

# Raising Our Children To Serve God

by Zac Poonen

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*This sermon emphasizes the sacred responsibility parents have in raising their children in a godly way, drawing from biblical examples like the dedication of Jesus and the impact of parental influence on children's faith. It highlights the importance of training children in the fear of God, teaching obedience, and avoiding behaviors that could lead them astray. The message stresses the significance of prayer for children's well-being and the eternal impact of parenting on their spiritual growth.*

**Scripture:** Luke 2:22, Hebrews 2:13, Matthew 18:6, 2 Timothy 1:5, Philippians 2:19

**Topics:** "Parental Responsibility", "Spiritual Growth of Children"

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## Description

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## Transcript

So, we are going to pray for some children at the beginning. There is no law that we should dedicate children in the church. There are only two things that Jesus commanded as ordinances.

One is baptism and the other is the Lord's table. But, we read that Jesus also was dedicated to the Lord as a baby. It says in Luke 2 verse 22, they presented him to the Lord.

That was a commandment in the Old Testament. That the first boy that is born, verse 23, must be given to the Lord. Verse 23.

According to the law, the first born male shall be called holy to the Lord. You know why? Because, in Egypt, all the first born sons were killed. But the first born sons of Israelites were not killed because they put the blood on the door.

So, the Lord said, from now on, the first born sons belong to me. So, Jesus was Mary's first born, so she presented him. She had four other sons.

He didn't have to present them. But in the New Testament, all our children belong to the Lord. Sons and daughters.

We say, Lord, they are all yours. But you give them to us for a few years and we want to bring them up in a godly way. We had a brother in one of our churches whose daughter died when she was 14 years old.

We had a brother in one of our churches whose daughter died when she was 14 years old. Imagine, if your eldest daughter dies when she is 14 years old. But she was a very godly girl.

But she was a very godly girl. She was a very modest and God fearing girl. Because the parents brought her up in that way.

So, I told that brother, God sent a little baby into your home 14 years ago. A baby who knew nothing. And you took that baby and in 14 years, you made her into a wonderful godly girl.

And you presented that girl back to God. What a wonderful work you did. God will say, well done.

I gave you a little baby who knew nothing. And in 14 years, you trained her to be a really godly girl. And in 14 years, you trained her to be a really godly girl.

You and I also got babies that God gave us. What have you done with them? Have you trained them? Can you present them one day to God and say, here is what you gave me Lord. See Hebrews and chapter 2. Hebrews chapter 2 And verse 13.

Here it says, behold I and the children whom God has given me. That is a quotation from the Old Testament. From Isaiah chapter 8. Isaiah 8 and verse 18.

Isaiah says, behold I and the children whom the Lord has given me. There are signs and wonders in Mount Zion. One day when you stand before God.

Don't just say, Lord here I am. When Jesus comes, what are you going to say? Lord here I am. If you are single, that is okay.

But if you are married and God gives you children. And that day you must say, Lord here I am. And here are all the children you gave me.

You gave me two children, three children, four children. They are all here. I brought them up for you.

It was not easy. But I sacrificed everything so that I could stand with them before you. Thank you Lord for helping me.

That should be your goal. That when you stand before the Lord you can say, behold me and the children you have given me. That is why from earliest childhood, we must teach them the fear of God.

Teach them to obey their parents. You must never tolerate two things. Never tolerate disobedience and dishonoring parents.

Secondly, you must never tolerate their telling lies. It doesn't matter if they don't come first in the class. If they are God fearing and they don't tell lies and you sought to bring them up in the fear of God.

God will help you mightily. We must believe that in an evil world, God will help us to bring up our children. And if some of your children are going astray, pray for them everyday.

Prayer is like putting a rope around their neck or around their body. Run a long way. But one day they come to the end of the rope and they won't be able to run anymore.

And God will pull them back. That is what prayer does. Keep praying, God will pull them back.

Nothing is impossible with God. And so we want to pray for these children that God will give these parents wisdom. We have a big responsibility when we have children in the church.

There must be nothing that we do that will cause these children to stumble. We read in Matthew chapter 18 verse 6 Anyone causes these little ones who believe in me to stumble, it is better that a heavy millstone be hung around his neck and he be drowned in the depth of the sea. Can you imagine Jesus speaking such strong words? Tie a heavy millstone around your neck and go and drown in the depths of the sea.

If some brother spoke like that you would think he is not Christ like. But this is Jesus himself saying it. It is a very serious thing to do something that will lead these little children astray.

Some bad habit that the children learn from their parents. I know one young man who was a chain smoker, slave to smoking. He was not converted.

I asked him, how did you start smoking? He said, when I was a small boy my father used to send me to the shop to buy cigarettes for him. And without my father's knowledge I started smoking. They are unconverted people we can't say anything.

Something we can learn from them. Are your children learning some bad habits from you? Are your children learning to speak rudely because you speak rudely to your wife? I will tell you something. It is better for children to learn smoking than to learn to speak rudely.

A person who smokes will not go to hell. But if a person does not speak respectfully there is a chance they will go to hell. I am not saying smoking is a good habit it destroys this body.

But the sins of the soul which are much worse we look down on somebody who smokes or drinks he is destroying his body. But the way we speak and the way we behave with people we are destroying a person's soul. So be very very careful in your home that you don't lead your children astray.

I want to say to you parents that when you have a disagreement don't disagree in the presence of your children. Please go somewhere else and express your disagreement. Don't let your children ever see you arguing and fighting with each other.

If you do that then it is better to put a millstone around your neck and drown in the sea. It is a very serious thing. So it is a very sacred responsibility to have children.

At the same time if you bring them up properly they can be a greater blessing to the world than you could have been. Think of this young man called Timothy. He was a young believer maybe 18 or 19 years old.

But he was already a disciple at that age. Acts 16 verse 1 Acts of the Apostles chapter 16 verse 1 Paul came to Derbe and Lystra and there was a disciple there named Timothy. The son of a Jewish woman but his father was a Christian and his mother was Greek.

He was a young man maybe 18 or 19 years old but he was a disciple. How did he become a disciple? Because his mother gave him faith. Now it says here that Timothy's mother was a Jewish woman but his

father was Greek.

And it was against the law of Moses for a Jewish person to marry a Greek. So his mother must have disobeyed God in marrying a Greek. But her this Timothy's mother her mother was a God fearing woman.

2nd Timothy chapter 1 2nd Timothy 1 Paul tells Timothy verse 5 I am mindful of the sincere faith which was in you which was first dwelt in your grandmother Lois and then in your mother Eunice. So there was this old there was this God fearing lady called Lois and she had a daughter called Eunice she gave him some gave her some faith and as she grew up she back slid and married one Greek man He probably had no time for God but only business and making money. And she got this little baby Then I think she began to take her life seriously.

She must have said Lord I am sorry that I went astray help me to at least bring up this child in a good way. The father had no interest in reading the Bible. Some of you are like that your husband has got no interest in spiritual things.

His Eunice was like that. Timothy's father had no interest in spiritual things. But this mother all by herself brought up this boy so well that by the time he was 19 years old he was a disciple of Jesus Christ.

Such a good disciple that Paul said I want him on my team. And later on Paul said in Philippians 2 in chapter 2 verse 19 and 20 I don't have anybody like Timothy. Nobody else who will genuinely be concerned for your welfare.

All the others are seeking their own. Timothy is seeking the things of Christ. And he became a mighty apostle.

He could carry on the ministry that Paul gave him after Paul died. How did it happen? Only because of his mother. Single handedly she brought up that boy.

She could not become an apostle. But she repented of her backsliding and trained up a boy to come up. What a tremendous encouragement.

Many of you both father and mother are believers. What a tremendous opportunity you have to bring up all your children to be disciples of Jesus Christ. That is our greatest responsibility.

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