

dolls to play with and don't give boys trucks. Instead give the boys toy vacuum sweepers, irons, play kitchens *and* trucks and give the girls, toy chainsaws, tool benches, hammers, *and* dolls. *Do NOT* give them toys that might indicate whether they are male or female — *that's* "steering!" While girls are certainly capable of being carpenters and lumberjacks and boys can surely cook and run a vacuum, — remember Dr. Perry? "Once developed, and once organized — the brain is much harder to modify." At birth "there is a very broad potential and during the next few years that potential is narrowed, focused and refined so that the brain expresses the capabilities that are most adaptive for the environment it has perceived...childhood experiences therefore, create the person." Hum-m-m-m. So — following society's advice — could it possibly train up Sally to be *confused* about whether she's a girl or a boy and Johnny to be *confused* as to whether he's a boy or a girl?

"[M]ale and female he created them" (Gen. 1:27) God did not create a *unisex* being. He forms boys and He forms girls in the womb. Why *wouldn't* children who are trained up in a *unisex* manner be confused? Children who are not "trained-up" by their parents to *know* at a *very* young age whether they are a boy or a girl are *easy* targets for organizations like GLSEN. Children are too *pliable* and *impressionable* to make their *own* decision as to whether they are a boy or a girl! God gave them *parents* to *mold* them in such a way that they *develop* and *form* habits, thoughts and behaviors about things they are not emotionally and mentally mature enough to determine on their *own*. Proper training-up by parents can guide children *through* their difficult pre adolescent and adolescent years *if* the parents haven't bought into society's advice that's not Biblical advice! Boys should be taught to be boys and girls should be taught to be girls. God *made* them different and parents have the task of being sure their children *know* that fact. He didn't intend for them to *choose* which sex they are *after* they're old enough to know the difference. That's what *parents* are for! Is it possible that society's bad advice about this aspect as well as numerous *other* aspects of child rearing has something to do with the reason so many children are unsure and insecure about way too many things in their young lives?

We *could* have chosen *any* of the traits we mentioned earlier, but we chose sexuality because it's an easy target in today's society. The point we want to make however, is that parents simply *can not* allow themselves to be influenced by a society that is producing suicidal, miserable and confused children. Christian parents can do *better* than that — *if* — they don't fall for the societal trends that *prevent* them from following the Biblical admonition to "train up" their child. Society neither *accepts* nor *understands* God's way — *Christian* parents *should*! Christian parents must always keep *God's* way foremost in their minds and strive, at all cost to train up their children in a *Biblically* based way so that "*when he is old, he will not depart from it.*"

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# DILIGENCE

"We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, in order to make your hope sure." — Hebrews 6:11

A ministry of Dennis and Sherri Owens

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Issue 1

## Train Up A Child

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

We're all familiar with this verse. It's been discussed, explained, challenged and questioned countless times over the years. Many dedicated parents have done everything they knew to do and still, their grown child left the faith. What a tragedy — as well as a very difficult thing for Christian parents to deal with and to accept. Disappointed and bewildered parents wonder what they could have done differently.

We *sure* don't have the answer but we do know that children *will* be trained-up by *someone* socially, sexually, religiously, morally, doctrinally, and in numerous other areas of life — and God specifically assigned that task to parents.

The carrying out of that task however, has changed in a *lot* of ways just during *our* years on this earth. Those of us who have been around for awhile will attest to the fact that young parents "handle" their children far differently than those of us who raised youngsters in a time that in *many* ways seemed less complex. Certainly less complex as far as *society's* input, pressures, and — just plain *bad* and unbiblical advice. What do we mean by that?

Let's start by looking at the phrase "train up." Dictionary.com lists the definition of "train" as to *develop* or *form* the habits, thoughts, or behavior of an individual. So the words "train-up" carry the *weight* of *developing* and *forming* habits, thoughts — thoughts? — yes, even *thoughts* — and behavior. We *should* therefore be able to glean from this verse that the training-up of a child will produce an adult who will *maintain* whatever habits, thoughts and behaviors were instilled *during* the training-up years. In other words, the habits, thoughts and behaviors will *continue* to be the *same* even *after* the child is no longer under the jurisdiction of the parents. Can we conclude then that children who can't wait to leave home so they will have freedom to behave anyway they wish, have been trained *only* to obey *rather* than having *developed* and *formed* habits, thoughts and behaviors that became their *own*?

We said earlier that some of the advice to which parents are exposed in today's society is just plain *bad* as well as *unbiblical*! And it appears that many parents — including Christian parents — seem to be *taking* a lot of that advice. "Wait a minute." you say — "first of all, what makes you so convinced that it's *bad* advice and secondly, what makes you think parents are *taking* the advice? What do you have to back up such a statement?" Well, let's look at some statistics about today's children.

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According to a March, 2009 report issued by *The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, suicide is the third leading cause of death for 15 to 24 year olds. Among this age group, suicide accounts for 12.3% of all deaths. In 2007, 6.9% of high school students surveyed through the *Youth Risk Behavior Survey* indicated they had attempted suicide in the last 12 months, and 14.5% had *seriously considered* attempting suicide. In 2008, 15.4% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders reported using a prescription drug for *non-medical* purposes in the last year. A news release by the University of Washington in July 2009 referenced a study they completed that suggested children should be screened for depression as early as second grade. The study showed that about “20 percent of the children were found to have a notable number of depressive symptoms in second grade...” In addition to these statistics, research shows that *half* of all lifetime cases of mental illness begin by age 14. Need we say more? Today’s children have problems! And they’re *not* small ones. And *Christian* youth are not exempt. It hasn’t *always* been this bad. What’s going wrong with children or with child-rearing? What has changed?

Most of us could probably come up with a long list of things that have changed. One of the first on *our* list would be the de-stabilization of the family. Divorce has become the norm while marriage is now considered to be a defective and dying institution that is no longer required to “live together.” Both of which are unbiblical concepts. We could also point to the fact that husbands are no longer the head of the family. That has been traded for an egalitarian arrangement where husband and wife share leadership responsibility — another unbiblical concept. The value of human life has dropped to an all time low as abortion clinics and Planned Parenthood perform abortions by the millions — also of course, unbiblical. Another trend of today is that children should have what is called “religious freedom” and not be instructed in the faith of parents but rather be free to choose their *own* faith *after* reaching maturity — again, an unbiblical concept. Also — *The American Psychiatric Association* no longer considers homosexuality a disorder, *unless* sexual orientation becomes an object of *distress* for the individual — once again, unbiblical — homosexuality *is* an *abomination*. We could go on with this list but sooner or later, the question must be asked — have *parents* — even Christian parents — bought into society’s advice rather than using God’s Word? We don’t know. But after looking at those earlier statistics — *something* is causing *children* to be very confused! They’re unsure and insecure about way too many things in their young lives.

Let’s get back then to “train-up a child in the way he should go...” Remember that to “train” means to *develop* and to *form* habits, thoughts and behavior. So according to that verse, it is the job of parents to *form* certain traits in their child. That means they must assume the task of *establishing and molding* the habits, thoughts and behavior of that little being that God has placed in their care. Let’s think of it this way for a moment. A “mold” is a *hollow* form — it’s empty. It’s just waiting for something to be put into it that will eventually solidify and then maintain the shape of the mold. After something is molded, and some set-up time has passed,

the exterior of the mold is removed and — voila! — the once pliable (or moldable) *product* that was poured into the mold is now solid and — what do you know? — it *maintains* the shape of the hollow casing into which it was poured.

Children are pliable and it’s the parents God given duty to *develop* and *form* their habits, thoughts and behavior through the Biblical process of training up. Training up *is* the Biblical method that results in the “shape” the child will maintain *after* the exterior of parental control is removed. So exactly *how* is society taking such a toll even on Christian parents, concerning this training up process?

Dr. Bruce D. Perry, M.D., Ph.D., is a recognized authority on brain development and children in crisis. He has stated, “once developed, and once organized — the brain is much harder to modify.” Dr. Perry claims that at birth, “there is a very broad potential and during the next few years that potential is narrowed, focused and refined so that the brain expresses the capabilities that are most adaptive for the environment it has perceived.... [C]hildhood experiences, therefore, create the person. We must therefore recognize that early childhood is not a passive time. It is, in fact, the most crucial time in the life of an individual.”

We already mentioned a long list of things that have changed at the very *core* of society but with Dr. Perry’s words in mind, let’s look at one *specific* aspect that can be dissected into enough detail to allow for a much closer examination. Remember, we said that children *will* be trained-up by *someone* socially, sexually, religiously, morally, doctrinally, and in numerous other areas of life. So let’s apply Dr Perry’s conclusions to just *one* of those areas.

While solid statistics are hard to come by, many experts agree that homosexuality is *rapidly* increasing among young people. So let’s discuss sexuality in relation to *society’s* way versus the *Biblical* way of training-up. We all know that the pre-adolescent/adolescent years are years of much internal conflict and a time when sexual identity is being shaped. It’s also a time when *tremendous* pressure is placed on youngsters by peers and *especially* by the school systems to *question everything* about their own person, their own beliefs and their own value system. The pressure to question self is *especially* strong concerning their sexuality *and* their Christianity. *The Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network*, (GLSEN) is a growing, well-funded pro-homosexual organization and uses schools as its major platform starting as early as kindergarten. It is a *fact* that a child *will be encouraged* to question whether or not he or she is homosexual and *will* consider that to be a possibility if he or she isn’t *completely* secure in his or her sexuality! Now, remember Dr. Perry’s words, “Childhood experiences, therefore, create the person.” So — let’s think about this now. The advice from *society* is that children should not be “steered” toward sexual identity because it will cause girls to not want to be engineers, construction workers, mechanics, etc. and cause boys to not want to be nurses, beauticians, in touch with their feminine side, etc. Society’s advice then? — *no sexual steering* for children! Boys and girls should be raised in *exactly* the same way. Don’t give girls