

# (Godly Home) Part 13 - the Training of the Will

by Denny Kenaston

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*The training of a child's will is the foundation for a prosperous spiritual life, and parents have a crucial role in guiding their children towards this goal.*

**Duration:** 40:40

**Scripture:** Proverbs 23:13-14, Proverbs 29:16-18, Matthew 25:21

**Topics:** "Godly Home Series"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on the importance of training the will as the foundation for a prosperous spiritual life. He emphasizes the significance of parents teaching their children to love, honor, and obey them, as these are the only two commandments God gives to children. The speaker highlights the value of little lessons in obedience, which can be taught from a young age with minimal pain. He compares this approach to how dog trainers schedule sessions and use minimal pain to train their dogs, suggesting that we can learn from them. The sermon concludes with the principle that being faithful in little will lead to being faithful in much.

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## Transcript

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These messages are offered to all without charge by the free will offerings of God's people. A special thank you to all who support this ministry. Greetings, in the name of the Lord Jesus, this evening we are going to continue looking at the subject of discipline again this evening.

The title of the message first here is The Training of the Will. The title of this subject deals with the foundation of a prosperous spiritual life. The training of the will is the foundation for a prosperous spiritual life.

Blessed are those children whose parents train their wills. They shall come to the Lord and prosper in their spiritual lives. Did you ever notice in the word of God that God gives children only two commandments? He then promises them a long and a prosperous life if they will keep these two commandments.

Just two, that's all. Love and honor your father and your mother and obey them. That's it.

And I put the love in there because it's in the word honor. Love is in the word honor. Love and honor your father and mother and obey them and it will go well with you and you will live long upon the earth.

How many believe that promise tonight? I mean, that's a powerful promise. Bless God. What a simple carefree life those children have.

Amen. If they are led to follow these two precepts they have a beautiful, simple and a carefree life. We could easily say that all we do in training our children could be tracked back to these two commandments which God gives the children to do.

Even though these commandments are written to the children, they give tremendous insight to us parents. I don't know if you ever looked at those two commandments in light of our responsibility as parents, but I would like to look at it a little bit here this evening as we move into this subject, the training of the will. If we lovingly guide our children to honor and obey us, we, parents, set the stage for them to follow the will for their lifelong life of spiritual prosperity.

That's an awesome thought. You know, many times we look at those verses, we think those verses, they're written to the children. You children, you need to honor your parents, you need to obey your parents, it will go well with you.

But look at it just this evening from the perspective of a parent. Who is the one who is going to guide those children to love and honor their parents and obey them? Who's the one that begins to chart the course of those children when they are even very small? It is the parents that do that. It's very important that we grasp that.

If we don't guide them in this way, we are guilty of the opposite. We are guilty and partially responsible for setting the stage for that child for a life that is shortened and full of trouble. And we are partially responsible for that if we do not guide them.

We cannot just look at a child and say, oh, it's their own fault, they went their own way, now their life is filled with trouble and it's been shortened. No, if a child goes that way, if a child rises up and is rebellious and does not honor their parents, the parents are partially responsible for that. There was not a training of the will of those children.

The ultimate goal in every aspect of child training is to bring the child to the place where they cheerfully, willingly, honor and obey their parents, and eventually, cheerfully and willingly honor and obey God. Amen? That's how it works. First, they learn to do that with them that they can see, then that is transferred over when they receive a new heart to do the same thing that they've been doing all their life with the one whom they cannot see.

And my brothers and sisters, that is the foundation of a spiritually prosperous life. I cannot emphasize it enough. The blessings that God promises them are conditional.

It is our job to help them fulfill these conditions and thus enjoy a blessed life. The use of the rod is one of the methods that God gives us parents to reach this goal. Remember again, the goal in discipline is not judgment, but rather it is blessings.

And so when we see here this evening where we're supposed to be going with our children, again we can see, that's what the goal is. When we're going to spank our children, the goal is not to mete out a punishment upon them because they have done something wrong. The goal is not to be the judge over their life.

The goal is to use that as a training opportunity to guide them more in a direction that they will have a spiritually prosperous life. Oh, blessed are the children whose parents guide them in such a path as that from little up. Blessed are those children who find such blessings upon them.

While a loving relationship stimulates willingness and obedience in a child, there are times when the will is not willing. And that is when we need to use the rod and spank the child. There are times when the will is not willing.

Right. Let's look at some more verses here. Let's turn to Proverbs 23, first of all, and read verse 13 and 14.

Withhold not correction from the child, for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod and shalt deliver his soul from hell. Obedience is a matter of the will.

It is clear to me that these verses deal with the will of our child. Notice first, again, God repeats what he has already said to us. And I've noticed this when I study the Bible.

When you find God saying the same thing over and over again, he is trying to get your attention. But notice what he says. Withhold not correction from the child.

He already said that once. Why does he have to say that again? Because there is a tendency in us to withhold the correction. So God says it again to get our attention.

The second half of this verse has two interpretations, and both of them are worthy. So I'll give them both to you. The first interpretation is that it ministers to our tendency to hold back.

In other words, don't hold back from correcting your child. The child will not die. You know, sometimes children act like they're going to die when they're getting a spanking.

Sometimes they sound like they're going to die when they're going to get a spanking. But God says, don't worry about it. They're not going to die.

If you do it the way that I told you last evening, you don't have to have any worry in your mind. They're not going to die. Don't hold back because you hear sounds that sound like a child is going to die.

That's one of the interpretations. The second interpretation is this. You will save the child from an early death brought on by a reckless life.

Now, that's also a worthy interpretation in light of the commandments that we just looked at. If you withhold correction from your child, your child will not die. He will live a reckless life and a reckless life is a shortened life.

So, either one of those interpretations are worthy. If you beat the child with a rod, you will save the child from an early death because they have lived a reckless life. That's the other interpretation.

But look at the next verse. This is a very sobering verse because of one word in that verse and that is the word hell. Thou shalt deliver his soul from hell.

Listen to that, brothers and sisters. That is a commandment. God says to us, Thou shalt deliver his soul from hell, God says.

That's a commandment, by the way. Notice again, we are given commands not suggestions, two of them. See them, the two of them there? Thou shalt spank and thou shalt deliver.

Both of those are commandments. Oh, beautiful commandments in the word of God. I see goals and purposes in these commandments and they go far beyond giving a spanking for punishment.

These issues affect the eternal destiny of my children. That is serious business. If I allow my sentimental love to keep me from my responsibility to discipline, I am playing with the destiny of my children and that is not a little thing, brothers and sisters.

Let's look at the nature of salvation, the nature of saving faith for just a moment. Remember the testimony of the dear lady who got soundly converted? I believe that was on Friday evening. We shared a little bit of a testimony of this lady.

Remember that testimony? Her will was at the center of all those knee exercises that I described to you. A willing, humbling trip to the altar, a willingness to confess her sins, a willingness to repent and turn from them, a willingness to yield her whole life to God, and a willingness to walk in the spirit when she got up off her knees. That is the nature of saving faith and therefore the will is at the center of the nature of saving faith.

It is very important that we train the will of our children. Listen to this, when God's grace and man's will meet together on God's terms, salvation takes place and man is transformed. Hallelujah.

Paul said it this way in Romans 6, 17. He must obey from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered unto him. Amen? That is the nature of saving faith.

No yielding of the heart, no salvation. Amen? That is just the bottom line. No yielding of the heart, no salvation.

Only a spurious counterfeit that confesses but does not possess. And there are many examples of that in this land of ours, isn't there? Let's go back to the training of the will through the use of the rod. One of the fruits of spanking, like I described last evening, is a broken heart.

Oh, how sweet it is to sit a child on your lap and pray after you have spanked them and sense that brokenness, that yieldedness in their heart. According to the Bible, brokenness is yieldedness. Those are synonymous words.

Brokenness is not just crying tears. Many times when we are broken, we do cry tears. But many people cry tears and they are not broken because brokenness and yieldedness are synonymous in the Bible.

But a good, healthy spanking, as was described last evening, will yield brokenness in the heart of a child. And that brokenness is more than tears. It is a yieldedness.

They have given up to their parents. Good place to be. God uses terms like this in the Bible.

Rend your hearts, not your garments. Circumcise your hearts. These refer to man giving up his will to God.

So we see again that the will is right in the center of our spiritual destiny. May I say it that way? It's very important what we do with the will of our children. And this is where we are going with our children.

After their will. Through the use of the rod, an unwilling child becomes a willing child. That is God's purpose.

I'm not talking about destroying the will of the child. This is of no value to God. The will must be very much alive.

Only now it is yielded to a new master. Right now, the new master is the parent. But someday the new master will be God.

You see, in this whole matter of working with our children, our goal should be God. That's it. If we have lesser goals, it will not come out right.

If our goal is we would like to have the children in nice order so that we're not embarrassed by things they do, that is a cheap second. A cheap second. If our goal is to have children who will work good and hard for us and make money on the farm, that's a cheap third or fourth.

The goal is God. That's it. God must purify our hearts.

And if our hearts are in fire and we love God with all of our heart, I do believe our focus will stay right there. The goal is God. And I want to bring my children to God because he is the God of heaven, the Lord of Lords, the only one there is.

The goal is God. And if I'm going to get my children to God, I'm going to train their will. That's it.

But their will must be very much alive, only now yielded to a new master. A child that has been left to himself has a rebellious heart and an unyielded will. When God calls that child, my son, give me thine heart.

When God calls that boy, give me thine heart. And when God calls that boy or that girl and says, my child, give me thine heart, the child can more easily say no, if the parent has not trained the will. That's an awesome thing.

I think sometimes parents play Russian roulette with their children, may I say. They bank that they do not train their children to be responsible, yielded vessels. They just kind of say, well, praise God for salvation and salvation is going to take care of the whole thing.

Aren't we glad for that? I tell you what, many a parent wept many a tears because they played Russian roulette with their children, hoping the salvation would take care of the whole thing. Guess what? When God said to that unyielded will, give me your heart, it was very easy for the child to say no. Happens all the

time.

Have you ever thought about this? This whole matter of the will, the yielded will. This could be the answer to all the phony Christians in the churches today. No submission to parents, then no submission to God, only a prayer, a good feeling and a baptism and no new creatures in Christ.

Jesus is what you get out of it. Maybe that's the problem. I don't know.

I just give it to you to think about. Now, let's look to St. Susanna for a minute. You know, St. Susanna, she's the mother of John and Charles Wesley.

Nobody made her a saint, but she's a saint. Amen. So am I. Her words on this subject are not canon, but they are almost canon.

She is the most quoted writer on the subject of training the will that you'll ever find. Listen to her counsel. I set out at an early age to conquer the will of each child.

Then I continue to bring it under subjection and hold it there until it is fully yielded to Christ. That's beautiful. Good words.

It's easy to see by a statement like that, that this elect lady had clear direction for her heart and her hands. No haphazard child training methods with her. She knew exactly what she was doing with vision and purpose.

She moved from point A to point B. Point A was an unyielded will. Point B was a yielded will. Point A was a yielded will.

Point B was a will that is still yielded many, many years later. Point A was a yielded will continually. And point B was the salvation of the soul.

We need to get that, brothers and sisters. We need to see it just like that. Maybe the word conquer seems too strong for you.

But remember, our children are sinners, right? I mean, a few days and full of trouble. And so every one of us parents know that at times there is a battle over the wills when we are working with our children. So I think that Susanna's words are fitting.

I seek from the beginning to conquer the will of my child. We must be careful to use all the spiritual means that God has given us, not just the rod, but also that we must use all of the means to bring the will of the child into subjection. This is the foundation for all the training that we must do.

You think about it now. Think about it. How can you do any training if you have a child whose will is not yielded? What can you do? How can you guide them with some chores to do? How can you get them to get up in the morning when you want? How can you get them to eat the food they're supposed to eat? If you don't have that will in your hands, you can't go anywhere.

So I would encourage you to seek from early on to bring the will of the child into subjection. And I'm not talking about standing there with a stick to get the will in subjection. We're talking about the whole of everything that I'm speaking about.

God gives us many tools to bring this will into subjection, not just a stick. This is called authority. You are supposed to be the authority in your home.

And I want to encourage you as parents to establish that authority using all the methods that God has given us. Your family will prosper tremendously underneath the covering and blessing of your authority. They will prosper.

It's not mean to bring the will of your child in subjection. It's the greatest blessing you could ever give them. We've all seen the other extremes far too many times on an airplane.

I have often watched a three year old control its parents and humiliate them into obedience on an airplane. Have you ever seen a child do that? A three year old child will humiliate their parents into obedience. And pretty soon the mom or the dad is eating out of the child's hand.

What would you like me to do so that you'll sit down in the chair that you're supposed to sit down in? What would you like me to give you so that you'll be a good boy while we're in the store? That is ridiculous. But it happens all the time. I've seen it on planes.

I mean, sometimes seriously, I slip on a little piece of paper when I leave the plane. 1-800-227-7902. Here you can get some free tapes as you'll call this number that may help you with your children.

I just give it to the parents are hard pressed. They're in a hard place. The FAA regulation says the child must wear a seatbelt or this plane is not budging.

But the child says, I will not wear that seatbelt. Thus the parents are forced into all manner of creative ways to get the child to submit. When they come up with a good enough plan, he bows his will, puts on the seatbelt.

How sad that one is. But I've seen it many, many times. Who's in charge? I tell you, it's just like it says in Isaiah chapter three, the babes shall rule over them.

This curse is upon many Christian parents in America. Let's go on and look at Obedience 101. 101 is a term used in college courses to signify the beginner's course where you start.

It's the introduction. So let's look at Obedience 101 or the introduction to classes and lessons on obedience. Beginning steps in obedience can start very early in a child's life.

It is easy to train a small child in areas of obedience with very simple lessons. Some came with questions last night as I described spanking a child and wondered how that works with a two year old. You know, they don't understand everything.

Well, just listen. Listen here this evening. Consider with me the Bible principle of little and much.

You know where Jesus said he that is faithful in little, the same will be faithful in much. We need to get that. Did you get that? If a child learns to be faithful in little, they will find it easy to be faithful in much simple little lessons of obedience.

If a child learns to be faithful in the small lessons of obedience, they will be able to transfer that faithfulness over to bigger lessons when they get older. By the time our children reach the age of one, we began training their will. We had many simple, fun ways to teach them to obey.

In fact, they didn't even know what we were doing. They didn't know it was training. They thought we were playing.

Well, we were, but we were also training. Consider a simple lesson on coming. We taught all of our children to come at our word, but this is how we did it.

First, we just worked at it like a fun little game. You call the child, the child comes running to you. Oh, what a good little child you are.

What a good little girl. What a good little Hannah. What a good little David you are.

And you pick them up and you hug them and you bless them because they came. Then you sit them down and you say, that's what Papa wants you to do. When Papa says, come, you come and then you send them away again.

A couple of minutes later, you call them back again. And to them, it's just a game. You know, when Papa calls, I come and when I come, he blesses me.

And when I come, he gives me a hug. And when I come, he smiles at me. So when Papa calls, I'm going to come.

And here we go. They go away. Come, come Hannah.

Here comes little Hannah running. She's running with her big old eyes wide open and a big smile on her face. And you're looking at her saying, oh, good, come Hannah, come.

And you pick her up and hold her in your arms and tell her what a good girl you are. You came when Papa said to come. You're a good girl.

Oh, that makes Papa happy. When you come, when Papa calls you, that makes me happy. And you put her down.

Now is she learning to obey? Yes, she is. So we play that game for a while. Then when it's real clear in my mind or Mama's mind that this little child knows what's going on here, they know that when I say come, that means I want them to come.

Then we make it a little harder. See, we let them have some toys to play with. Now, it's not as easy to come when Papa says come when you're enjoying playing with the toys.

But we put some toys there and let them play with the toys and then say come. And at times, yes, it happens as it happens, that the child says in their own heart, I think it's more fun to play with toys than it is to come. I don't think I'm going to come this time.

Well, when that happens, then there's a little bit of discipline. And this is a little child. And you don't discipline a little child in all the ways that I just described you last night.

No, you just reach out with two fingers and slap them on their little hand one time, or you reach out with two fingers and slap them on their little leg one time and tell them, no, Papa said to come. You didn't come when Papa said come. Now let's try it again.

You go back over there, they play and you call them and then they come and then you say, oh, that was a good that was good. You did it right. This is how we train their little wills from the time they were small.

I call these training sessions. They are planned out sessions. By the way, this is how a dog trainer trains a dog.

Sorry about that. Sorry to say it that way. But, you know, sometimes I think we could learn a few things from the dog trainers.

But this is how the dog trainer trains his dog. He has scheduled sessions. He knows what he wants that dog to learn.

He has a list of things that he wants that dog to learn and he goes after it with purpose. And by the way, dog trainers use very little pain to train their dogs to do all the tricks that they do. They use positive encouragement and repetition and patience and time.

I know one fellow. He has a dog that he trained that dog to do 45 different things. I mean, this dog is amazing, but he trained him to do 45 different things.

We could learn a few things from the dog trainers. Can I say that? Is that too harsh? Does that seem unkind? Does that seem like we're lowering child training? No, we're not lowering it. It's too low.

The dog trainers have it more figured out than we do. So I call it training sessions. They're planned.

We're going to have a session on this. Now we're going to have a session on this. Now we've learned to come.

Now we're going to learn this next one. And there are many, many little sessions like that that you can come up with. The dog trainers call it obedience training, right? Don't get so long.

Oh, my dog is it obedience training today? Well, it is obedience training. The ideas for this kind of training are endless. You can come up with your own.

We've had many of them. Laying your head down in the crib at night when it's time to go to bed or when it's time to take a nap. We use that as an opportunity to train the child to obey, not touching something that they shouldn't touch like a stove or something like that.

We use that as an opportunity to train them to obey, putting their toys away when they're finished playing with them. That is a very fun activity. If you get down there and do it with them, they will love it.

But all the while they are learning to obey your positive direction. They are learning to give up their will. And guess what? You haven't even spanked them yet.

When a child starts to crawl, it's time to learn about the no-nos in the house. Amen? This should be mostly positive training, by the way, not just corrective when they touch something. Now, many parents don't do this.

They actually, instead, they believe in child-proofing the house. As soon as the child starts to crawl, they go around the house and move all the things that they don't want the child to touch. Oh, this little vase, this goes up here.

This little piece, we'll stick this in the cupboard over here. Oh, they child-proof the house. You're not supposed to child-proof the house.

You're supposed to change the child and train them not to touch those things. So anyway, we have training sessions on that. Walk around the house with the little child and teach them in a good time, at a fun time.

You don't just teach them when they touch something. You teach them way ahead of it. You see this here? This is a no-no.

No-no. See that? No-no. No-no.

And you know that little one's just looking up at you. Soon, they get to the point where they understand what you're doing. And I know you parents have seen this before in your children.

Here they go across the floor. You know they're still crawling. And they're crawling across the floor and they're getting right over there next to that no-no.

And they reach their hand out for the no-no and look over at you to see if you're looking. Now, do they know what they're doing or what? They know what they're doing. They know it's a no-no and they're looking over you to see if they can get away with it.

That's obedience training. And if we will work with them on that simple level, you'll save yourself lots of trouble in the future. And if they reach out and touch something that they're not due, like that example there, if they looked over at you and then went ahead and touched it, no-no.

No-no. You're not supposed to touch that. And that's all there is to the lesson.

You can train them many, many ways that way. One thing that I used at my house with some of the children was the old checkbook and the pen lesson. I don't use a checkbook anymore, but I used to use a checkbook that I carried around in my pocket.

So in my pocket was a checkbook and in my pocket was a pen. Well, now you know how it is with a child. You know, when a child, you pick up your little child and they look right away to see what's closest enough around them and they see what's in your pocket and they want it.

You know, they want to look at it. Only thing is, with a little child, when they look at things, they always look at them by putting them in their mouth. And I didn't want them putting my checkbook in their mouth to look at it.

So I thought, okay, this is a good lesson that they can learn. The checkbook is a no-no. The pen, it's okay.

And so, I mean, I did this dozens of times. Every time you have a child, you know, you're walking around and the child's looking there at you and you know, they reach out with their hand and if their hand goes to the checkbook, I just push it away. No, no, no.

And I give them the pen. We go up a little bit later, walking around with him. They're looking at all the things, you know.

If their hand goes to the checkbook, no, no, no, no. Here, would you want the pen? You want the pen? And soon they learn that's a no-no and that's okay. In fact, I've even heard them say, they'll look at it and say, Papa, that's a no-no.

That's a no-no. I mean, it's serious business. Don't you touch that checkbook.

And most of the time, no pain, no pain. Maybe just a little on the finger. Just a little.

No pain at all. Real simple lessons when they're little. What is the point of all this that I'm saying here? There are several.

Note these little lessons transfer into big obediences someday. Note that little lessons transfer into big obediences someday. Little lessons are easy to learn.

I've described a few to you. They're pretty simple, aren't they? Little lessons can be given earlier in life. Little lessons require very little pain.

Little lessons do take time, but the investment is well worth it. And lastly, little lessons are not little lessons at all. They are big ones made easy.

They are big ones made easy. A child who learns on a dozen of these kind of little lessons to obey, you may not ever have to work your way through some of those spitting and kicking and fussing and carrying on sessions that you have to do with them. If you will start young, the lessons will be easy and the child will be much better off for it.

Only problem is it takes time and we don't have any of that, right? We don't have any of that, but I'm just telling you, it's there if you want it. Proverbs chapter twenty nine. Let's go there as we finish up this session here.

Proverbs chapter twenty nine. We have looked at some of the verses in chapter twenty nine. Verse fifteen through eighteen is where we're at.

But I feel like we are ready to look at it again. Proverbs twenty nine, verse fifteen and following the rod and reproof, give wisdom. They give wisdom.

You know what wisdom is? Wisdom is learning how to live a righteous life. The rod and reproof teach a child how to live a righteous life. But a child left to himself, remember the wild olive tree uncared for, bringeth his mother to shame.

Look at the following verse. If you leave your child to yourself, this is what happens to themselves. This is what happens when the wicked are multiplied.

The transgressions increase or are multiplied also. You get the context there. So if you leave your child to themselves, wickedness will increase.

Wicked people will increase and it'll be a plague to the land. But the righteous shall see their fall. Verse seventeen, correct thy son.

There it is again. Correct thy son. And he shall give thee rest.

Yea, he shall give delight unto thy very soul. Where there is no vision, the people perish. But he that keepeth the law, happy is he.

These verses flow together in context. What God is saying is simply this. If you will train your children, they will prosper.

You will be at rest. They will be at rest. They'll bring delight to your soul.

They'll bring delight to the nation they live in. If you have a vision like this to train your children like this, there will be no perishing in the land. But if you don't have a vision and you neglect this, the people will perish all over the land.

That is God's word to us this evening. Let's pray. Oh, God, our Father, this evening we bring our hearts to you.

Oh, Father, yes, God, this is not a revival message this evening. This is just good old down to earth teachings from the word of God. We need them, Lord.

We need more than inspiration. If our children are going to be right, we need to be instructed out of your word. And I pray, Father, that you would give us earnest hearts just like we were listening to a revival message this evening, God, because this is how it really gets done, Lord, every day, day in and day out.

So, God, we pray blessings upon us, Father, as we continue to look at the teaching and the training of our children. We ask you this and trust you for it in Jesus name. Amen.

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