Daily Devotion #114

Train Up a Child

*Proverbs 22:6 – “Train up a child in the way he should go, Even when he is old he will not depart from it.”*

Some years ago Wayne Watson, a contemporary Christian singer and songwriter, wrote a song called, “Water Color Ponies”. It was a tearjerker for any parent who was in the midst of raising children. And even for those of us who have children in young adulthood and beyond, listening to that song still makes feelings of joy mixed with sadness come alive again.

Just so you know, the song speaks to the early life of a child and all they are involved in. The title comes from the times a parent spends with their little ones passing the day by using watercolors to occupy their busy minds. And after the portrait is completed by their tiny fingers, it is placed for all to see on the refrigerator door. But then, the water colored ponies are gone, having ridden away into the sunset because childhood has also gone.

Truly the joy of watching children grow is a bitter cup - one of wonder and excitement and the hope of a great future for them as well as the sadness that one day they will be out of the parents’ care and on their own.

Every God-fearing parent longs for their child to grow up to know God as their Lord and Savior. And not only know Him but serve Him with their lives. But there is always that little bit of uncertainty. After all, every child is his own person. Each one makes decisions in life as to what they will be and how they will spend their days. Sadly, many parents have watched their children choose a path that is different from how they were raised. I’m talking about the spiritual path to eternal life filled with joy and peace as they live for and with God. So, there ends up being questions in the minds of many parents such as, “Will my child follow God? Will he or she serve Him and live their lives for Him? Will they love God will all their heart, mind and soul?”.

Because God knows all things, He has given parents, those who live their lives for Him, a promise in raising children. That promise is what we hear in Proverbs. The promise is that when a child is raised to know God, meaning they have been trained in spiritual life by their parents, they will not lose what has been planted in them.

This means every God-fearing parent and/or grandparent is to spend their lives putting into the hearts and minds of their children, the truth of God and His Word. Just like they would anything else in life that is important. Early training leaves lasting impressions in the minds of children. God’s promise is, when the truth about Him is place deeply into the minds of children, that they will never depart from that truth.

That does not mean, however, that the child will always follow God. After all, every child is born a sinner, an enemy of God. They will want and fight for their own way just because pride lives in their hearts like everyone else. However, when the Word of God is continually brought up and put into the mind, it stays there. They may deny it along the way of life, but God will ultimately bring them back to the truth of what they know. That may mean He brings discipline upon them for ignoring what they know to be true, but always they will know that the truth of God exists, and they will never be able to fully deny Him.

If you are a young parent or a grandparent raising a grandchild, make the most of your time by putting into their little minds the truth of God, and talk about God. He will take the responsibility to use the knowledge that is shared in the appropriate times. Do what you can do, then trust God to do His part. After all, even our children belong to Him, not to us.