

Proverbs 22:6 ESV

Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.

My father was an interesting man. He would be 117 years old today – if he were living. He was a tradesman owning a country store and gas station. He bought and sold livestock. Though he never farmed, he also owned almost 300 acres of land. He had been a schoolteacher and, having graduated from the University of Chicago law school, was a member of the Tennessee bar. Somewhere along the way he was instructed in French. He taught himself Hebrew and Greek.

As a young man and a new college graduate, he taught grades one through eight as the only teacher in a white four-room country school in the community of Oak Grove. It was the same school that he had attended as a boy. I have a picture in my den of the class of 1920 standing in front of the old building. I can spot my dad among the 40 or so youngsters in the student body. Only one of the children is wearing shoes. Years later, in the late 1930s, the school district was consolidated, and the old structure was vacated. My father bought it from the state and moved his young family into it. I was born there.

He was of a fatherly mold not much known or emulated in modern days. He had no intention of being my “buddy”. Fathers were for the “big stuff”. He never failed to be there for the “big stuff”. He was not much with small children but loved to talk with us (I had two brothers) when we could handle adult conversation.

He was not one to shroud things in mystery if, in his opinion, no real mystery naturally attached to them. I remember once when I was about ten years old and out in the car with my dad, I asked him if I could drive. He responded: “I don’t know. Do you think you can?” In an era before automatic transmissions, what followed was not elegant. The old car bucked, stalled and made odd noises but eventually we were away. My father was unflappable. It turned out that I *could* drive.

My father brought me to church. He taught me the scriptures. He set a Christian example before me. I remember lying in bed late at night and listening in the dark as my father prayed for me.

I am now an old man. By grace, I have not departed from the way shown to me by my father. As an added bonus, age notwithstanding, I can still drive.

George Moore

Elder Emeritus