

# Preparing Our Children As Arrows For God

by Zac Poonen

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*This sermon emphasizes the importance of recognizing children as a gift from the Lord and the responsibility parents have in raising them to be godly individuals. It highlights the need for humility, faith, and discipline in parenting, encouraging parents to instill values, teach submission to authority, and create a loving and peaceful atmosphere at home. The ultimate goal is for children to grow up as sharp arrows in God's hands, standing against the darkness of the world.*

**Scripture:** Psalms 127:3, Ephesians 6:1, Hebrews 3:13, 2 Timothy 1:5, Matthew 7:11, Proverbs 22:6

**Topics:** "Parenting as a Divine Responsibility", "Raising Godly Children"

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## Description

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## Transcript

Children are a gift of the Lord. We recognize that. There are numerous married couples who long and long for many, many years to have one child.

I've come across many of them and how delighted they are after many years when they get a child. So don't take for granted that you have one child or children. Every one of them is a gift of the Lord.

It's something which God gave us freely, just like salvation. We don't deserve, you know, the amount of happiness children can bring. We don't deserve it, but God's given us in this evil world, children to delight our heart.

But it's Psalm 127, it says in verse three, Psalm 127, verse three, children are a gift of the Lord. But then there's a part we have to play in it. Once they are given to us as a gift, just like every gift that God gives, if God's given you abilities, you've got to use them for the Lord.

If God's given you money or a house, the purpose is to use for the Lord. It says, even our eating and drinking, the Bible says we must do for the glory of God. So if God gives us children, those who are wise will recognize that these children have been given to me so that as they grow up, they'll glorify God.

And they don't know anything when they are born, we have to instruct them. In the next verse in Psalm 127, after it says they have a gift of the Lord, verse four, it says, they ought to be like arrows in our hand. When we confront the enemy, verse five, and you know, an arrow is effective only if it is sharp.

And look at your children as arrows God has given you. And by his help, you are to sharpen them so that they will be useful in God's hands one day to stand against the devil. Not to become preachers or healers or any such thing, just by their life, we conquer Satan by our life.

And if your children can grow up and live a life that is godly, that is a great weapon against Satan, because Satan is flooding the world with ungodly lives. And we need in the midst of it, that's the darkness there is in the world. And we want our children to grow up to be like arrows that we have sharpened through the years they've been in our house.

And here we need God's help. You know, the very well-known verse in Matthew 7, 11, that if you being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly father give good to those who ask him? I want to ask you parents, what is the greatest good you would like your heavenly father to give you? Is it a better house or more money or God-fearing children? I hope every one of you will say more than anything on this earth, advancement in my profession or more comfort or anything. Lord, I want the children you have given me to grow up to be godly.

And I'll tell you something, if that is the number one desire in your heart, well, earthly things, because the greatest desire in our heart is that we must love Jesus more than everyone else. But from there, our desire for our life on this earth is that our children will grow up to be godly, not famous, not rich, but godly, a sharp arrow in God's hands. If that is your desire, then remember this verse.

If you being evil know how to give good things to your children, how much more will your heavenly father give what is good? And what is the good you want? You want your children to be godly. How much more your heavenly father will give that to those who ask him? See, prayer, what a wonderful definition of prayer is an expression of our helplessness. That's what prayer is.

Lord, I need this. See, if I feel self-sufficient, I will not pray. If you feel you can handle something, you don't need to pray.

We pray for our children because we say, Lord, I don't have the ability to bring them up in godly ways. I want you to give that to me because you give good gifts to your children and I'm your child. I want you to give me this good gift more than anything else, that every single one of them will grow up to be godly, not most of them, but all of them.

Whether you have two children or 10 children, that you'll say, Lord, every single one of them must grow up to be godly, glorifying you in their life, fulfilling the purpose with which you brought them into our family and made us their parents. We have many examples in scripture of good parents and bad ones. We think of this wonderful mother in the Old Testament, the mother of Moses, you read in Hebrews 11, that she instilled certain values into that little boy Moses when he was a small and in the sovereignty of God.

He grew up at least for the first seven or eight years with his mother and father was away as a slave working from morning to night, but the mother put so many godly values into that little child that more than 30 years later, he remembered them when he was in the midst of the most wicked place on earth, that is the palace of Pharaoh, where there was plenty of money, plenty of sinful pleasure, sexual sin, and plenty

of opportunity to become famous and honor. He rejected all of it. He rejected everything.

He said, I don't want this world's honor. I don't want to be the next Pharaoh. I don't want the riches of Egypt.

I don't want the pleasures of sin. I'm always challenged by that at the age of 40 because of what that mother had put into his mind by the time he was seven or eight and she had to give him up to Pharaoh's daughter. He never forgot it.

It's a tremendous challenge to every one of you mothers to put values into the minds of your children when they are very small. Don't make anything else on earth is more important. Don't make your profession more important.

Don't make earning money more important. Don't make some program you have for yourself more important than spending time with your children, giving them the values that will help them long after you're dead and gone or when they have left your home and gone somewhere else and they'll bring credit to your name. There'll be arrows in God's hand.

I want to say to every one of you mothers, those babies who are being dedicated today and all the others who've got babies in the church, I want to say to you in Jesus' name, it is God's will that you should bring up your children for his glory. He's a good father who gives good things to those who ask him, but we have to ask him. We have to express our need and our helplessness and say, Lord, I can't do this.

I want to pray just like mothers in the Bible prayed. Timothy is the other example in the New Testament as Moses' mother in the old and Timothy's mother in the new. Timothy was a young man, maybe around 20 years old or 19 or 20 years old when Paul met him and Paul immediately chose him to be one of his co-workers.

Boy, can you think of that? If your son grew up and it says everybody in the church had a good testimony about him and then Timothy, young Timothy was about 20 years old. Imagine if your son or daughter grew up and had such a good testimony before everybody as a humble, God-fearing person that the apostle Paul could say, yeah, I want him on my team. Think of that.

There must have been a humility in Timothy that made Paul choose him. Teach your children humility, particularly if they are gifted. I've seen so many children in different CFC churches ruined by their parents because they're gifted and the parents buff them up and make them proud and over a period of time, it's not so evident when they are small, but by the time they come into their late teens and they become college students, they are proud like anything and I'll tell you something, it'll be very difficult for you to get rid of that pride from that child when the child is 17 or 18 if you have not put those values in when they are small children.

They'll grow up and God will be their enemy. Sorry to say that, but because the Bible says God is the enemy of the proud. The most important value you need to teach your children from childhood is humility.

Humility. I'll tell you why, because God gives his grace only to the humble. It's good to get your children educated, to train them in different things with sport and music and all, they need all these activities.

They're not going to be just sitting at home doing nothing and let them do well in their studies and grow up to get good jobs. But above all, if you don't place humility as the number one virtue that you want your

children to get, and you're always boasting about your children in their presence, you're going to have a lot of heartaches when they grow up. I have to warn you that because I've seen through my life.

And so it's very important to discipline our children from young. The Bible says it's the father's responsibility. I told you a little bit about what mothers can do.

You know, I mentioned Timothy's mother, whose father was not much interested in bringing Timothy up, but she must have done a tremendous job. It says in 2 Timothy, when Paul writes about Timothy's mother, it says, I'm reminded of the faith that is in you, which you got from your mother Eunice, 2 Timothy 1.5. The most important thing that Timothy got from his mother was a faith in a loving father in heaven, a humility, which he learned from his mother and faith that God will take care of him in every situation. And that must have been through trials that they went through in their home where Timothy saw his mother.

He was a young boy and he knew there was a problem in the home. And the mother says, well, Timothy, there's a problem here. Dad's not here.

He's on business somewhere. It's just you and me here. Let's pray.

We've got a father in heaven. Let's pray and ask God our father to solve this problem. And then some other situation when Timothy is sick and the dad's not here, the dad's away doing business.

He was a Greek businessman and Timothy's mother says, well, let me lay hands on you, pray for you that Jesus can heal you. And she does that in little, little situations like that throughout Timothy's young life. He saw his mother always exercising faith.

Jesus can solve that problem. Jesus can solve that problem. When he was on earth, he always solved every problem that people came to him with.

There was never a problem that Jesus couldn't solve. And Timothy, I want to tell you, he can solve our problem too. And Timothy grew up with that.

And he was a young man of humility and faith. Teach those values to your children. Teach them the word of God.

It's good for them to know the stories of scripture, but the principles of God's word as well. And one more word I want to say is, see, discipline is very important because the first sin in the universe was disobedience or rebellion against authority. That's how the devil became the devil.

So submission to authority is one of the most important things that all children have to learn. That's why God gave them only one commandment. Honor your father and mother.

Children, obey your parents. Ephesians 6.1. What does that mean? Submit to authority. Whatever the authority above you tells you to do, do.

That's what Eve didn't do. There was an authority above Eve that was God and Adam. First of all, she didn't consult Adam and she was tempted.

She knew what God had said, and she didn't submit to that authority. So we have to teach our children that all the chaos in this universe came because first of all, an angel did not submit to God's authority. And then Eve did not submit to God's authority.

And now God wants you, my little son, my little girl, my little boy to grow up to listen to your parents and obey your parents. Then you break off this habit that has come to us from our forefather Adam, to submit to authority. When they go to school, they learn to submit to their teachers and not make fun of them.

And in society, to submit to authority, wherever they find authority. You see the rebellion in the world today, it's all lack of submission to authority. We want our children to be a light in the midst of this darkness.

And that's why we must never treat disobedience lightly. It's serious. You must never treat their telling a lie as a joke.

It's serious if they tell you a lie, because that's a rebellion against authority too. But along with that, I want to add this word, and that is a word spoken to all believers in Hebrews 3.13, encourage one another daily. Husbands need to encourage their wives.

Wives need to encourage their husbands, but more than anything else, we have to encourage our children. Whenever they do something good to encourage them, and not to boast about how much better they are in the marks they got in school before others. That's okay to appreciate them and to tell them that you're proud that they did well in school, or they got a hundred percent in some subject, definitely within the family, but don't boast about that to others.

Because those other families, their children may not have done so well. Keep all those marks within your own family. Don't boast about it to others.

But more than anything else, encourage your children when they do something good, because not everybody, not every child can get a hundred percent in different subjects, and some are clever and some are not. But doing good and helping one another and denying oneself when there's a conflict, that's something we must always appreciate and encourage saying, I'm really proud of you, the way you behaved there in that situation, my son, my girl. Really happy to see how you gave up that instead of fighting for your rights.

We have to encourage one another daily and let those children learn that more important than getting a hundred percent in school is to, you know, be selfless and self-denying in their relationships with one another. Then we have done our part to make sure that our children grow up as godly. That has to start right from the beginning.

And they have to see not just the words we speak, but the example of parents, father and mother, and the way they deal with each other. That is why I say this in conclusion, the greatest work, the greatest way in which you can help your children, your father, is by loving their mother, that is your wife. And to the mothers, I say the greatest way you can bring up your children in a godly way is by loving their father, your husband, and by respecting your husband, by loving your wife, respecting your husband.

And the children see that the relationship that dad and mom have with each other, that is a message to them. When they see the atmosphere of heaven in your home without conflict and strife, without yelling and getting upset and anger and all that, it's the atmosphere of heaven that makes a child godly. If you merely teach them all the truths and the atmosphere is one of strife and conflict and blaming and criticism and all that, you're going to cancel out everything that you have taught them.

So that's why parents need to cry out to God for help. Lord, help me to be a good example, not just to teach them the right thing, but to be a good example at home. And when you've been a bad example, don't be hesitant or afraid to apologize to your children saying, I'm sorry.

I'm sorry, daddy was not a good example there. Mommy was not a good example there. I tell you, your children will love you for it.

They'll admire you for it. Years later, they will remember and that'll be, they'll realize that you're a person who's humble enough to acknowledge your error and they will learn that from you. So please teach your children humility and not to glory in their gifts or their abilities and encourage them whenever you can, particularly for good behavior and pray for them regularly.

Ultimately, it's only God who can make them grow up godly. So we must pray for our children. You must pray for your children every single day that they will grow up to be godly and be a credit to his name.

And I believe God will answer that prayer if you're sincere, definitely. If you're humble enough to acknowledge your limitation and say, Lord, help me to be a good parent to my children. I want to pray for them.

I believe God will help you.

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