

University Heights Church  
of Christ  
445 Columbia Ave.,  
Lexington, KY 40508  
(859) 255-6257  
www.uheightschurch.com

**WORSHIP SERVICES**

**Sunday**

Bible Study: 9:45 AM

Worship: 10:45 AM; 6:00 PM

**Wednesday**

Bible Study: 7:30 PM (This is  
immediately followed by a  
short worship period)

**First Friday of Each Month**

Singing: 7:30 PM

**LEADERSHIP**

**Elders**

David Collins

John Thompson

Troy Antle

**Evangelist**

Adam Litmer

**Deacons**

Richard Brundige

Matt Thompson

Adam Litmer

Bill Morelan

Jim Parsons

Pat Seabolt

Adam Daniels

Jamie Powell

**In need of prayers**

The Osborne family, Pat Halsey, Jim Parsons, Rachel Thompson, Jill Harrison, Larry Billator, Karen Spivey, Jeff Howerton (also his aunt), Janet Brundige, Rhonda Boyd (and her sister, Dorothy), Paul Atkisson, Lois Weatherholt, Cassie Neel, Keia Burton, Robert Brundige, Valerie and Barry Boyd, Erlene Young, Larry Sells, Evelyn Damron, John Blessing, William Roberts, Paul Lyda, Sandra Queen, Annie Allen, Elijah Ossege, Chassey Seabolt, Edwina Cowherd, Karen Litmer

# University Heights Messenger

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**“Train Up a Child”**

John Thompson

Proverbs 22:6 says, *Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.*

Recent reflection upon this verse of scripture has brought two thoughts to mind that had not occurred to me before. The first thought centers around the phrase “train up.” Growing up can be likened to a training camp. In reality, it is a training camp wherein the child is to become skilled in all areas necessary for a successful life. Training up a child is not limited solely to the spiritual, but is to include all sorts of other skills such as decorum, responsibility, accountability, civility, good manners, kindness, gentleness, care and concern for others, citizenship, respect for authority, neighborliness, generosity and many, many others. There is considerable overlap among those skills, and they all do have a significant spiritual component. Most, if not all, are able to be tied to specific verses of scripture.

An incident in a Walmart store the other day got me thinking about Proverbs 22:6. As I was walking down one of the aisles, a father and mother and two teenage children were coming towards me. The two boys stopped to try on some Halloween masks. As happens in most families, the older brother knocked the mask off of his sibling, then both boys simply walked on leaving the mask on the floor. I turned around and watched to see if one of them would

come back to pick it up, but neither did. I don't recall if the parents saw their sons walk away without picking up the mask, but even if they did not, why didn't one of the boys pick it up automatically? It is highly likely that they had not been trained to do so.

While a huge part of training is teaching, training is so much more intense and involved. It consists of hard work, day after day, with plenty of opportunity to test out one's skill level. It involves practice and goal setting, and constant reevaluation when goals are not met. The parent/trainer must be a constant role model who can give honest appraisal of the trainee/child's progress over an extended period of time. The well-known passage from Deuteronomy 6:6-9 uses the word teach, but it is clear that the teaching occurs during a sustained period of intense training. *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.*

We all recognize that the passage in Proverbs does not contain a guarantee that proper parental instruction will always produce children who become godly adults. There are those who point out that the word "should" is not in the original Hebrew text and, consequently, Proverbs 22:6 is more accurately translated "train up a child in his own way." In other words, let the child choose his own way. Then, having done so, even when he is old he will still be living life as he has chosen and will not have departed from it. I believe the word "should" is necessarily implied and is borne out by the passage in Deuteronomy as well as Ephesians 6:4. *Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction*

*of the Lord.* You be the judge. Do those passages describe children being left to their own devices?

The second thought that had not occurred to me previously is brought out by the ESV wording *even when he is old*, rather than *and when he is old*. The ESV rendering, I believe, implies a life-long adherence to the training one received as a child. My parents drummed certain values into me. For some time, those values were theirs, not necessarily mine. I observed them because I was a child and they were my parents. However, along the way, experience has solidified those values and sometime, somehow, they became my values, and to this day I continue to live by them. Thank God for the training I received from my godly parents. Those values mean more to me now in my elderly years than they ever did before. *Even when he is old he will not depart from them.*

Perhaps the most vulnerable times in a person's life are those first few years after leaving the parental home. The challenges to the training one received at home can be enormous. For example, perhaps one is at a gathering where the booze is flowing freely. Do you say to yourself, "I was trained not to drink and become intoxicated. But I've never tried it before. Can it really be so bad?" Or, does the training sort of take over and you feel out of place and cannot wait until you can get away from there? Then, a few days later you realize you have internalized some values and principles, godly values and principles taught to you by your parents that you can live by, and even when you are old you will still be living by them.





