



REFLECTIONS

January 12, 2020

**Train up a child in the way he should go,
And when he is old he will not depart from it.**

Proverbs 22:6

Train Up a Child

There's an adage that says, "It has been said that there are two things parents should give their children. The first is roots; and the other is wings" What a heavy responsibility! Parents hold delicate human lives in their hands; and most parents seem imbued with love for each child to do their very best to prepare them with roots and wings to face the life ahead. But as I think of this familiar adage, I find myself as a beneficiary of those roots and wings my parents worked so tirelessly to provide.

Through the years, *Reflections* have often noted the blessing my parents were in my life. But alongside them during those nurturing years stood my grandparents behind them and close friends encircling them. Collectively they taught principles to live by through the stories they told and set examples by the way they lived them out. Looking back, those lessons shaped my perspective of life and instilled the values for how I have chosen to pattern my life.

At no time during those years did I sense any intentionality or duty from any of them to train up a child. They just did it. All of them gave me their attention willingly and freely. Without their attention, it seems unlikely I would have given much attention to them. From Mema reading me Bible stories, or Millie challenging me to competitive card games, or J.P. teaching me hit, throw, and catch a baseball, I learned about life and how to live it.

I watched Mema live what she taught as a Sunday school teacher until she was 90 years old. Millie's games instilled my competitive spirt; and my hand-eye coordination from J.P.'s training proved to open more doors for me than I can count.

Train up a child in the way he should go, the proverb says. But parents don't have to go it alone. Mom and Dad were blessed with a team to help—my grandparents who had trained them well, and a circle of friends who served the Lord and lived principled lives. Perhaps this child of theirs fell short of everyone's hopes; but today he looks back in thanksgiving for all those whose love and training helped give him grow roots and wings to become me.

And it seems now the proverb ascribes responsibility for more children than our own. We are all God's children. And we should feel blessed when God chooses us to help give roots and wings to some of them not our own. He assigned such a team to Mom and Dad.

And I have been blessed by it.

You are the light of the world,

Richard +

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