

What My Child Will Probably Become

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

If my highest goal for my child is that he become a Christian by early adolescence, I will probably have that joy.

If I wish for my child to be a respected citizen, contributing to the peace and prosperity of the community, that is probably what he will become.

If I hope my child has a place of his own—not too far from my place—graced with a sweet spouse and some energetic children to enjoy their granddaddy, that dream will probably come true.

If I want my child to be successful in business, with a head to understand investing and how to turn a good profit, my child will probably become a good businessman.

If my desire is that my child enjoy the best America has to offer—without falling into its most obvious vices—he probably will.

If I would be glad to see my child making positive contributions to church life and the church’s missions, without needing to sacrifice so deeply as to drag his family into poverty, he will probably fulfill my expectations.

If I want my child to show the community what a godly life looks like by faithful church attendance, distinctive dress, and frugality, he probably will become just such an example of the believers.

If I want others to think well of my child and see in him the imprint of a wise dad, that could well happen.

If any of that is what I want for my child, I will—wittingly or unwittingly, by example more than anything else—be training him up in that direction.

Will I be satisfied with the result? Will God?

If I seek God’s vision for my child, He will grant it:

A vision that my child be brought to broken repentance by learning to know God and see his own sinfulness, so he will passionately love and joyfully submit to His precious Savior and Lord.

A vision that my child learn to see beyond himself and his immediate community, so he will catch God’s vision and share God’s heartbeat for the nations beyond.

A vision that my child sink down his roots, not deep in home soil, but deep in God, so he will be free to move about in the Master’s service. A vision that he equally consider both singlehood and marriage, ready to embrace either for the Kingdom of Heaven’s sake.

A vision that my child catch an eternal perspective of temporal things, and learn to invest his treasure in Heaven, the only risk-free investment opportunity ever to be offered. A vision that he live for the good of others and seek others' happiness, even with his finances and business dealings.

A vision that my child understand deliberate self-denial for the Kingdom of Heaven's sake, so the comforts of the American lifestyle hold no more attraction for him than the deprivations of Jesus' lifestyle. A vision that he model his lifestyle—whether in America or afar—after the Master's.

A vision that my child be a living, active building block in the temple of God. A vision that he serve the interests of the Church, the Kingdom, ahead of his own prosperity. A vision that he understand the value of doing without in order to more effectively fill the place God has put him.

A vision that my child be an effective evangelist: that his faithful church attendance, distinctive dress, and frugality merely complement his testimony of loving concern for the physical, material, and spiritual well-being of neighbors near and far, and provide a basis for sharing the Gospel of warning and hope. A vision that others be both convicted and attracted by his selfless perspectives and responses.

A vision that my child not be inhibited by sinful fear of men's opinions as he takes up his vocation of imitating Jesus. A vision that he, like Jesus, bear the imprint of—an unmistakable resemblance to—his Father.

Does my child's upbringing reflect God's vision for him?

Proverbs 22:6 restated: *My child will probably become what the upbringing I give him prepares him to be.*

—Aaron Crider