

# Shapers

Proverbs 22:6, Ephesians 6:4

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## A. Nurture vs. Nature (Proverbs 22:6):

1. Train – The word to train means to set the child aside on a narrow path so that the child becomes dedicated to it. To dedicate means that the child is set aside, based on the guidance of the parents to achieve what is to be accomplished as directed by the Word of God and the wisdom God provides to the parents.
  - a) The Hebrew word for train (*hanak*) means to dedicate. It is used for dedicating a house (Deut 20:5), the temple (1 Kings 8:63; 2 Chron 7:5), and an image (Dan 3:2). The noun *hanukkah* speaks of the dedication of an altar (Num 7:10; 2 Chron 7:9) and of the walls of Jerusalem (Neh 12:27). Only in Prov 22:6 is the verb translated "train." *Hanak* seems to include the idea of setting aside, narrowing, or hedging in. (*Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1982, p. 252).
2. Train – Train means that there is a divine service that the Lord has dedicated the child for, based on the ability God gave them, and their future to build a family and their spiritual gift when they accept Christ as their Savior. The parent seeks to influence the child by lovingly guiding them to experience God's purpose.
  - a) "Hear, O Israel! The LORD is 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. 6 "These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. 7 "You shall teach them diligently to your sons 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. "You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. 9 "You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. (Deut. 6:4; NASU)
3. Children; servant – "Children" is referring to a young person who is like a servant. In other words, the child must remain in a mode of compliance, like a servant under the parents' leadership, ready and willing to accomplish various responsibilities in the home.
4. The way – Notice Solomon said, "the way". He did not say "ways".

- a) Since "way" in Proverbs does not mean personality or stage in life, it is preferable to say that "way" means *proper* way, the path of wise, godly living, which is Emphasized frequently in Proverbs - basically the way of wisdom. It is from this proper behavior pattern or godly lifestyle that he will not turn when he is old, that is, when he is grown (attains adulthood). (From Bible Knowledge Commentary/Old Testament Copyright © 1983, 2000 Cook Communications Ministries, Bible Knowledge Commentary/New Testament Copyright © 1983, 2000 Cook Communications Ministries. All rights reserved.)
5. The way – It is stated as “the way” because it is directed by God’s Word and wisdom which means that best way to nurture a child is to love them, to create a spiritual environment in the home so that the child at a young age accepts Christ as their Savior. The Holy Spirit’s influence stimulates the child to have an appetite for God’s Word.
  6. The way – “Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me. Behold, you desire truth in the innermost being, and in the hidden part You will make me know wisdom.” (Psalm. 51:5-6).
  7. He should go – The way should shape the character and disposition of the child so that the inside change in the child’s life becomes an outward manifestation that exposes the direction the child will take.
  8. Depart – This child who is in “the way”, vividly displayed by the way they act will be so influenced by the Holy Spirit that it is impossible for them to turn away and take a path that is contrary to the very nature of who they are.
    - a) These verses are principles, not promises. A godly parent has no guarantee from God for faithful children. <sup>[1]</sup>
  9. Depart – “The way” becomes such a lifestyle and so much a part of who the child is on the inside that it becomes everything the child wants to do and become so the child does not even have a desire for another course of life.

## **B. Call to Duty (Ephesians 6:4):**

1. Fathers – The word father has to do with the author and beginner. God, by the word’s Meaning, has structured everything to begin here.
  - a) Fathers are addressed because they represent the governmental head of the family on whom rests the responsibility

of child discipline. Fathers are not to exasperate (*parorgizete*, “provoke to anger”; used only here and in Rom. 10:19; cf. Col. 3:21) their children by unreasonable demands, petty rules, or favoritism. Such actions cause children to become discouraged (Col. 3:21). Instead, fathers are to bring them up, that is, rear or nourish (*ektrepheete*, “provide for physical and spiritual needs”; also used in Eph. 5:29) them in the training (*paideia*, “child discipline,” including directing and correcting; cf. “training” in righteousness [2 Tim. 3:16] and God’s “discipline” of believers [Heb. 12:8]) and instruction (*nouthesia*; cf. 1 Cor. 10:11; Titus 3:10) of the Lord. Children are to obey “in the Lord” (Eph. 6:1) and parents are to train and instruct “in the Lord.” He is to be the center of their relationships and of their teaching and learning.<sup>[2]</sup>

2. Provoke to anger – Paul orders us to not continuously (to the point it becomes a habit) over protect, show favoritism, purposefully neglect our children, say words that stimulate bitterness to them or become physically abusive when raising our children.
  - a) There are several things that can cause a child to become embittered:
    - By over-protection – If the little bird remains in the safety of its nest, it will never learn to fly. Besides, the over-protective attitude has the tendency of depriving the children of confidence and of instilling in them an angry mood, especially when they compare themselves with other children who are not receiving this special treatment.
    - By favoritism – Isaac favored Esau above Jacob. Rebekah preferred Jacob (25:28). The sad results of such partiality are well known.
    - By discouragement – The child says he wants to be a doctor and the father say there is no way you will ever make that.
    - By neglect – Absalom (2 Sam. 14:13-28).
    - By bitter words and outright physical cruelty – Here is a father who loves to throw his weight around and to make use of his superior strength.
3. Provoke to anger – (Prov. 18:21 – power of the tongue) – We are not to continuously (to the point it becomes a habit) and purposefully say words that would arouse anger in a child. The child can become angry, resentful, and bitter.
  - a) At the same time, children were often taught through beating,

which was standard in child rearing and education; fathers were considered responsible for their education. Paul is among the minority of ancient writers who seems to disapprove of excessive discipline (6:4). (Greek and Roman society was even harsher on newborn children, because an infant was accepted as a legal person only when the father officially recognized it, babies could be abandoned or, if deformed, killed. Early Christians and Jews unanimously opposed both abortion and abandonment. This text, however, addresses the discipline of minors in the household.)<sup>[3]</sup>

4. Bring up – Paul commands us to make it a habit to nourish our children with the same mindset as husbands are to nourish their wives. There needs to be a tenderness provided to a child while they are being raised. If you want to win a child’s mind, nurture their hearts.
  - a) If a home is truly Christian, it is a place of encouragement. In such a home, the child finds refuge from battles, and yet strength to fight the battles and carry the burdens of growing maturity. He finds a loving heart, a watching eye, a listening ear, and helping hand. He does not want any other place; home meets his needs. In this kind of a home, it is natural for the child to trust Christ and want to live for Him.
5. Discipline – This word is not first attached to correction. It is more focused on developing wisdom in a child which is followed with instruction.
  - a) A child’s obedience led to a long life. This was especially true in the Old Testament where disobedience leads to death (Exod. 21:15, 17). Paul also described the father’s proper relationship to his children (6:4). Fathers are to be gentle and patient like the Lord and are to avoid provoking their children.<sup>[4]</sup>
6. Discipline – Discipline not only symbolizes education, but it is teaching the child for the purpose of stimulating spiritual growth in them. This is why all of this is done in the Lord (in the sphere of all that God desires to achieve in and through the child’s life. Each child is a gift from Him; Ps. 127:3. What we do with them determines if they are a gift back to God; 2 Tim. 1:5-6).
  - a) This is why we are responsible for training a child in the way he ought to go and if we don’t function as fathers, the land is destroyed (Prov. 22:6; Mal. 4:6). The same is true if a pastor forsakes knowledge; God curses their children (Hosea 4:6).
7. Discipline – Discipline also involves correction. Correction takes place when the child

willfully and persistently violates the rules that are in place to shape the will of the child to submit their lives to God. Earthly fathers lead their children to their heavenly Father (Hebrews 12:7-11). This is important because the child will violate rules that can lead them away from Christ.

8. Instruction – The purpose of instruction is for training the child to understand what they are dealing with so that they learn to make wise decisions.
9. Instruction – The purpose of instruction is to influence the child so that the child's disposition is shaped by Christ.
  - a) Ultimately, the concern of parents is not simply that their sons and daughters will be obedient to their authority, but that through this godly training and admonition their children will come to know and obey the Lord himself. Theologically, this interpretation makes good sense, and it is consistent with the Old Testament reference, “the discipline of the LORD” (Prov. 3:11). <sup>[5]</sup>
10. Instruction – The purpose of instruction is to also provide information to the child when they are wrong so that expectations are clear. This allows correction to be more objective than emotional.
11. Lord – The direct objective for which everything is done is for the Lord because He is the One with the ultimate authority and power. The parent is therefore ultimately accountable to God forever (Matthew 18:5-6; 10 – millstone around your neck).
  - a) All of this discipline and admonition must be “of the Lord.” That should be its quality. It should amount to Christian training, therefore, and this in its most comprehensive sense, certainly including giving the child a noble example of Christian life and conduct. The entire atmosphere in which the training is given must be such that the Lord can place the stamp of his approval upon it.

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<sup>[1]</sup>Radmacher, Earl D. ; Allen, Ronald Barclay ; House, H. Wayne: *Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Commentary*. Nashville : T. Nelson Publishers, 1999, S. Pr 22:5-6

<sup>[2]</sup> Hoehner, H. W. (1985). [Ephesians](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 642). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

<sup>[3]</sup> Keener, C. S. (1993). *The IVP Bible background commentary: New Testament* (Eph 6:1–4). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

<sup>[4]</sup> Hughes, R. B., & Laney, J. C. (2001). *Tyndale concise Bible commentary* (p. 596). Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

<sup>[5]</sup> O'Brien, P. T. (1999). *The letter to the Ephesians* (pp. 446–447). Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.