pass it on to their children. This is why the author of Proverb 22:6 could rightly claim, "Start children off on the way they should go, / and even when they are old they will not turn from it."

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