

# 02 the Holy Art of Training Children

by Denny Kenaston

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*The Holy Art of Training Children is a series that explores the principles and methods of the Bible for raising children in a way that honors God.*

**Duration:** 41:01

**Scripture:** Psalm 144:12, Proverbs 22:6, Isaiah 59:19, Malachi 2:15, Malachi 4:5, 1 Corinthians 1:27

**Topics:** "Parenting", "Discipleship"

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## Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of training children in a godly way, highlighting the need for parents to step into their role with faith and dedication, trusting in God's ability to equip them for this task. It encourages parents to believe in God's provision and guidance in raising their children, emphasizing the significance of following biblical principles and disciplines in child training as a holy art. The speaker urges parents to focus on nurturing a godly seed, aligning with God's heart for families and seeking revival through dedicated parenting.

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## Transcript

Well, God bless all you courageous parents who have come for these ten days. You're in for a rigorous ten days. It shows your hunger that you would come, that you would set aside ten days, ye more than that for some who had to travel ten days to seek God about your family.

God bless you. I tried to make it sound tough so that I could scare some of you away, but you came anyway, and I'm grateful for that. I'm excited about what God will do with us and for us during these days.

We are all here by faith, you and me. I don't know where we're going, what we'll do, but God will lead us, that I'm very sure about. Why are we doing the home meetings again? I believe it's eleven years since they were done.

There are several reasons for that I'd like to give as we just give a little introduction here before we get into the holy art of training children, which is the title of the first session. Why are we doing this again? Well, there are several reasons. I have been writing a book on the home.

It's called The Pursuit of Godly Seed. But while I was writing the book, I began to see that there were some flat spots in the home series, some need for balance. I also, number two, began to realize that the sessions weren't really in a proper order like they should be, and therefore for that reason I felt it needs to

be done again and done in a more orderly way.

Number three, we're eleven years older, and we've made a lot more mistakes and learned a lot more lessons, and I think it would be good to be able to share all those things that we've learned. And lastly, I'm in a strategic place in my life that I won't be in again. That being, I'm almost 54 years old, and three of my children are grown, they're married, they're gone.

Yet at the same time, we still have little boys at our house, and we're very busy about training them. So I feel I have a perspective that I won't have again. In ten years I won't have any little boys.

Now I do. So for those reasons, I felt the need to give the series again, and obviously it will be broadened quite a bit from the original one. In Malachi chapter two and verse fifteen, you'll find a portion of that scripture up here on the board.

It says that God is seeking a godly seed. That is what these meetings are about, because God is seeking a godly seed. Not because you want your children to be right, not because I would want them to be right, but because God, the God of heaven, is seeking a godly seed.

That is the reason why we've gathered together here for ten days. And brothers and sisters, nobody seeks like God does. Nobody seeks like God does.

And He is seeking a godly seed. We have come to join in with the mysterious working of God's spirit in the last days. That's why we're here.

According to Malachi chapter four and verse five, the spirit of God is working in the hearts of fathers and turning their hearts to their children, and He's working in the hearts of the children to turn their hearts toward their fathers. And we have come to join in with that mysterious work. I don't know if you realize it, but God will be doing that in your heart while you sit here for the next ten days.

I promise you that. If your heart will be open to the spirit of God, you will get a radical turning of your heart. I promise you that.

Because the spirit of God is brooding over our homes. God is causing men everywhere to repent of their unscriptural focuses. We'll say more about it later.

But God is doing this. This is not the work of a man. This is not the work of some tapes.

This is not the work of any seminar. This is the work of the living God, because nobody seeks like God does. We live in perilous times.

The Bible speaks about that. We are in them, I believe, perilous times. According to Isaiah 59 and verse 19, God says, when the enemy shall come in like a flood, and he has, God says, the spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him, against the enemy.

Now, there are many ways that the spirit of God can do that, but I believe that one of those ways is he lifts up the standard of a godly family against the enemy. I believe nothing will turn or affect this nation that we live in more than spirit-anointed godly families. Nothing.

God is desiring to lift up that standard against the enemy. We'll see more of that later. Just a little bit of our testimony as we introduce the subjects this evening.

Jackie and I have come a long way. May I say it that way? We've come a long way. We have learned much out of failure.

We have sought God for answers through the years. We have stuttered and stumbled around quite a bit. You can ask our children.

They'll tell you. But all the while we were stumbling around, there was something inside of our heart that said we want to go the right way. We want to do the right things.

And because of that, we sought God when we didn't have answers. We sought God when we saw failure. And through study and meditation in his word, God gave answers.

God gave us answers. He'll do the same for you. He'll do that for you this week.

I'm sure many of you came looking for answers. You came to the right place. God gives answers when we meditate upon them.

We didn't have a good start. We had no clear patterns. We didn't know how to be Christian husband, Christian wife.

We didn't have a clue. We didn't know how to raise our children. We didn't have a clue when we started.

There's hope for you. We've come a long ways. We still have needs.

I want to say that in the beginning here because I want to preach the beautiful realities of the word of God all week. But I want to let you know here in the beginning we have lots of needs in our family. We're not a perfect home.

We're not the godly home. We're not. We're just like you are.

We're learning. We're growing. We're endeavoring to raise our family for God.

We make mistakes. We get up off of our faces and go again and learn what we need to learn. We are no different than you are.

But one thing I do know for sure. We are pressing on. We are pressing on.

That is our desire. We tremble a bit entering into these 10 days of meetings. You know, 11 years ago when we did this we did not know how the enemy would attack us for doing such a thing as telling everybody about how they can have a godly home.

We had no idea. But now we know. Now we know.

But we're still here. Amen? We're still here. Let me share with you an experience that God gave me that has stuck with me for these many years now.

About six years ago I had an experience in an African village that I'll never forget. And I wish that I could take every one of you to an African village just one time. You would never be the same.

I know that. But I know I can't take you to that village so I'll try to take you there with a few words. But it's about six years ago that I was in an African village and we were there with some others doing an

exploratory trip to see if possibly God would have us plant a church in this village.

It was a large village. And in an African village they're run very much like they were a hundred years ago. The chief is the boss.

The authority in the village is the chief. And he became the chief by the family lineages and they have all that worked out. But we were in this African village and we had made an appeal at the chief's palace to talk to the chief about starting a church in his village.

So there we were sitting in the shade waiting for the chief to come out of his mud palace with a grass roof. Eventually he came through his door. He had his robes on.

Everybody started bowing down to the ground as he walked out of his mud palace and he came and took his seat on a little throne underneath a shaded area. And as he was sitting there it was my lot to approach him and explain why we were there. I wasn't feeling very excited about that because I didn't know what this man was going to do with me but I was the oldest there so I approached the chief's throne and knelt down on one knee and began to speak to him and tell him why we were there.

And I told him we've come. We want to plant a church here. Oh, he was happy about that.

He was excited. He said, oh, you're welcome. You're welcome.

We will even give you a piece of land when you're ready to go. And so we got his blessing on that. Then I started introducing the people that were there and there happened to be three of my children there with me in that village.

In fact, it's the three that are not here right now. They were there with me and I introduced them. I turned over to my children and I told them these are my children, these three, and I gave the names and I said, and I have five more at home.

And he looked a little funny at me and said, with one wife? And I said, yes, with one wife. Well, that's surprising to him. You see, he had 15 wives and about 60 children.

Many times he didn't even know who his children were in the village. But I noticed him watching my children. And then he said these words, and I'll never forget them.

He looked at me and he said, your children, they follow your ways. Then he looked back at me and he looked at them and he looked back at me and then he said these words, my children are rebellious. They will not do what I say.

You know, as I knelt there looking into that chief's face, his eyes were saying something to me. His eyes were saying, as he looked over at them again, his eyes were saying, how do you get them to do this? And I knew what he was saying. I knew very well what he was saying.

How do you get them to leave comfortable America? How do you get them to come over here in the heat, in the sweat, in the sickness, in the malaria, in the filth where there are no roads and everything is miserable? How do you get them to leave America? And he knew what America was like and come over here to Africa. Your children, they follow your ways. How do you get them to do that? Well, the Bible says, train up a child in the way that he should go and when he is old, he will not depart from it, Proverbs 22, 6. Praise the Lord for those words.

God has given us ways and means by which we can get our children to follow our ways, which, by the way, are God's ways, not ours at all. These words of wisdom are hidden in God's word and they are there for us to dig them out whenever we need them in this series for these next 10 days. I plan to answer the chief's question.

How do you get them to do this? Maybe some of you have the same kind of questions in your own heart. How do you get them to do this? Well, let's look at the title of the message this evening, The Holy Art of Training Children. David, the prophet David, cried out to God in Psalm 144.

He cried to God for mature plants and polished cornerstones. This was the cry on David's heart. Both of these take an art, don't they? You know, you can learn how to have a green thumb and make something grow, can't you? And you can learn how to take a stone and polish that stone and shape that stone into a beautiful stone.

It's an art. It is an art. Child training is an art, brothers and sisters.

It's an art. Watch the artist with his paintbrush as he begins to paint a picture on a piece of canvas. Every stroke of his brush adds some more beauty to the painting that he's painting.

Every stroke adds some more meaning to the heart of what he's putting on that canvas. As you stand and watch him, you marvel how easily he does that. Moving his brush this way and that.

Mixing this color with this one and another one and marking it and painting his beautiful picture. And as we stand there and watch this artist paint his picture, maybe these thoughts would come into our own hearts and minds and we would say to him, how did you learn to do that? That's amazing how you can paint that picture, we might say. What do you think he would answer if we asked him such a question as that? He would probably give this answer.

He would say, it is a gift that God gave to me. But it is also a gift that I had to learn and develop over many, many years. Well, that's a little bit how I look at child training also.

It is a gift that God deposits in each and every one of us. But it is also a gift that we must learn and develop by observation and study and practice. And we can do that, brothers and sisters.

We can learn how to train our children in such a way that we feel comfortable in what we're doing and no longer fearful if we're going to do the right thing. We can do that. His answer was twofold.

It's the same with child training. It's a holy art. I call it a holy art because there is in the Bible a revelation of sanctified principles that all work together, if followed, to form a beautiful soul that is filled with Christ-like character.

Those principles are in this book, brothers and sisters. If we follow them, they work. A holy art because these principles are disciplines.

Disciplines. Not for the children. Disciplines for the parents.

You see, when you're going to be an artist, you're the one who gets disciplined. You're the one who disciplines yourself when you're going to be an artist in whatever you learn. Yes, a holy art because these principles are disciplines for the parents, not for the children.

They are rigorous at times, but if you will follow them, you will find yourself becoming proficient in them. Just like the artist does, you will also become proficient. Do you believe that this evening, brothers and sisters? God has deposited that in you.

God wants to develop that in you. And if you will allow Him, He will make you an artist. A holy art, yes, because the subject of child training is a subject that must be studied, learned, practiced, and mastered.

Oh, the joyful results that come as we learn the nuts and bolts of everyday child training. Brothers and sisters, are you ready to become a student of training children? And I don't mean a student because you're here this week, although that will qualify you, but you will not develop this art that I'm speaking about if you are only going to be a student while you are here in this place for these 10 days. It won't work.

That's not enough. It's not enough for the artist to go sit in a classroom and hear a few things. He must go back to his own little room and get out his paintbrush and put up the easel and begin to paint and learn and observe.

That is what I mean. We need to become students of raising our children where we walk through the days of our lives and our homes pondering everything that is happening. What should I do in this situation? How should I handle this one? What does the Bible say about the situation that my son is in right now? And on and on it goes.

Students of raising children. A holy art, yes, because many go about it in a very haphazard way. In a haphazard way.

Here a little, there a little. Off again, on again. Kind of a haphazard way.

Get a little frustrated, get a little spanking, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. It is a sort of hit and miss thing with them and of course they get the same kind of results. Well my desire is that we would not see it that way after these ten days.

Not a little haphazard thing you just flip into here and there. No, not at all. But instead, something to be done purposefully, daily, consistently and you will get beautiful results.

And lastly, a holy art because we need to lift these principles up out of the common place where they have been laid and make them holy again. They are holy. God revealed them.

God showed us his heart in his word concerning our children. They are holy. We will lift them out of the common place and begin to realize the glorious treasures that are hidden in every precept that we're going to look at.

God will change our hearts. Let's look at a definition of the word art that will help us to understand the title. The definition of the word art.

This definition gives us great encouragement. Art, a skill that is attained by study, practice and observation. There it is.

A system of principles and methods employed in the creation of something beautiful. Glory. There it is.

That's it. Let me read it again. A system of principles and methods employed in the creation of making something beautiful.

What a lovely definition of child training. That's what we're about. Making something beautiful for God.

Not for us. It's for God. Well, God has given the ability to you.

We need to rise up in faith and develop it. You say, Brother Denny, I don't have what it takes. I know you're up there and you're talking all these things but you're who you are.

But I don't have what it takes. May I carefully warn you in the beginning here of the danger of unbelief. You know that you can sit through all these meetings in a state of unbelief and you will get relatively little out of all that is given.

But if instead you will settle it in your heart even this first evening, I'm going to believe the word of God. I'm going to believe what God says. God said it, that settles it.

Amen? That's what we need to do. I want to warn you not to give in to those thoughts of unbelief. Oh, if you knew, especially some of you men, if you knew what God wants to make of you as you give yourself to the responsibilities of raising your children, if you only knew what God would do with you.

How dare you sit there in unbelief and say, I just don't have what it takes. Come, let us reason together. Would God give children and not give the ability to train them? Would He? Would God give children and not tell you how to raise them? Of course not.

Would God give you children and then let you fail at training them? We know the answer to these questions. Of course He wouldn't. If God gave you children, God has provided the ways and means by which you can train them and raise them.

And you say, but it's not in me. I don't know how to talk. I don't know how to speak.

I'm not a teacher. I'm not, I'm not, I'm not. Listen.

God can make you something that you're not. He's in that business. That's the kind of God He is.

So if you're not tonight, praise God. He delights in taking the are nots and using them to confound everybody else. That's what it says in 1 Corinthians 1. He delights in doing that.

And besides that, remember, all this week we are looking at all of this subject through the eyes of a so great salvation. Amen? A so great salvation. God has not left us alone.

We are not left here all by ourselves. He has not done it. God is in the salvage business.

Amen? He salvaged me. He salvaged you. And guess what? He'll salvage your home too.

You say, well, Brother Denny, my home needs to be salvaged. Well, praise God. You've come to the right place.

God's in the salvage business. He delights in taking something that is chaos and bringing beautiful order to it. He delights in taking the broken, undone ones and setting them among the princes of the land.

God delights in doing that. So if your home needs a salvage job, God is in the salvage business. But you must believe that in your heart.

Even tonight, first night, your heart must rise up and say, yes, Lord, I believe. Help thou mine unbelief. But I believe you can do it for me, even for me.

God has given you an ability. And I think you got the hint already. I aim to convince you of this fact before these meetings are out.

If you are blood washed, you have the ability to raise your children in the nurture and the admonition of the Lord. You have it. It's in you.

But guess what? Just like the painter, if he sits there before a blank piece of canvas with his paint in this hand and his brush in this hand and he sits there looking at it and saying, I can't do it. Guess what? He won't have any painting when he's done. And that's exactly how it is with you and I, brothers and sisters.

God is able. He is able to do exceedingly abundantly above what we could even ask or think. Amen? I think we could put our families under there somewhere, couldn't we? Exceedingly abundantly above.

How high do you want to reach? Above all that you could even ask or even dream of. He's able to do it. Hallelujah.

Allow me to be the voice of your father this week saying, it's there. It's there. I see it.

I see the ability in you. It only needs to be stimulated. It only needs to be stirred.

You only need to rise up and pick up that paintbrush and say, Lord, help me. I'm ready to go. And God will help you.

I assure you. Let us turn the focus of our hearts onto our precious children. Study, learn, observe, so we can train them for the glory of God.

All of heaven is for you, brothers and sisters. Remember Malachi 2.15? The father is seeking a godly seed. He is longing with all of his holy heart to have godly seed upon the earth.

One of the major themes of Revelation in the word of God is God seeking children for himself. All through the Bible you will see it. He is intensely interested in your children.

He will help you raise your family. He will help you. He's the God who parted the Red Sea.

Amen? He's the God. He's the God who's done all the miracles that we find in the Bible. Surely He can help you with your children.

You cannot go wrong if you focus on the thing that is nearest to God's heart. You can't go wrong. I tell you, God will come alongside of you.

He will help you. He will strengthen you. He will give you wisdom.

He will enlighten your heart. He will give you what you need. Why? Because He is the one who is seeking your children.

He wants your children to be godly. He will help you. What an exciting prospect that is.

Think about it. Co-laboring with the glorious, omnipotent, all-wise God to raise my children. What more could you ask for than that? Are you listening? Tonight, brother, sister, you have a gift.

God has put within you what is needed. You just need to step into the water and watch the River Jordan part. Amen? That's how it is.

You know that? What do you think would have happened if those priests, when they walked up to the River Jordan, if they walked up to the edge and just stood there and said, Okay, God said we're going to go over on dry ground. Amen? The river won't part, will it? No. You know why? Because God said, I want you to step into the water.

I want you to step into the water believing that that water is going to part and when you step into that water, the water will part. That's exactly how it is with our family. Step into the water.

The water will part. I know it will. You know, I thought also, we could have a revival this week.

Do you know that? I don't mean just some good meetings. I mean, we could have revival this week. This subject is so near to God's heart.

If we get serious about Him and our children, we could have a revival. And the more that I study it, the more I realize revival is tucked away in this subject right here. It is.

We will see that as we go. You could be in for a radical change in your life. It may be you will never be the same.

In fact, that's what we've been praying for you. That's what I've been praying for myself. But that through these 10 days, when it's all said and done, I will never be the same.

In closing, there are two powerful beings that are after your children. Which one will get them? God, the God of heaven, the God of glory, the omnipotent one, the ruler of the universe, is after your children. He's seeking a godly seed.

But Satan is also a powerful being, and he is after your children. And guess what? It seems like he gets more than God does. He's after your children.

Don't doubt that one. Just because you've protected them, just because you're homeschooling them, just because you put them in the right kind of church, it does not guarantee you anything. God is after your children, and Satan is after your children.

We are the instruments that either one of them will use to possess our children and use them for their kingdom. We are the instruments that either one will use. Who will we yield to? The choice is ours.

It's ours tonight and through these weeks. Let's bow our heads for prayer. God, our Father, we wait on thee.

Lord, here we are at the beginning of a very full 10 days. Father, we open our hearts to you. You know where we are, all of us in this room.

You know where we are. Thank you, Father. You're an all-seeing God, and you know the depths of every one of our hearts.

You know the situation in every one of our homes, God. You see it all. You're weeping over some of them.

You have been weeping over them. And now here we are, Father, beginning to sit with a heart to learn. Oh, grant us open hearts, Father.

Oh, Father, would you help us to see the family the way that you see it? Lord, even if it's painful, would you do that through these sessions? Father, help us to see the way you see. We choose to open our hearts to you. We choose to yield to you.

Lord, take us on from here. Don't let us be the same. This is our prayer.

We pray before you. In Jesus Christ's name, amen.

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