

(Basics) 51. Bringing Up Godly Children

by Zac Poonen

God's plan for bringing up children is to train them in the way they should go, so that when they are old, they will not depart from it.

Duration: 13:01

Scripture: Genesis 1:28, Deuteronomy 6:6-7, Proverbs 22:6, Malachi 2:14-15, Malachi 3:14-15, Matthew 6:33, Ephesians 6:4

Topics: "Christian Parenting", "Child Discipline"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of teaching children to be honest and responsible. He uses the example of a child stealing a pencil and explains how ignoring such behavior can lead to more serious wrongdoing in the future. The responsibility of raising godly children primarily falls on fathers, as stated in Ephesians 6:4. The speaker also highlights the significance of discipline and instruction in shaping children's character. He concludes by discussing the role of the Christian home in countering the attacks of Satan and God's plan for raising children.

Transcript

In our last two programs, we were considering the Christian home, the place which Satan has attacked from the days of Adam and Eve and which is under tremendous attack today. In our last two programs, we considered the relationship between husband and wife. Today, we want to continue and consider God's plan for bringing up children.

Children were part of God's perfect will from the time He created man and woman. When He created Adam and Eve, the very first words that He spoke to Adam and Eve, mentioned in Genesis 1.28, were these, Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it. They were to have a physical relationship with each other and produce children.

That was God's will. And in the last book of the Old Testament, in the last page of the Old Testament, we see an emphasis on that. Why did God tell Adam and Eve to be fruitful? Their children were to reflect God's image, just like Adam and Eve were to reflect God's image.

God created Adam and Eve that they might reflect His image. Adam could not do it alone, Eve could not do it alone. Together, they were to show the character and the nature of God.

There are things a man can show of God's nature, there are things a woman can show. Together, there would be a balance. And their children were to carry on fulfilling that ministry in the next generation.

In Malachi chapter 3, we read, there are two things that the Lord mentions in verse 14 and 15. Malachi chapter 2, sorry chapter 2 verse 14 and 15, in the middle of verse 14 it says, The Lord has been a witness between you and the wife of your youth, that you have dealt treacherously, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant. First thing He speaks to them in the last page of the Old Testament is your relationship with your wife.

The wife of your youth, why does He emphasize that? Maybe you are both fifty, sixty years old today. But when you chose her, she was a young, attractive person in your eyes. And your husband was a young, attractive man in your eyes.

But you have dealt treacherously with each other. You have not been faithful, even though she is your companion and your wife by covenant. Do you know that marriage is a covenant? And you promise to be faithful to her? And she is meant to be your companion, your friend.

How many of you husbands can honestly say that your wife is your best friend? She should be. That's what God says in the last page of the Old Testament. And how many of you can say, I have not dealt treacherously with her? Or if you have, that you have repented.

And you seek to be faithful to her now. This is God's will. And then He goes on in the next verse, Malachi 2.15, to say, And what was God seeking in uniting you as husband and wife? I am paraphrasing the words.

What was God seeking in uniting you as husband and wife? He was seeking a godly offspring. He was seeking godly children, that in the next generation. And they would transmit it to the next generation.

Godly offspring. Not just offspring. It's easy to have children.

But to bring up children in a godly way, that's a task of a lifetime. It requires sacrifice. It requires sincerity, wholeheartedness in our life to God.

Just like God is the binding force that holds husband and wife together. It is only with God's power that we will be able to bring up our children in a godly way in this evil generation. The way your children have turned out is an indication of whether you have lived in a godly way in your own home.

Do you know what the Bible says about the way children turn out later on in life? It says in Proverbs, chapter 22, verse 6. Train up a child in the way he should go. Even when he is old, he will not depart from it. Now, either that is the stupid opinion of a man, or it is the inspired word of God.

What do you think it is? If you accept this as the inspired word of God, inspired by the Holy Spirit, then listen to it. If you do the first part of that verse, the second part will be automatic. What is that? If you train up your child or children in the way you want them to go, He doesn't say a spiritual way.

No. He doesn't say if you train up a child in a godly way. No.

Maybe you want your children to make money in the world. Okay. Fine.

Train up a child in the way you want him to go. When he is old, he will not depart from it. Why are your children running after money today? Because you trained them up in that way.

When they are old, they will not depart from it. Why are your children seeking for greatness in the world? Because that is what you wanted for them. You may speak high-sounding spiritual language and be an elder in a church and many many things like that.

But if your children are worldly and wayward and unconverted, Dear parents, I don't want to condemn you, but I would encourage you to take the blame instead of blaming circumstances, people, etc. Humble yourself and say, Lord, it's my fault that my children are not converted. It's my fault that my children are not following the Lord.

When you take the blame, then God can help you even if you have been a failure. Do you know that God can help you even if your children have left your home? They have gone away and you recognize today that you are a miserable failure in the way you brought them up. That today they are unconverted.

Now when I say they should be living for God, I don't mean they should become full-time workers or preachers or evangelists or pastors. No. That's a matter of calling.

God doesn't call everybody to full-time Christian work. But they should be born again. They should be disciples of Jesus.

99.9% of people are called to work for the Lord in a secular job. But they should all be disciples of Jesus. Every single one of them.

So we are not to train up our children to become full-time workers or pastors or preachers or evangelists or missionaries. No, that's not primary. We train them up to do the will of God, to be disciples of Jesus in whatever God calls them to do.

If God calls them to be evangelists, that's fine. But they must be disciples. Whether they are nurses or teachers or engineers or missionaries or evangelists or pastors or whatever it is, they must be wholehearted disciples of Jesus.

Whether they are teachers or clerks or peons doesn't make a difference. They must be wholehearted disciples of Jesus. And that's what we are to train them up in from earliest childhood.

To show them that the only thing worth living for in this world is the kingdom of God and His righteousness. And the children must see it in their parents. They must see the way their parents live.

They must see what their parents live for. And if children see that you as parents have lived for money, even though you go to some church and speak high-sounding spiritual things over there, don't blame your children if they grew up doing what they saw you doing at home. If they saw that even though you preached wonderful things in the church on Sundays, you lived as hypocrites at home with other standards, you can't blame your children for going astray.

Train up a child in the way he should go. When he is old, he will not depart from it. I believe that is the word of God.

It can work for the good of the children or the bad of the children, depending on how you bring them up. Why do you think Judas Iscariot went astray? Was it because he was not dedicated to the Lord as a little

baby? He probably was. He was probably taken to the temple exactly like Jesus was taken to the temple and dedicated to the Lord.

But it's quite likely that after dedicating him to the Lord, his parents brought him up for the world. Maybe when Judas Iscariot did little wrong things as a child, maybe bringing back from school somebody else's pencil or rubber or something like that, his parents ignored it. When you ignore the little thefts and the little lies that your children do, you are training them to be thieves and liars when they grow up.

Even a small thing. Supposing you see your child has come home in the kindergarten class with a pencil that you never gave him, and you ask him, how did you get this pencil? And he says, well, somebody stole my pencil, I don't know who it was. So I found somebody else's and I took it.

And you give him the impression that he is a smart boy. You have trained him to be a Judas Iscariot when he grows up. It starts with a small pencil.

It may end with robbing a bank. What do you need to tell that child at that time? You need to tell that child, if somebody else robs your pencil, it doesn't mean you can rob somebody else's. Go tomorrow and give it back to the teacher, or to the person who it belongs to, and say, I am sorry I took this.

My dear friends, very many times, parents are responsible for the godless way in which children grow up. Do you realize that God wants you to bring up godly offspring? And the responsibility primarily comes upon fathers. We read in Ephesians 6, and verse 4, Fathers, bring up your children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

There are two things we need to give to our children, instruction and discipline. Instruction in the Lord means not just the stories of Joseph and David and Moses, that's all good, but also principles of righteousness, of honoring parents, honoring, speaking respectfully to older people. Who is going to teach children all this? Who is going to teach little girls modesty of dress and behavior? Parents! If you don't teach your little girls principles of modesty and behavior, they are going to pick up practices from the television screen, and from the pictures of the film stars they see.

Take this responsibility seriously from today. If you have failed and your children are grown up, repent, take the blame, and ask the Lord to change them even today. If fortunately your children are still with you at home, then say, Lord, give me grace to bring them up in a godly way.

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