

# Gospel Parenting

Making Space for What Matters Most

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## Train up a Child

*Train up a child in the way he should go,  
even when he is old he will not depart from it.*

### **PROVERBS 22:6**

This verse could be literally translated as “Train a child according to his way,” meaning each child is unique and has an individual personality that God will delight to work through. **As parents, we have a responsibility to train our children in light of their uniqueness.**

In other contexts, the word *train* refers to the process of teaching a newborn to eat. This is a beautiful picture of what God does with all of us. Scripture tells us, “Taste and see that the LORD is good!” (Ps. 34:8). **God wants us to get a little taste of Jesus so that we’ll want a lot more of Him.** Then that desire grows throughout our lives. That’s the background of the word *train*.

Parents train up our children with a gentle application of the goodness, beauty, and joy of Jesus Christ. We lead them to see how good the Lord is. We lead them to taste and want more. This is the best way to prepare them for adulthood. **Training them in the way they should go means nurturing them with the good grace and satisfying substance that Jesus is to our souls.** That’s what we do when we parent our children.

Do you see yourself as the primary disciple-maker of your children, or have you delegated that responsibility to someone else? **How is the Great Commission being fulfilled in your home?**

How can you intentionally train your children to walk in repentance and faith?

How can you make time for conversations, spontaneous lessons, and explanations of the gospel?

Consider the unique way the Lord has made your children. What might be the most effective way to train each of them according to their individual bent?

*Whoever spares the rod hates his son,  
but he who loves him is diligent to discipline him.*

## PROVERBS 13:24

*Discipline your son, for there is hope;  
do not set your heart on putting him to death.*

## PROVERBS 19:18

The concept of discipline in these verses isn't a picture of punishment or harsh treatment. Rather, the rod should remind us of a shepherd who devotes his life to caring for sheep. He uses his rod to gently nudge the sheep toward green pastures where they could eat or toward quiet waters where they could drink. If the sheep were running in the wrong direction, the shepherd could actually throw the rod and strike the sheep's legs to keep it from going off a cliff or into a dangerous place. If a predator came near, the shepherd could use the staff to fend off the predator so that the sheep wouldn't be harmed. **This is the idea of discipline in these proverbs: in love, we correct, rebuke, and protect our children.** This is the way God disciplines us.

How have you experienced God's loving discipline in your life? What did you learn from His discipline?

How can you discipline your children like a shepherd who guards and cares for his sheep?

## Lead Them in the Way

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently 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. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

## DEUTERONOMY 6:4-9

What are all the ways we should lead our children to know and follow the Lord? What would it look like to implement these instructions in your family's weekly schedule?

What are a few age-appropriate ways you can teach your children to implement some of the wisdom you're gaining in their lives?

We're called to lead our children in following Jesus. **As we lead, we're an example of what it means to be a man or a woman for them.** We don't simply talk to them about God; we demonstrate a life lived close to God in repentance and faith. **When we fail, we point to Jesus as the perfect Son, the true humanity.**

**Jesus is the perfect example.**

How can your children encounter Him in the way you live your life? How can you demonstrate repentance and faith with your children?

Do you seek your children's forgiveness or share what you're learning and ways you're growing?

**Every time we share ways God meets us in our struggles or redeems us in our brokenness, we point our children in the way.** Every moment we share ways God's grace has grown our faith, we lead them toward the way of abundant life. **Our children need to know and see our need for Jesus.**

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