

04. the Eternal Value of a Child

by Denny Kenaston

The eternal value of a child is an inheritance from God, and it is essential to value and raise them to honor God.

Duration: 45:10

Scripture: Psalm 127:3, Psalm 139:13

Topics: "Parenting", "Discipleship"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of valuing and raising children as treasures from God, highlighting the eternal impact of parenting and the need for a vision to see children as God sees them. It challenges parents to prioritize their children, repent of neglect, and invest time and love in training them for God's kingdom.

Transcript

Well, we're excited about this day. Looking to the Lord to see what He has to say to us as we seek Him about our families. Let's just commit the meeting to the Lord in prayer.

Can we do that? Just bow our heads. Commit the meeting to the Lord. God our Father, we bow down before You.

You are the Lord. We know, God, if we got a glimpse of You, we would all fall on our faces this morning. We acknowledge You to be the Holy One.

We come in the name of Your Son, Jesus Christ, this morning. We come pleading the blood, Lord, as we come to Thee. We come by the new and living way before Your throne to plead our crying prayers to You this morning, God, that You would open our eyes.

Open our eyes, Father, as we move into the dreams and the visions, Lord, of what You want for our families, God. We cry to You, God. What would You write on the tables of our hearts this morning, Lord? What only You can do, Lord God, pour out Your Spirit upon us all.

Lord, that's the only way we will see with the eyes of our heart. You will pour out Your Spirit upon us all, not just me, Lord, all of us. But yes, Father, me.

Me too, Lord, me too. In Jesus Christ's name, amen. Okay, this morning we are moving into the visionary aspect of our sessions.

We'll be dealing with the subject of our vision all day today and through tomorrow morning's service, that's six sessions on vision. There's a reason for that, and you will understand it as we go, but it's very important that we see from here what God wants for us and for our children. It's very important that God would give us a vision.

The beautiful portion of Scripture that I've chosen to read just to introduce the subject of vision this morning in Psalm 127, verse 3, says these words. Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord, and the fruit of the womb is His reward. As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man, so are children of the youth.

Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them. Full of them, the Bible says. This morning our subject is the eternal value of a child.

We see from this portion of Scripture that children are an heritage from the Lord, that in itself, if we could just grasp what those simple words are saying, if we could let those words get a hold of our hearts and grip us, if we could see just those words right there and they would get a hold of our hearts, we could all go home. We wouldn't need to hear anything else. Children are a heritage from the Lord, the Lord of the heaven and the earth.

Enough said. A vision is that which we see with the eyes of our hearts. God must give us that.

What is the value of a child? We want to focus on that a bit. I feel that's foundational for everything else that we're going to look at later. If we have placed a little value on our children, then we will also give them little of our time.

And we all know the results of that. So the value of a child is a major foundation stone in this house that we want to build. How we answer this question will determine the kind of houses we build and how they stand when the winds begin to blow and the rains beat upon it.

Whether we value our children rightly will determine whether those houses stand. The text says an heritage. Now a heritage is an inheritance.

And here we have an inheritance that comes from God. I like that. Something that God has left behind, something that God has given to us to remind Him, us, of Him.

That's what an inheritance is. An inheritance is an heirloom, something that is given to remember. Each child that we have is a deposit from God of Himself because they are made in His image.

Hallelujah. How we view our children will affect every area of our life and theirs. No doubt about it.

Many years ago, I was in a home for a meal and some fellowship. And when I go to homes, I'm always looking on the wall. You know, you can tell a lot about a home by what they have on the wall.

Amen? You can. And I'm always looking on the walls and I found a plaque with some powerful words on it. And as I looked at those words, I knew these are important words.

I wrote them down and have never forgot them. These were the words on the plaque. Empires fall.

Mansions crumble. Cattle, they die. Machinery, it rusts away.

Earthly pleasures vanish in a moment. But a child... Ah, yes, dear people. But a child lives on and on in the lives of descendants and in the lives of those he influences all the way into eternity.

When I look at those words, I recognize that somebody who wrote that understood a measure of the value of one eternal soul. And oh, if God could help us to see some of that this morning. A child is an eternal being.

It will live for eternity somewhere. Somewhere. They will live for eternity somewhere.

And that's an awesome perspective, isn't it? What is the value of a child? Just one precious little one? Who can measure its value? I cannot. For I know not what God will do with the child. If I knew what God would do with it, maybe I could begin to measure its value.

But I know not what God will do with a child. But I'll tell you one thing that I can do as I wonder what God would do with my child. I can look into this book and begin to find out the heartbeat of God concerning my children and the heartbeat of God concerning the world around us.

And you begin to see what God would want to do with my child. I cannot tell you specifically what God will do with each one. But I can read in this book and begin to see where God would take them if I direct them in the right path.

Amen? Psalm 139. We get a little bit of a glimpse of the value of a child reading from verse 13. Psalm 139.

David says these words, awesome words. For thou hast possessed my reins. Thou hast covered me in my mother's womb.

Thou? God. God, you have covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made, David said.

Marvelous are thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well. He goes on to say, my substance was not hid from thee, God, when I was made in secret and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance yet being unperfect, and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.

How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God. How great is the sum of them. If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand.

When I awake, I am still with thee. These verses take us into the very throne room of heaven where plans and purposes burst forth from the mind of God. Picture the God of the universe forming a child in the womb.

Picture it. Somehow, if we could grasp the God of the universe forming every one of the children in the womb, does God make something for naught? Does God just make children to populate the earth? No. We know that if we're in the throne room of God where God is planning out his purposes here upon this earth, God forms every one of them with a purpose.

With a purpose. I don't know if you believe that, but I'm going to convince you of it if you'll keep your heart open. Elohim, God creator, surely has a holy purpose for my children which demands my utmost care.

You know, if we could get a glimpse into the prophetic, we would begin to see what God would do with our children. Then we would begin to see their value. But God doesn't give most of us those kind of glimpses.

God gave me no glimpses like that. I only saw what God would do if I would raise them for him. That's all I saw.

I saw no more than that. Every single one of us can see the same thing. As we gaze with an open face, which is a clear and an open heart, into the beauty of the pages of this book, we begin to see the heart and purpose of God and what God would do with any dedicated soul.

We begin to see that. Susanna Wesley, inflamed with a vision, was moved to raise a different kind of child. She saw the way so clearly laid out in the Bible, and by faith she raised some boys who shook the world in the day that they were living.

Yes, she did. Abraham and Sarah, they, think about them, they saw into the prophetic. They had a prophetic word from God.

They had a promise from God. They had a miraculous birth to back up the promises. How do you think they looked at Isaac when he was placed in their hands? Think about it.

The value of a child, what do you think, was going through Abraham's mind when they brought that little boy and put that boy in his hands? My, he must have felt like old Simeon did. He must have felt like that. His heart must have lifted up in praise.

We can clearly see how that old patriarch must have valued that little boy as he had him in his hand. Yes, parents of a barren womb, they can show us what the value of a child is, drop in somewhere where a child has been given after 10, 12 years of barrenness. If you want to find out the value of a child, just hide in the shadows there at their house when their baby comes forth and she takes it in her arms to give it suck and he picks it up in his hands to give it back to God.

They, with reverence and awe, hold their baby. Is there really any difference between the one that they hold and the 10 that you have? None at all, none at all. They behold their gift, their reward from the Lord with reverence and awe, and we should also.

I've noticed that sometimes God withholds children to raise the value in the hearts of the parents because he has a special vessel that he would like somebody to train. Abraham and Sarah waited 40 years for Isaac. Isaac and Rebekah waited 20 years for Jacob.

Jacob and Rachel waited 20 years for Joseph. Manoah and his wife waited many years for Samson. Ruth waited for 12 years before Obed was born.

Hannah waited for years before Samuel was born. And Zechariah and Elizabeth waited 50 years before John the Baptist was born. And in each one of these situations, the value went higher and higher and higher and higher.

Imagine, just picture it with me, step into the hearts of Zechariah and Elizabeth that day when John the Baptist was born. Step into their hearts for a moment as they take that little boy with reverence and awe in their hands and realize God has something special for this little boy to do. We don't know what it is, but we know it's something special.

Oh, how careful we're going to be. It's no wonder the Spirit of the Lord came upon Zechariah and he prophesied when he wrote down the name of his son, his name shall be called John. And he began to prophesy.

Why? Because the value of a child is way higher than most of us understand. Oh, God, open our eyes to see it the way he does. Open our eyes, Lord.

But we can see the wisdom of God in withholding children like this, preparing parents to receive them with awe, raising the value higher and higher. In the New Testament context, let's just look at it there. Let's bring it down to us.

We don't have an Isaac. We don't have a Joseph. We don't have a John the Baptist.

But let's look at it in the New Testament context and see. We can clearly see in the New Testament that God wants us as his people to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature that's clearly revealed in the Word. And I'm telling you this morning, dear parents, if God had 10,000 John Wesleys, he would pick every one of them up and send them to some dark corner of this dark earth and use them to shake that place for his kingdom.

If God had 10,000 of them, he'd use every one of them today. But before God can have 10,000 John Wesley, he needs 10,000 parents who will get serious about their children and recognize the high, high, high value on every single one of them. Oh, the value is high.

It's very high. Think about an earthly king. Just an earthly king.

I mean, when a king has a son, everybody knows that son will receive extra special training. Why? Oh, because it's a king's son. Oh, but my dear brothers and sisters, do we not have sons and daughters of the king of kings and the lord of lords? And if God could pull back the veil just for two or three seconds and let us see who that king really is, oh, my, how we would raise our children with such dedication for the king.

Because he needs every one of them. Every one of them. God, open our eyes.

Open our eyes. Remember the birth of your first child this morning. Just let your mind go back a little bit.

Remember? First one. Never had a child before. She's married a year, maybe two years.

And here you are. Husband, wife, first baby. Remember how it was? Remember how you felt? I mean, the fireworks of heaven were going off inside of you.

You held that little one. You looked at it. My bone of my bone.

Flesh of my flesh. You know, and you looked at it and you said, it's got my nose. What? She has your ears.

Look at that. Look at the little fingers. They're long just like yours.

Oh, you remember? Hallelujah. What a sweet time that was. Well, my dear parents, that was your first love relationship with that child.

That's what it was. First love relationship. What do I mean by first love? Well, the Bible talks about first love, doesn't it? It speaks about the church at Ephesus and says, the church at Ephesus has lost its first

love.

Oh, you're doing many things right. Amen. But God said, you left your first love.

He didn't say you lost it. He says you left it. Amen.

So we understand that that first love relationship that God had with the church at Ephesus was supposed to be the foundation upon which the whole relationship with that church was built. And God said, wait a minute. I'm glad you're doing this.

I'm glad you're doing this. Praise God you're taking a stand for truth over here. But I have one thing against you, and it's the most important one.

You've left your first love. That's not a little issue. Have we left our first love with our children? We know that we understand first love relationship as we reflect a bit on our wedding day.

There are a lot of married couples in this room. Remember your wedding day? Remember how you felt on the inside? Remember you listened to the sermon? You said your vows? Remember how you felt? I mean you thought nothing will ever hinder me from loving my dear wife or my husband, all of my deeds. You said those vows freely.

It was no problem to say them. You know why? First love. First love.

But that first love was only supposed to be a foundation. It should never go away, but something that you build on top of. It is the same with the children, brothers and sisters.

It is the same with the children. It should never go away. That awe that we had, that reverence that we had, it should never go away.

We're supposed to build on top of that. Have we left our first love for our children? We often start out right, but then other things distract us away. Isn't that how it happens? Oh, we're in awe.

We hold this little one. It's awesome what's going on. You see this child.

You realize this is a gift from God, but then you get distracted over there, over there, and you can quickly turn into, not now, parents. Not now, not now, not now. Have we left our first love for our children? We had six of our eight children at home.

The first two, we went to the hospital. We didn't know any better. Sorry.

But we had the last six at home, and oh, what a sweet and a beautiful experience that was. I mean, the child comes forth. Bless God, I get to hold him right away.

It was wonderful. But in every one of those experiences, I can give this testimony that the Spirit of God was hovering near over the birth of those children, and it's not just mine. Midwives testify that the Spirit of God hovers over the birth of every child.

It is designed by God. God sanctifies the birth of every child because he's trying to lay a foundation. You know why? Because he's seeking a godly seed, and he wants to sanctify that relationship between parents and child from the very beginning.

And I can say, God did sanctify those six births that we had at home, and the other ones too, but you know it's quite a bit different looking through the glass at them. You know what I'm saying? You can look at them through the glass, and yeah, that one's mine. Okay, you know, that's very different than to be right there, and sometimes even catch that little one, bless God, and lift it up to the Lord.

Amen. This relationship is a foundation stone upon which a God-honoring life is built, parents. It is a foundation stone.

Let me share with you a very revealing story. Some years ago, I was invited to a home of a couple. They wanted to ask some child training council questions, and I was there sitting in the living room.

They just had one boy, one little three-year-old boy, and he was all over the place. I mean, they just kept correcting him, and he was what, you know, the modern people today call hyperactive, you know. He was all over the place, and they were trying to settle him down, and he was getting up and going here and there, and I mean, you know how it is.

Brother Denny's sitting in our living room, you know, and he preaches these tapes. Please be a good boy, don't you know? Oh, Brother Denny is here. You know, that's how the mother was feeling, you know, and finally, you know, they just couldn't do it.

They just couldn't do it, and finally they just gave up in frustration and said, Brother Denny, this is, you know, what can we do with this little boy? This is why we have called you here. Oh, my, I didn't know what am I going to say, you know. They're asking deep questions, and I just made a prayer to God, and I believe God gave me a word of wisdom.

You know what that is? That's a spiritual gift, by the way. Right out of heaven into my heart, and I asked her a question off the cuff, right out of nowhere. I said, dear sister, I want to ask you one question.

How did you feel about that little boy when he was in the womb? She looked at me in shock. She said, how did you know to ask that question? And then she began to weep. She began to weep, and I knew why then, why I was led to ask that question, and she opened up and she said, it was not good.

It was not good. I was a spoiled little girl when I was growing up, and I entered marriage with a fairy tale, dreamy, romantic idea about what marriage was and home was, and when I got pregnant, I despised the whole thing. Those were her words.

I thought, oh, no. Now I'm pregnant. Now what are we going to do? All the pain and the discomfort and all those things.

She was sharing all of this, and I simply looked at her, and I said, dear lady, this is the reason why this little boy is doing what he's doing, and she broke her heart there, and she repented, and God changed a mother's heart that day and guess what? God changed a little boy that day also. He changed a little boy. You see, that little boy, he picked up that silent message.

He probably picked it up in the womb, but in his heart he thought, I will get the attention one way or another. I will get your undivided attention even if I have to bounce off the walls to do it, and that's kind of how it is sometimes, isn't it? What is the value of a child? How we view our children will affect everything about them. It will affect our lives.

It will affect their lives. It will affect their very conduct from the time they're little bitty babies. It's not a little thing.

It's not a little thing. Some parents have this thing all mixed up. They think, oh, the baby is in here.

No problem. I'm going to do what I want. I'm going to get angry when I want to.

I'm going to live in unpeace in my life, and they have no idea that they are laying the foundation stones for a child's life while they spit and spew in argument and anger, and then they wonder why the child is all the way the child is. Oh, well, we've got a real tough one on our hands, they say. Well, what kind of a life did the child live when he couldn't see you? Well, where on the priority list would you put your children? Dear brothers and sisters, if we were to give you a priority list and you could get before God and just start writing with the all-seeing, probing eye of God, the priorities in your life, where would your children fit on the list? It's a good question.

Have we swallowed the spirit of the age? Yet we don't know it. We've deceived ourselves. You know, the world doesn't value children very highly.

They have devised many, many different ways to get them out of their hair. The worst being abortion. Just get them out of my hair.

I don't even want them. They do not see the value of a child. Not at all.

But sometimes I wonder if we haven't swallowed more of that same spirit and attitude in our own hearts concerning our children. Four years ago, I was meditating on the Sermon on the Mount. I was reading through the sermon each day for about six months.

I did that. Very convicting, by the way. But I came to the verses on treasures.

You know, it talks about treasures there, laying up treasures in heaven, all of that. And as I was reading one morning, the spirit of God quickened my heart and said this to me. God said, your children are your treasures.

And I thought about that for a minute. And God began to bring it all together to me to help me to see that, yes, my children are my treasures. It was a rhema to me that morning.

It was God speaking his word to me. And I had to, after I sat and listened to the Lord a while, I had to agree. Yes, it's true.

And as I meditated upon it, I realized, you know, what was happening inside of my heart. You see, Daryl and Rebecca had moved to Africa. And they're part of my treasures, bless God.

And I found my mind and my prayers were there continually. I just kept thinking more about Africa and more prayers were going to Africa all the time. And God spoke to me and he said, where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

And your heart is now gone over there because you've deposited some of your treasures there. Oh, I took that and I brought it to my wife. You know how it says you're supposed to wash your wife with the word? Well, I brought a fresh word to my wife.

And she listened to me and she said, it's so, it's so. I'm in the same place. I wondered why.

So much, so much. Thinking about Africa all the time. Oh, it's because your treasure is over there.

And where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. Where's your treasure, dear father, dear mother? Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. Our children are our treasures.

No doubt about it. No doubt about it. Americans have many treasures laid up on earth.

I'm afraid our devastated homes is the fruit of this wrong pursuit of treasures. Because see, where your treasures are, there will your heart be also. There will your heart be also.

We have deceived ourselves. We think that we, Americans, we can serve God and mammon. We think we can do both of those even though God said you cannot serve God and mammon.

Somehow we think we can get away with it. But we can't. And the devastated homes are proof of it.

The fruit of our deception screams from every corner of American society. It screams. Allow me to make another application here.

You know the verses. You'll find them a couple of times in the Gospels where Jesus said, what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Awesome words. Awesome.

And what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? May I make the application to our children this morning in this way? What shall it profit a man if he gains the whole world but loses the souls of his children? And worse yet, what will a man give in exchange for the souls of his children? You know, it's pretty sad sometimes to see what a man really will give in exchange for the souls of his children. I mean, imagine it! Imagine it! That a man would give, you know, his golfing, you know. I mean, he's going to go golfing.

Every Friday night he's golfing. Saturday morning he's golfing. Saturday afternoon he's at the country club with the boys.

That's what he's giving in exchange for the souls of his children. What a shocking reality that is. These words make me tremble.

And the stories of broken-hearted parents abound in the churches who look back at the end of their days. And it all looks so different, you know. I mean, here sits a man on a big pile of money, you know.

So what? So you got a big pile of money. And there are all his children out in the world, and they're all gone. All he has is a big pile of money.

Guess what? When he dies, leave the whole pile of money behind. That's it. That's it.

How sad. How sad. Some years ago, I was at a Bill Gothard seminar, an all-day minister seminar.

2,000 pastors sitting in the room. Imagine it. Brother Bill got up, and his own quiet way, he said, I want to find out how many children you have, all you pastors here.

How many of you have one child? And all these hands went up. And how many of you have two children? A whole bunch of hands went up. How many of you have three children? Just a few hands.

Four, five, six, and we got all the way up to nine. That was the highest there. And then everybody clapped, you know, over the guy that had nine.

And we blessed him. And oh, it was a great time we had there. But then Bill turned his attention on the rest of us.

Instead of that one guy, you know, who had nine, he turned his attention on the rest of us and said these words. Most of you men have limited the size of your family. Ooh, it got quiet in there.

I mean, from all the clapping and all the rejoicing, you know, and all these preachers, you know, and they're full of amens and shouts and all that. Ooh, quiet. Most of you men have limited the size of your family, he said, because of the ministry.

And in Bill's gentle way, and if you know Bill Gothard, you know, I don't think he ever shouted once in his life. But in his gentle way, he looked at all these pastors and said, kindly, you men have the spirit of abortion. You are part of the reason why abortion has turned itself loose in this land, because you do not value children.

You only have one. You only have two. You limited the size of your family because you wanted to do the ministry.

And he rebuked us. All those pastors there, he rebuked us. And then it was even more quiet in there.

And then he said, he challenged us, you need to go and get a reversal and change this thing and repent before God. And you could hear a pin drop in there. It was a very quiet meeting.

I'll never forget that. I thank God for what that man did in that meeting. I thank God for the courage that he had to say that to 2,000 pastors.

And probably some of them wrote him off and said, ah, he's just a legalist. He's under the law. And we're free from the law.

We're going to have a good time. We don't have to worry about that. I can just have one child.

It's no big deal. I'm free from the law. And they walked out the door.

But you know, some of the men in that room didn't do that. Some of the men in that room repented. And they changed their hearts.

And some of them have children today to show for it. How we value our children will affect every area of our lives and theirs. How we train them, how much time we spend with them, how we treat them in love.

Somehow God must open our eyes to see the true value of each one of our precious treasures. Think of it. Only one life of each child, it will soon be past.

Only what's done for Christ in them will last. A child is an eternal being made in the image of God after his likeness. Our God wants to dwell in our children someday.

And he is working toward that end. Will we allow him to do it? I remember at David's birth, little David's birth, seven years ago now, I remember that little fellow was born. It was a sweet time like they all were.

But it stands out in my memory because I was getting a bit older when David was born. And I took that little fellow up in my hands and lifted him up before God and made my prayer before God, an earnest prayer that God would take this little boy and make him like David in the Bible, that God would take this little boy and give him a vision like Isaiah had in the Bible, and that God would give us the wisdom to train this little fellow for the glory of God, that he would be a servant of God someday. And in the midst of that prayer, it dawned on me, ooh, when I get done with this commitment that I just made to God, I'll be 66 years old.

Sixty-six years old. And you know, for just a moment, for a passing moment, I thought, what am I doing? I'm getting too old for this stuff, you know. This is too much for me.

But you know, it's not too much for me. Praise God. Another 20-year commitment for a precious soul that God has placed in our care.

I don't mind making the sacrifice one bit. And you know why? Because I'm raising a soldier for the King of Kings and for the Lord of Lords. So maybe I won't be able to run and play with David like I did as much with Daniel or Samuel, but bless God, if David rises up and does damage to Satan's kingdom, I'll be delighted to invest 20 years in that little boy's life.

We need a vision. We need to see with the eyes of our heart what God sees. Lord, open now mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things about my children out of thy law, O Lord.

Open now mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things about my children out of thy law, the psalmist says. That's what we need. Brothers and sisters, we need a vision.

We need to see with the eyes of our heart. We need to see the way that God sees with the eyes of our heart. If we could get a glimpse to see what God sees, I believe it would shake us to the depths.

I believe we would fall flat on our face and weep before God for the neglect that we have already done with our own children, mine included. We need a vision. We need a vision.

Let's stand before God in prayer. We love you, Lord. Thank you, Father, for all the children you've given to us.

There's a lot of children represented in this room, Lord. Oh, we just come again, Father. We come crying to you.

You've got to do something inside of our hearts, Father. It's not enough just to sit here. It's not enough to get a bunch of how-tos, Father.

You've got to change something inside of our hearts, Lord. And we come crying to you and pray that you will do just that. Father, take your finger, Lord, and write on the fleshy tables of our heart.

And, oh, God, if the heart is hard, then, God, break the heart so you can write on it, each and every one that is here. Do that, Lord. We commit each heart into your care.

And I pray, God, give us the vision that we need. Lord, we have five more sessions on this subject. Oh, God, we open our hearts to you.

Father, write on them, Lord. Write on them. In Jesus Christ's name I pray.

Amen. Amen.

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