

## Proverbs 22:6 - Deception

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

Jeremiah 17:9 “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?”

Before we entered full-time evangelism, my wife and I volunteered for a prison ministry where we would go into the jails and hold church services for the inmates. **Did you know that many criminals truly believe “they didn't do it” even after it has been proven that they did?** Their heart is like your heart. Without the revealing light of God's Word, our hearts will come up with anything to deceive us.

Many a heart is deceived about Proverbs 22:6's promise. These deceived people are willing to believe any lie other than the clear truth, “when he is old, he will not depart from it.” Many people, for instance, believe that the verse teaches children may depart and then return to God when they are old. **Although the wording would have to be different in Proverbs 22:6 for that to happen, many still read Proverbs 22:6 with their own words inserted.**

Many who believe that Proverbs 22:6 only teaches that a child can depart from their parents' godly teaching and then return when they're old also contend that it is impossible to expect every properly raised child to never depart from proper biblical training. Friend, don't be deceived. **It is just as possible for God to make sure a child never departs from godly training just as much as it would for God to bring a prodigal who departed and returned again. Actually, it would be easier for God to keep a properly trained child in his godly parents' training than it would be to bring them back after they'd already been dirtied and hooked on the addictions of the world!** Do not be deceived! It is completely possible for our all-mighty God to keep any of His children in His teachings including those who are raised in a godly home. Why then does it seem easier for believers to accept the misinterpretation of a child to depart and return again despite strong biblical support? The main reason: our deceptive hearts. **The enemy does not care what you believe as long as it isn't what God wants you to believe.**

Here is another deceptive thought some have about Proverbs 22:6: “This verse is an encouraging promise parents can cling to knowing that their wayward children will surely come back home.” There are a number of problems with this deceptive thought.

- Proverbs 22:6 would not be an encouraging promise if a parent doesn't know which child will turn out wrong, and when they will return back to God. That thought process is exactly what some declare about salvation, “Although the Bible gives many promises of salvation, no one can know for sure if they are saved.” In all kindness, that doesn't make sense! That is not an encouraging promise at all.
- Someone will counter, “Well, then, Proverbs 22:6 is a promise, but not necessarily

a positive promise.” No, dear friend, if you carefully reread the verse, it is obvious that God included this promise in scripture to encourage parents in the training of their offspring, not discourage them. Proverbs 22:6 is definitely intended to help inspire parents, not hurt them.

- Another thought: if Proverbs 22:6 really is promising that your adult children would come back after they've gone astray, then that would always happen. Otherwise, Proverbs 22:6 would not be a promise. Why? **Because God's promises never fail, not ever (Num. 23:19; Titus 1:2).** Yet, the honest truth is that most offspring who leave the house as a prodigal do not come back to God. This means that Proverbs 22:6 cannot be a promise of children departing and returning to God.
- Many are not willing to accept the previous thought process because they believe that if Proverbs 22:6 really meant properly trained children would never depart from God then all “Christian” children who come from “Christian” parents would never depart. The problem, though, is not God's promise in Proverbs 22:6. The problem is sinful parents. The prerequisite for a child never departing from God is dependent upon the very beginning of the verse: “Train up a child in the way he should go....” Who is being commanded to train? The parents of the child. **Because of our deceptive hearts, many are not willing to admit it, but most “Christian” parents do not diligently train their children in the way they should go from the day they are born to the day they leave the house. The problem is not God or His Proverbs 22:6 promise. The problem is us.** Most “Christian” parents never seek godly counsel for parenting. Most “Christian” parents do not study God's Word and godly literature on how to train their children. Most “Christian” parents allow a ton of worldly things into their home, allow a lot of disobedience and bad attitudes from their children, allow their children to be around worldly friends, rarely spend much family time with their children, rarely pray or read the Bible with their children, make a lot of excuses for their children/teen's disobedience, etc, etc, etc.... **And despite all of this absence of God and godliness, most of these same parents will trust their deceptive heart over God's Word and declare themselves, like the criminals in prison, “I am innocent. I didn't do anything wrong. It could happen to anyone.” even after the evidence of God's Word has proven otherwise!**

I do not wish to be mean, but, dear parent, that is our problem. Not God. Us. Our deceptive heart is the problem. Get back to training your children exactly as God has instructed in His Word in all areas at all times in all of His power trusting His promises, and you will definitely raise a godly seed.