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Keystone BAPTIST

Training Children

By Nathaniel S. Bramlet
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It would be a moot point to ask this author if he agrees with the verse *“Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it”*(Prov. 22:6, KJV). Because the Bible firmly and unequivocally states that *“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness”* (2Tim. 3:16.) Therefore, one cannot cherry-pick the Scriptures to find verses that are easily agreed upon and then proceed to only adhere to their advice. Nor can this author simply disregard a passage from the Bible because it is particularly difficult. But some have taken this passage and twisted it into something entirely different from its original intent. It has become increasingly clear that there is a lack of understanding as to what a proverb is and how to apply it in everyday life. Prayerfully, some of the stigmas around this particular proverb can be removed in this treatise.

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God Is Good

By Pastor Daniel Basham
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Jeremiah 29:11 says, *“For I know the thoughts that I have toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.”*

I am not a person that likes to use trite expressions or phrases. We so often throw around the phrase “God is good” like we were talking about the score of last night’s game.

Really though, the one phrase that so well describes God is: “God is good!”

There are so many passages of Scripture that refer to God’s goodness, and many that very specifically state that God is good:

(Psalm 103:8; Psalm 25:8-9; Psalm 27:13; Psalm 31:19; Psalm 34:8; Psalm 107:1; Psalm 119:68; Psalm 145:17; Nahum 1:7; Genesis 50:20; Psalm 84:11; Psalm 103:1-5; Psalm 145:8-10; Lamentations 3:25-26; Joel 2:13; Zephaniah 3:17; Matthew 5:44-45; John 3:16-17; Romans 2:4; Romans 5:8; Romans 8:28; James 1:17; Exodus 33:18-19; Deuteronomy 26:7-9)

The list goes on, and I encourage you to look these passages up.

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Moment by Moment

Have you ever set a deadline to finish something only to see the time running out too quickly? I've heard others say, "Where did the time go?"

The days seem to just fly by. With each moment the deadline gets closer.

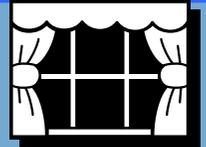
Ever since I rendered my resignation and set a time for my retirement, effective September 30th of this year, I am discovering more and more things that have to be done with less and less time to get them done. My itinerary is almost full and there is now the sad realization that I won't be able to get to every church in our Association to give my final greeting.

I am having to be reminded that the Lord is in control of this whole process. The PARBC is the Lord's ministry, and He has called just four state representatives in the Association's history. Many of us were blessed by Dr. Duane Brown who was the first representative, then Rev. Jack Keep who was the second and then Rev. Leland Hufhand who was my predecessor, serving our fellowship of churches for 10 years. Each of them contributed uniquely to the betterment of the association.

So it now becomes my time to step aside – there is a Bible reference to "knowing the time" in Romans 13:11, which says; *"And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed."* After 26 years of serving our Lord and the PARBC it is time to

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From the Parsonage Window



A CERTAIN FRAGRANCE—An Easter Story

by Anita Fordyce, Hope Baptist, Hanover



Her lungs ached from running back to the garden in the pre-dawn air. She couldn't believe what she had seen there earlier that morning. His body was gone. But, as she paused to catch her breath and allow her heart to slow down, she noticed a sweet fragrance. This fragrance outside a gravesite was a surprise. She had expected the stench of death from the corruption of a body which had been gruesomely beaten, disfigured and mutilated. Blood, which had streamed down His forehead from a manmade crown of thorns, had dried and glued His matted hair to His scalp. His face was swollen where His abusers had mercilessly pulled out great chunks of His beard. Finally, they had nailed His hands and feet to a cross. She shuddered at the memory.

It was horrible to watch Him die. Yet, with His dying breath, He forgave His murders, led a soul into heaven and cared for His mother. With his last breath He cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" And then, "It is finished."

In His weakened condition, He had died very quickly; nevertheless to make sure, a soldier had thrust a sword into His side.

The sweet odor tugged at her senses again. The fragrance enveloped her. She stooped down and scooped up a handful of soft earth. Drawing the dark substance up to her face and spreading her fingers, a gentle breeze blew it about and dusting her black mourning garments. She was amazed at how dry it was. An intense storm the night before had soaked everything. She brushed the dirt from her hands realizing it had only smelled like dust. No, what she sensed was alive. She was so tired that maybe her senses were tricking her. Maybe she did not smell anything at all. Adjusting her black veil, which covered her face, she picked up a bag of spices she had brought to finish the body's embalming.

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Scripture clearly shows the great responsibility of parents to train up children. Moses told the people, “... *these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up*” (Deut. 6:6-7.) The apostle Paul wrote to the Ephesian church, “...*ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord* (Eph. 6:4.)” It is not the state’s responsibility to train up a child, nor is it the church’s responsibility to train up a child; rather, it is the burden of Christian parents to pass on their faith, values, knowledge, and goals. No one else is better suited for this role than the parent, and if God has called you to this role, then you can guarantee that He will equip you to accomplish it. But accomplishing the role of training a child is not the same as a child being saved. A good teacher can train her class and still have those who fail it. A faithful parent can train their child and still have them rebel against God.

Nevertheless, in the Church today there are large groups of people who lack clear doctrine and sound systematic theology. The doctrines of the Bible are the parameters that God has put in place to keep the church from falling into heterodoxy. Unfortunately, orthodox Christianity is not being passed down to our children in evangelical and fundamental circles. This is shown to us in a recent study from the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life. They report 52% of American Christians believe that some non-Christian faith can lead to eternal life (Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, [Heaven Not a Gated Community](#)). This is astonishing when you think about it. People who claim to be Christians and claim to follow a Biblical pattern of living are completely disregarding the Bible.

This seems to even plague the so-called conservative wing of the church. Some people have become so extreme in their views on child raising that they teach their opinions as Biblical facts. One internet article from a well-known conservative parenting authority says this about Proverbs 22:6,

I know there has been a movement to disbelieve the passage as the Holy Spirit inspired it, but the fact remains that when they are trained right they stay right without interruption until they are old. I am an example of right training, as is my wife. My five children were trained in the way they should go, and I now see all twenty of my grandchildren (more on the way) being trained that way. I expect a continuance of 100% positive results just as God promised. I will not lower the standard, and you should not lower your expectations because of the poor results others are experiencing (Pearl, [Six Ways Parents Destroy Their Children Without Trying](#)). This is just a sampling of the article. It repeatedly asserts that Proverbs 22:6 should be taken so literally that if an adult child does go wrong, the parent must admit that somewhere along the way they failed. It then tells the parent to repent and examine themselves so that other parents can learn from their failure. But is this really why the Holy Spirit inspired Solomon to write this proverb? Did he intend for parents who have sought

to honor him in their parenting to play the blame game when a child goes astray? Let's examine that thought.

Proverbs has two main themes running through it, foolishness and wisdom. Solomon lays these side by side exhibiting to us the benefits of living wisely. But is Solomon attempting to lay out for us a poetic book of doctrine, or is he inspired to lay down principles for righteous living in this world? One author wrote, "The most common mistake is to interpret Proverbs as promises rather than statements of principle. These are written by Solomon to grant guidance to those desiring to live wisely and successfully. To consider them to be direct promises of God will lead to frustration and error" (Finnigan, p.30, Living Skillfully.) An example of this could be seen in the above internet article where parents were charged with playing the role of the Holy Spirit in their children's lives. The truth is, "Godly families have not infrequently produced ungodly children" (Johnson, Catechizing our Children.) To think that parents somehow can save their children goes against the Biblical teaching of salvation. Paul would not have been able to write to the Ephesians "...we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works..."(Eph. 2:10) if that were the case. It would have to read "we are our parent's workmanship," thus, effectively removing God from the equation in the lives of those with saved parents. But the role of regenerating mankind is retained by the Sovereign God of the universe not given to parents.

This does not mean parents can be slack in their duties of training children. God fully expects parents to lay before their children Biblical truths and practical examples in such a way that makes righteous living attractive. But God never lays upon the parent the responsibility of saving their children, merely training them. The prophet Jeremiah recorded these words, "*In those days they shall say no more, The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge. But every one shall die for his own iniquity: every man that eateth the sour grape, his teeth shall be set on edge*"(Jer. 31:29-30.) God judges parents and children based on their actions separately. Hear these words of wisdom, "...It must be said, that exposure to the Scriptures and God's redemption in Christ, does not guarantee a child's salvation. He still grows up to make his own choices (Finnigan p.361, Living Skillfully)." Apart from a work of God's radical grace in a person's life, he will pursue his hell-bound race with gusto.

If believing this proverb to be a promise is erroneous, then how are we to understand it? This author believes that it must be a precept for parenting. Parents must carefully, patiently, and lovingly train their offspring in the face of that child's natural tendency to sin. It is true, "...our faith can be transmitted to our children, but, clearly, the process is not automatic" (Johnson, p.18, Catechizing our Children.) We must teach them who they are and who God is. One pastor gave four practical areas to train children in, God's Holiness, their sinfulness, Christ's sacrifice, and God's expectations (MacArthur, pp. 50-53, Being a Dad Who Leads). These are important areas for every believer to be familiar with. Matthew Henry put it this way, "Train them up, not in the way they would go (the bias of their corrupt hearts would draw them aside,) but in the way they

Churches Searching for Pastor

As of February 2023



First Baptist Church – Corry
 Perry Baptist Church - Hadley
 East Lawrence Baptist Church, Lawrenceville
 Mountain Top Baptist Church – Mountain Top
 Grace Baptist Church – Norristown
 Chestnut Street Baptist Church – Port Allegany
 First Baptist Church – Roulette
 Carmel Baptist Church – Saegertown
 Tidioute Baptist Church – Tidioute
 Calvary Baptist Church – Union City

Coming Activities for Our Fellowship

Spring Conference – April 17-18, 2023

First Baptist Church, Butler
 Hosts: Pastor Dave Maitland and Congregation
 Speaker: Dr. Marty Von (Church Care Ministries)

Youth Retreat and Talents for Christ

Calvary Baptist Church, Bloomsburg
 Special speaker: Pastor Nathan Bramlet
 (Grace Baptist Church, Kittanning)

Date: April 28-29 2023

Bible Quizzing: I Corinthians 9-16
Bible Knowledge: NT I Cor. 9-16 / OT I Samuel 15-31

See www.parbc.org (Teen Activities)

Fall Conference – September 11-13, 2023

Marsh Creek Fellowship Baptist Church, Wellsboro
 Hosts: Pastor Keith Williams and Congregation

Spring Conference – April 1-2, 2024

Independent Baptist Church, Towanda
 Hosts: Pastor Donn Hauser and Congregation

Fall Conference – September 16-18, 2024

Bible Baptist Church, Quakertown
 Hosts: Pastor Tom Harris and Congregation

The goodness of God is a thread that is woven through the tapestry of the entire Bible (I borrow this concept from Criswell's "The Scarlett Thread Through the Bible").

While not as "seasoned" in ministry as many of the pastors in our association, I have been in ministry long enough to see God work in miraculous ways, through circumstance that we, as humans, can never comprehend.

When asked to write this article I had no idea what the subject should be. My dear wife encouraged me to write the testimony that God has given to me. That testimony is **filled** with His goodness.

I accepted Christ at an early age. I was blessed to be raised in a Christian home – not perfect, but Christian. (i.e., if the church doors were opened that meant that we were there! If you were sick or dying? We will stop at the hospital on the way home.) My parents sacrificed to see that I was in a Christian school, and I had the great opportunity to attend a really good Bible college.

It was during those college days that I **really** started to see (understand) how good our God really is. He brought me through some incredible physical challenges, and He always provided for any needs that were there.

Because of the constraints of room in this publication I will skip ahead to my "real" start to ministry.

Immediately after college I had a great opportunity to teach in a Christian school in Florida. I never wanted to be a teacher, but I loved working with those kids. It was a time of learning and growth. I was only there for one year before God moved me on.

Next, I attended seminary and then another year of graduate school. After this time God led me to Joliet, Illinois, to once again – teach. It was here that one of the greatest blessings of my life took place. My path crossed with a beautiful red-headed Canadian girl who would eventually agree to be marry me! **GOD IS GOOD!**

We have been in several different ministries over our years together. Each one of those had its own unique challenges. We have moved from Wisconsin to South Carolina to Illinois to Michigan back to South Carolina to Georgia (8 years) to Canada (8 years) and finally here to Western Pennsylvania.

Through all of these transitions, God has shown how good that He is. Loss of family members, ministries closing, problems in churches, loss of jobs (income) you get the idea. God always provided financially, physically, spiritually and emotionally. Nearly every time, He did this in unique and unexpected ways. We **never** wanted for anything.

Less than two weeks after moving my family to Worthington (November 2020, during the height of the Covid crisis) my sister passed away. She was the last of my "family" (growing up). My brother, father and mother have all passed. We had to take our first break, from our new ministry, less than a month after moving here. We had to head to South Carolina for my sister's funeral and to settle her estate.

In July of 2021, I was diagnosed with Lyme's disease. I thank God that we caught it. I do still experience some fatigue from this (but really – we are all tired), but I am thankful that the residual effects are not nearly as bad as many people experience.

This past summer (Memorial Day of 2022) God began leading my family through another trial. On Saturday, May 28th, I had a tooth pulled. No big deal, right? That is where most of us would be wrong. It quickly abscessed and caused some real problems. I took my first ambulance ride to our local hospital on Sunday afternoon. The next day I marked another item from my bucket list when I took a helicopter ride. I was life flighted to Presbyterian Hospital in Pittsburgh. My first, and hopefully last, helicopter ride.

The following three weeks are quite a blur to me, but many details have been relayed to me.

I ended up spending two weeks, intubated, in the ICU of Presbyterian Hospital, and going through four surgeries. I was on the receiving end of many jokes about the Baptist pastor in a Presbyterian hospital.

I thank God for sending the perfect medical professionals. The surgeons, nurses and support staff were all incredible and patient.

I spent my third week in a Jewish hospital. You can make your own jokes about the Baptist pastor and the Jewish hospital. Again, the care was better than I probably deserved.

The last few months have involved some pretty tough challenges: almost needing to learn to walk, learning to use my voice differently, swallowing, regaining lost strength (still a challenge), even just getting my jaw to open has been a challenge.

The world would say, “How can anyone say that God is good through all of this?” But, indeed, God HAS been good!

The love and care of our church family has shown brightly! Everyone rallied around our whole family through this entire ordeal (they are still so supportive). Every morning someone would bring my wife to the hospital, and every evening someone else would pick her up to go home. I am so glad she was able to be there with me through all of this ---- honestly, I was a bit difficult to deal with.

My son (who was mostly alone through all of this) was so well provided for. Folks took him shopping, they fed him in their homes, they took him out to eat. Some even got him Taco Bell! It was a scary time for him, but he was surrounded by God’s people showing him love.

The visits, calls and messages from so many people was so encouraging. Knowing that people were praying for us helped to encourage me through the healing process. Visits and calls from friends within our association was a real blessing. I can never fully express my gratitude for allowing God to use you in my life.

Because of this event in my life, I have had opportunities to witness to people whose paths I would never have crossed otherwise: so many opportunities to show the love of Christ through weakness (II Corinthians 12:9-10).

In recent months through, through physical therapy, even greater opportunities to share the Gospel have presented themselves. I am thankful for the chance to at least plant a seed, and pray that others will come behind to present even more.

I share all of this, not to seek sympathy, but to be a reminder to all of us that our God is so good.

Remember, every day, and through every circumstance (whether perceived as good or bad) that God is good. As Jeremiah stated in the verse that I began with --- His thoughts for us are ones of peace, not evil. The end that we experience might not be what we would expect or choose, but it is the one that He has chosen, and it is all for His good and His glory. **God is good, all the time, and all the time God is good.**

GOD is Good, all the time.

should go, the way in which, if you love them, you would have them go (Henry, Notes on Prov. 22:6, Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible)." Keep in mind as you train your child this incredible thought, "No part of them should be so dear to you as that part which will never die. The world, with all its glory, shall pass away; the hills shall melt; the Heavens shall be wrapped together as a scroll; the sun shall cease to shine. But the spirit which dwells in those little creatures, whom you love so well, shall outlive them all... (Ryle, p.8, Train Up a Child in the Way He Should Go)" The principle this verse teaches us is that if we train our children thoroughly we can expect what we "instilled in youth (will be) hard to shake and forget, even in later life (Finnigan, p. 361, *ibid*)." Therefore we can trust that "early training secures habitual walking in it (Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown, notes on Prov. 22:6, A Commentary, Critical and Explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments)." This is not salvation; rather, this is the influence of the godly sphere into which a parent wishes to bring their child.

What can we learn from this? A proverb was not written to give us unattainable promises but practical principles. In light of this, it is not for us to look at Christian parents with unbelieving children and assume they have failed to accomplish the task given in Proverbs 22:6. Nor is it for us to, "...Hide behind cliches, especially when it involves our children. Could it be that our teenage 'backslider' never did really slide forward? Could it be that we still have a rebel on our hands who needs to repent and believe the Gospel (Finnigan, p.15, When Kids Go Wrong)?" The author of this article has met so many sincere Christians who seek to justify their rebellious children on the strength of Proverbs 22:6 and Acts 16:31. That sort of thinking does not line up with the rest of the Bible. Scripture teaches salvation comes by grace alone through faith alone, not by the meritorious work of parents. Nor does the Bible ever have in view a Christianity that is achieved by some nebulous "sinner's prayer" that is followed by a life lived in alignment with the denizens of Hell, itself.

The child in the Christian home could more rightly be compared to Paul's description of the Jews in his epistle to Rome, "What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God (Rom. 3:1-2)." The child who is blessed to have Godly parents has had the "oracles of God" before him. But this does not mean he will never leave them physically. Rather the truth we learn is parents who raise their children faithfully can be assured that their teaching was not in vain. The well-known Christian evangelist brothers John and Charles Wesley had a dear mother who fervently believed this;

The parent who studies to subdue self-will in his child works together with God in the saving of a soul. The parent who indulges self-will does the devil's work, makes religion impractical, salvation unattainable, and does all that is in him to drown his child, soul and body, forever. (Susannah Wesley, quoted by MacArthur, p.74, Being a Dad Who Leads)

Our task is clear, as a child's life begins we must strive to set them on a path worth following so that, "...when he is old," he will have to fight against that faithful upbringing to do evil."

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Moment by Moment-Continued

step aside. There is no question in my heart about that... It is just in my mind that I'm dealing with the fleeing moments that are drawing me closer to the finish. But, no doubt, it is time.

There is a hymn that really helps the spirit – "Moment by Moment" and the verses are most comforting. The chorus goes like this: "Moment by moment I'm kept in His love, Moment by moment I've life from above; Looking to Jesus till glory doth shine, Moment by moment, O Lord, I am Thine." It may be time and the moments are speeding by, but whatever is ahead, whatever doth come –moment by moment, O Lord, I am Thine!

*"Moment by Moment...
I am thine"*

PARBC Youth Retreat & Talents for Christ

April 28-29, 2023

Calvary Baptist Church, Bloomsburg

Friday – April 28th:

- 
- 6:00 – 7:00 PM Registration (Church Lobby)
Groups arriving early may play in gym with sponsor's supervision & proper gym shoes
- 7:00 – 8:00 PM Rally Time – Pastor Nathan Bramlet (Church Auditorium)
- 8:00 – 8:30 PM Pizza and Pop (Fellowship Hall, Downstairs)
- 8:30 – 9:30 PM Bible Quizzing (Church Auditorium)
There are three pianos available for practice ONLY on Friday night
- 9:30 – 10:30 PM Girls staying in host homes leave
Game Time / Free Time (Gym)
- 11:30 PM Lights Out!

Saturday – April 29th:

- 7:45 AM Registration (Church Lobby)
- 7:45 – 8:30 AM Breakfast for All (Fellowship Hall, Downstairs)
- 8:15 – 8:30 AM TFC Judges' Meeting (Church Auditorium)
- 8:30 – 8:50 AM Contestants' Meeting (Church Auditorium)
- 8:50 – 9:00 AM Sponsors' Meeting (Church Auditorium)
- 9:00 – 12:30 PM TFC Competition (Various rooms in church and school)
- 12:00 – 1:00 PM Lunch for All (Fellowship Hall, Downstairs) & Free Time
- 1:00 PM Final Bible Quiz Off - (Church Auditorium)
Rally Time with Pastor Nathan Bramlet
- 2:00 PM Award Ceremony (tentative time)

HEAD FOR HOME

She thought she saw a light glowing inside the grave so she cautiously looked into the opening. She froze, not daring to go any further into the hollowed out cavern. There were two men inside. She stumbled through the entrance toward the intruders and suddenly, she felt faint. Her body, in shock, convulsed in seizure-like sobs.

“Woman, why weepest thou?” one of the men said to her. Never in her life had she felt such emotions this hopeless.

“Because they have taken away my lord and I know not where they have laid him.”

The men said something but she barely heard them. She backed out of the tomb and collapsed onto the garden floor. The fragrance swept over her again--more intense than before. It was refreshing and calming. She looked up and saw another stranger Who said, “Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou?”

"Sir, if thou have born him hence, tell me where thou has laid him, and I will take him away" she begged with her hands.

"Mary," she realized He knew her. "Mary." She recognized His voice.

"Rabboni!" There was no mistaking Who she was seeing. It was Jesus! He was alive!

She instinctly reached to clutch His feet. He told her not to cling to Him. "...for I am not ascended to my Father, but go to my brethen and tell them..." He said kindly but firmly and His eyes never left her eyes.

She knew now Who he was, why He had died, and now for whom He had died. He was Her Saviour but not her alone. He had died for al mankind "...himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour."

He, the risen Saviour, was the fragrance which had permeated the garden. She ran to tell the world what up to now only she knew "*...for He is risen, as He said.*"

