

# Making Our Children Warriors

by Zac Poonen

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*Zac Poonen emphasizes the importance of raising children as warriors for God through active parenting and spiritual training.*

**Duration:** 21:32

**Scripture:** Psalm 127:3, Proverbs 22:6, Jeremiah 3:12-13

**Topics:** "Parental Responsibility", "Spiritual Warfare"

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## Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of dedicating our children to the Lord, recognizing them as gifts from God to be raised for His glory. It highlights the spiritual battle for our children's souls, urging parents to train them as warriors for God from a young age. The message stresses the need for parental responsibility in shaping children to fight against the devil and stand for God, with a call to repentance and proactive training in godly ways.

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## Transcript

Let's turn to Psalm 127. Why do we present our children to the Lord? Because we acknowledge they are not ours, but they are a gift that God gave us for a short period on earth. It's for the same reason that God says that we should not be attached to money.

1 Corinthians 10, 26 says, everything on the earth belongs to the Lord. So, when you get attached to money, you're treating as if it is yours. No, it's not ours.

All the money you earn is not yours, it's God's. That's why we have to use it the way God wants us to use it. It's the same with children.

It says in Psalm 127, verse 3, children are a gift of the Lord. And it's something that God gives us so that we can bring them up for His glory. And so, he says here further in verse 4, your children are to be like arrows in the hand of a warrior.

We must recognize right from the time our children are born that the devil is after them. You remember in Egypt, in Exodus chapter 1, we read of an order that Pharaoh gave that all the male children should be killed as soon as they are born. As soon as they are born, they should be killed.

Because those boys could grow up to be warriors. I mean, the women were not warriors those days. So anyone who was a threat to Pharaoh, and Pharaoh is a picture of Satan there, had to be killed right at birth

so that the Egyptians would be strong and the Israelites would have no warriors.

And that's exactly what the devil seeks to do. From the time a child is born into your home, the devil is watching out. You see, how can I destroy this child so that he never becomes a warrior for God, my enemy? Now whose side are you on? Are you on God's side or the devil's side? Or are you neutral? Well, let them grow up as they like.

Let them choose when they grow up whether to join the devil's army or God's army. If you're like that, I would say to you directly, you are not born again. Not at all.

If that's your attitude to your child, something's seriously wrong. God's will is that our children should be like arrows in the hand of a warrior. And such men, parents, will not be ashamed, it says in verse 5, when they encounter the enemy at the gate.

In those days, cities were surrounded by a wall and a gate, and the enemy would seek to attack the gate. But here, our children are going and fighting the enemy. They're not on the enemy's side.

So it takes a long while to sharpen these arrows. So that they can hit the enemy's heart. In those days, they didn't have guns, they had bows and arrows.

And so, it's a very beautiful picture. You know how an arrow is made? It's got to have a very sharp edge, and that doesn't happen in two minutes. It takes a while for the people who make arrows to sharpen it.

And God gives you, usually about 18 years at least, some of you more than that. I had only 18 years with each of my four sons. Then they went to college, and I'd see them rarely.

So we have them at least for 18 years, some of you who are fortunate have them for 25 years perhaps. But it's only a short period, and they grow up very quickly, I tell you that. And during that time, God wants you to sharpen them, so that by the time they leave your home, even in India, they say a child is an adult by the time he's 18.

In God's plan, a child was an adult when he became 20. In Israel, they counted the adults from the age of 20 to 60, and said once you're 20, you go to battle. So, by the time your child is 20, if you were in Israel, you had to be a soldier in the army.

So that means, by the time your child is 20 years old, you should have sharpened that child to attack the devil. We are so careful to feed them, and even more careful to educate them. Good.

But with all your emphasis on education and everything else you buy for them, if you have not made them into sharp weapons to fight the enemy, not just, oh, my son is baptized, my daughter is baptized. What's the use of that? I've seen so many useless baptized people. I'm not saying they are against God, but they're not against the devil either.

They're sort of neutral. During the last Second World War, there were some countries that were neutral. We're not on Germany's side, and we're not on the side of the British or the Americans.

We're neutral. Lots of children were growing up like that. Lots of children, even in CFC.

They don't fight the devil, and they don't fight against God either. They're just neutral. They're not involved in the war at all.

That's not a good testimony. I tell you, you've got to start when they're one year old. If you don't start early, it's too late.

You can't wake up when they're 15 and say, oh, my children are not following the Lord. I want to encourage you. Learn from the mistakes of others.

A wise man learns from the mistakes of others. Of course, if you're really wise, you just follow the Bible. You don't need to learn from anybody's mistake.

You just say, from the time they are children, the Bible says in Proverbs 22, Proverbs 22, I don't know whether you've seen this verse, 15, foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child. Born like that, I mean, however godly you are, when your child is born, there's a whole lot of foolishness in its heart. The heart is born like that.

And how to get rid of it? Here's what the Bible says, the book of wisdom. The rod of discipline will remove that from the heart. The rod on the backside.

That's why God has put a lot of flesh on the backside, so it doesn't hit the bone. But there's a direct connection from the backside to the heart. Did you know that? You hit on the backside and the foolishness goes out of the heart.

That's what the Bible says. I believe it. I practiced it.

I practiced it all the time my children were at home. Well, once they become teenagers, it's a bit too late to try and use the rod. If you haven't used it before that, it's too late.

Then you've got to use other methods. Prayer. But the best is if you start when they're only one year old and say, I'm going to sharpen this child to be an arrow.

I don't want my child to be neutral. Neither here nor there. Doing nothing for the devil, doing nothing for God.

Is it like that with your child? You're training him up to do nothing for the devil, nothing for God. You really believe you're on God's side? When you train up your child not to fight for the devil and not to fight for God. I tell you this, a lot of parents are just happy.

My children are not fighting for the devil. Is that enough? They have to be warriors. Everyone in Israel, once they became 20 years old, had to become a warrior.

Let's follow that example. Lord, help me. Never mind if you have failed.

There's tremendous power when a person repents. Now, some of you have heard this. This is not the first time I'm preaching on this.

For years, has it brought a change? Don't ever make the excuse the world makes saying, Well, brother, some children are different. No, all children are exactly the same. They're all children of Adam.

They all have foolishness bound up in their heart. Every boy and every girl, without exception. I believe the Bible.

I don't believe all this what psychologists say. Some children are like this. Some children... If you want to believe psychology, that's fine.

I don't believe it. I believe the Bible. Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child.

Foolishness. That means there's no wisdom. It says about Jesus, he grew in wisdom.

All our children are born foolish. Don't ever ask yourself, Why does my child behave like that? I'll tell you. Because he's a child of Adam.

Because foolishness is bound up in his heart. Why does my child tell lies? Psalm 58 verse 3. The last part. They go astray from birth telling lies.

Every child. Every boy, every girl. Is a deceiver.

When they are born. They tell lies. We have to teach them to speak the truth.

They have a tendency to fight. We have to teach them to be peaceful. They have a tendency to move towards the devil.

We've got to turn them away towards God. And that's the responsibility of parents. And so when we pray for children as their babies.

When we dedicate them to the Lord. It's not just a one time action. We can go through a ritual.

Like people get baptized. It doesn't mean anything. Baptism is a testimony.

I'm dead and buried to sin. I'm risen again. Into a new life.

But how many people who are baptized live like that? Hardly anybody. They don't even know what that baptism meant. They just get dipped.

You know baptism means, I'm dead with Christ and I'm buried. I'm raised up to be a new person. To live for the glory of God.

To walk in newness of life. That's what Romans 6 says. But just like baptism is a ritual for many.

Child dedication has also become a ritual. Dear Lord. Some man laid hands and prayed for my child.

Okay, now I'm alright. No. Judas Iscariot was dedicated in the temple.

Just like Peter. Maybe around the same time. Can you think of these mothers? Coming with this sweet, innocent looking baby.

Judas Iscariot. Dedicated to God. And there next to Peter standing.

His mother standing. Dedicated to God. Where are they today? How did they spend their life on earth? Train up a child.

Proverbs 22.6 Train up a child in the way he should go. In other words, the way you decide you want him to go. And this is a promise.

It works both ways. When he is old, he will not depart from it. In between there may be a few ups and downs.

All children have that. In their teenage years. Don't get disturbed.

That is a child trying to grow out of a childhood into adulthood. Goes through a little up and down period. Some little longer or less.

But when they come out of that, they will not depart from the way they were instructed when they were a child. That's a promise. Supposing you say, Lord, I have decided I am going to train up my child to be a godly person from the age of one.

Okay. By the time he becomes a teenager, he may go through a little fluctuation. But before that, I've got 12 years at least.

I'm going to train him up, train him up, train him up, train him up. And I want to see you fulfill that promise. That when he comes out of that teenage period, and he's 20 years old, he's going to follow the Lord.

Or do you believe God breaks his promise? So, if a person's, a born again person's child is say 25 years old, or 30 years old, and he's not following the Lord at all, what should he say? Oh, what to do brother? Let's weigh my children on the... No. Go to Proverbs 22, 6 and say, I did not bring him up in the way you told me to bring him up, Lord. Don't blame him.

Don't blame her. We have such a tendency to blame other people for our own fault. And God sees that.

You don't acknowledge your own fault. And so, He'll never do anything for your children. He'll do miracles for your child once He sees you acknowledge your fault.

I'm saying that to those whose children are older, and not following the Lord. There's hope for you. But that hope will begin when you say, Lord, when he's old, he's going in a certain way, because when he was a child, I brought him up that way.

Either that, or you have to say, God's word is not true. I brought him up in the right way, but when he's old, he departed from it. Lord, your word is not true.

I'm going to scratch out Proverbs 22.6 from my Bible. It is not true. It is not the word of God.

It is the word of God. I can guarantee it. There's not a word in Scripture.

Jesus lived by the Old Testament. I don't believe there's a word in Scripture, but I've seen so many Christian parents. They always blame their child.

So many. I've seen CFC parents. What to do, brother? He's like that.

She's like that. Have they ever gone to Proverbs 22.6? Brother, it was my fault. I've almost never heard it.

Almost never heard a CFC parent saying, it was my fault. I did not bring up that child in the way he should go when he was small. I took it easy.

Boy, what tremendous hope there would be for such a child, whose parent is willing to acknowledge his mistake. You know, God loves honest people. There's nobody in the world who's done it right.

I'll tell you that. Nobody. I made many mistakes as a father.

But I repented, and I said, Lord, it's my fault. I did wrong. I will never blame my child, and never blame anybody else.

I remember when my children left home, I said, if you go astray, I told them to their face, I will not blame you. I told all my four sons, I will blame myself. Because I believe the word of God.

I want to say that as a word of encouragement. Every parent here who's got small children, and every parent here who's got grown up children, who are not going the way you think you should be going, there's hope for everyone. Even if your child is 40 years old.

There's hope. If you say, Lord, I slipped up. I often tell husband and wife, you should both kneel down.

Get down before God, and say, Lord, we slipped up. Forgive us. Can you do something about it now? Lord says, sure.

There's nothing impossible for me. I was just waiting for you to acknowledge your iniquity. Look at this lovely verse in Jeremiah.

Chapter 3. It's a great verse. It's a tremendous verse. Some of these Old Testament verses have got New Testament applications.

Jeremiah chapter 3. Maybe you have been faithless. God tells Jeremiah. Jeremiah 3.12. Go and proclaim these words.

Return, faithless Israel. You can apply that to yourself. I will not look upon you in anger.

No. I'll be gracious to you. I will not be angry forever, but acknowledge your sin.

Only acknowledge your sin. That's all he says. I will not be angry forever, but please acknowledge your sin.

And stop finding fault with other people's children. That you have transgressed against the Lord and His commandments. You have not obeyed my voice.

Verse 13. Now please return and let me be master over you. And I will take you one from a city and two from your family and I will bring them to Zion.

To the church of the living God. Take that as a promise for those of you who have children. And then I will give you shepherds after my own heart.

Your children will be led to churches where there are shepherds after their own heart. After God's own heart. Isn't that the way we want all of our children to grow up? We're living in terrible days.

Everywhere children are growing up and going astray. Used to be only in western countries. It's here in India today now.

We have a battle to fight brothers and sisters. Don't take it easy. You need God 100% on your side if you don't want your children to go to hell.

Or to dishonor the Lord. Don't sit back and say, some years ago my son or daughter said, Lord Jesus come into my heart. Where are they today? They could be lost.

Let's take it seriously. God is on our side. Like we sang in that song, the God who helped all those people is just the same today.

And he will help us. That is the faith with which we dedicate our children to the Lord and it's going to be a daily thing even though we don't hold up the child. In our heart we present our children to God and say, Lord preserve our children.

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