

# Training Children in the Last Days

by Zac Poonen

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*Zac Poonen emphasizes the critical role of parents in training children spiritually in challenging times, advocating for personal responsibility and prayerful guidance.*

**Duration:** 20:03

**Scripture:** Proverbs 22:6

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

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## Description

The sermon emphasizes the challenges of being a true Christian in the last days, focusing on the importance of having the inner power of the Holy Spirit rather than just a form of godliness. It discusses the characteristics of religious versus spiritual individuals and warns about the dangers of being lovers of self and money. The message highlights the critical role of parents in shaping their children's spiritual growth, urging them to take responsibility and prioritize respectfulness and truthfulness in their upbringing.

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## Transcript

The Bible says that we must live as those who have understanding of the times in which we live, and especially in the matter of bringing up children. It says in 2 Timothy, sorry, yeah, 2 Timothy chapter 3, in the last days, difficult times will come, and in the context in which it is spoken, it's not speaking of financial difficulty, because that's been there through ages. It's not something particularly for the last days, and most of us are not facing financial difficulty.

But the Living Bible paraphrases it very well. In the last days, it will be very difficult to be a true Christian. That we know.

So that's the difficulty spoken of here. It's difficult to be a true Christian. And in that context, it speaks about people, verse 5, who hold to a form of godliness.

That means they appear to be Christians, but they don't have the inner power. They deny the power. That means they don't value or appreciate the power necessary to be a true Christian, and that's the power of the Holy Spirit.

In other words, what we would call them in our church is religious people, not spiritual. Spiritual people are people who are filled with the Holy Spirit, who depend on God and the Holy Spirit to live the Christian life. Religious people are those who, you know, follow a form.

And, but yet they have a form of religion, means they go to church regularly, they read their Bible, they look like born-again Christians. But it says here, in spite of that, verse 2, all these people would be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant. Now, these things are always true of people in the world.

The people in the world have always been lovers of self, lovers of money, etc., etc., etc. But you must see it in the context of what's written here. This is referring to the last days when people will have a religious appearance of Christianity, but still will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, and disobedient to parents.

I don't want to go into all the others, but just that one phrase. So, in the last days, we can expect Christian children to grow up to be disobedient to parents. Well, children have been disobedient to parents right from the time of Adam.

That's not peculiar in the world, but it's going to be people who have an appearance of religion, but disobedient at home. And what is the reason for it? Because the Bible says, you train up a child in the way he should go. When he's old, he will not depart from it.

I've mentioned before how some of the smaller children ask their parents in CFC, why can't I be like that person? Why can't I dress like her? And my answer to them has been, there are good examples and bad examples in CFC, and you have to make a choice. There was a Peter and a Judas Iscariot. In Jesus' church, you could make a choice whether you aligned yourself with Peter or with Judas Iscariot.

Thankfully, the 10 of them aligned with Peter and not with Judas Iscariot. That's why it was a good church. In the Garden of Eden, paradise, there was a choice between this or that.

So, in the best places in the world, there's a choice. And as your children grow up, and everybody who has observed CFC in the last 30 years will see that, some children join up with the wild crowd, and others move towards those who are more God-fearing. And that almost determines their future.

But who is it who determines which way these children go? When you look at a baby born in a hospital, you look at these two children who went in different ways. If you saw them the day they were born, they were absolutely innocent. How is it a different scheme? There can be only one reason.

The reason God gives is it's the way the parents brought them up. The reason parents give, because all human beings like to justify themselves and say the fault is not with us. From the days of Adam, who said, the fault is not with me, it's my wife.

There are parents who will blame something else. Maybe I'm okay, but my wife is not. That's why children are like this.

I mean, that's an old story from the days of Adam. Don't use it. But the real reason is that there's something in the lives of the parents.

It's not the teaching in the lives of the parents, which is inconsistent. And through the years, I've tried to privately study this. Why is it some children turn out this way and some children turn out that way? And sometimes I have seen, even in CFC, all the children in one family are very respectful in the way they speak.

And then I've seen all the children in another family just couldn't get less. They wouldn't even say hello. I mean, it can't be that all the children are turned out one way.

That's not the reason. It's the atmosphere in which they grow up. And that's where the responsibility of parents is very great.

The moment you put the blame on something else, oh, it was their bad friends. Of course, I'm perfect, but my children got into bad company. Your children will never turn out right until you learn to take the blame yourself.

That's the way Christians go. We judge ourselves, not blame others saying, oh, they got into bad company in school or college. They were okay.

They're such sweet children. I've heard these excuses for years. I don't say anything because whatever I say will not convince them.

They truly follow Adam saying the fault is not with me. It's somebody else. We should follow the thief on the cross who said, Lord, I'm guilty.

He didn't say my parents brought me up badly or I went into bad company. Hi, it's fault is with me. Jesus said, really? You deserve to come to paradise.

Paradise is meant for those who take the blame themselves. Adam was kicked out of paradise because he couldn't take the blame himself for what he did. Blame somebody else.

The thief got into paradise because he took the blame himself. I've said that many times, but apply that to children. Dear brothers and sisters, there's nothing wrong in humbling ourselves, saying, Lord, the fault is with me.

Not my wife, not my husband, not the company they keep, not their school, not their college, not other people in CFC who led them astray. It is 100% with me. Then there's hope.

Throughout the Bible, you'll see it. The woman caught in adultery and the Pharisees accusing her. She admitted it.

She didn't defend herself. No, no, no. It wasn't me.

Somebody looked like me and all that. No. She said, yeah, I committed adultery.

What a terrible thing. She admitted it. Those Pharisees who were accusing her, wanting to throw stones at her, she said, if anybody was without sin, throw the first stone.

Everybody went away. Wasn't there even one of them who was so broken by those words of Jesus and said, Lord, I feel so guilty that I had such a spirit of accusation when there was so much sin in my own thoughts. Will you please forgive me? I wish there were one among those Pharisees.

There were none. They all went away. Of course, they didn't throw stones because they wouldn't dare to do that with Jesus being there because he would have made a list of all their sins publicly.

That would have been terrible. But it's sad that throughout human history, it's been so difficult for people to take the blame. And I believe you'll discover when we get into eternity that it's people like the thief on the

cross who took the blame 100% who got into paradise.

You'll see that. If you don't believe me, you'll see it at the judgment seat of Christ. People like the thief on the cross were probably very wicked, but it took the blame 100% themselves for their sin who got into paradise.

And a lot of people like Adam who put the blame on others who went to hell. We're all evil. Some take the blame, some don't.

Apply that to your children, my dear brothers and sisters. Don't blame anybody else. Say, Lord, if my children are not following the Lord today, you can blame 101 circumstances.

I hope you'll get rid of that from today and say, Lord, the fault is with me. And if a husband and wife can kneel down before God and say, the fault is with me. I want to say there's hope for the worst possible child.

I believe that the worst possible one. I have told parents around the world whose grown up adult children or left the home and gone astray. I said, you and your wife will kneel down and spend just two or three minutes every day.

Is that a long time? Two or three minutes every day and unite, settle all your differences and quarrels between yourself first. Pray in one spirit and claim the promise that if two of you agree concerning anything, Matthew 18, 19, it shall be granted and pray every single day that your wayward son or daughter will come back and be a disciple of Jesus. I said, I can guarantee you they'll come back.

Prayer is like a rope, a lasso that we put around a child and there's a long leash to it. I mean, it's a long, it's very long so they can go run, run, run, run away. But one day they come to the end of the rope and God will pull them back.

But we don't have to wait till our children go astray. It's good to start from day one, from the time they are born. I mean, I believe that even children in the womb can be influenced by prayer.

I've encouraged pregnant mothers to put their hands on their stomachs and pray for their child in Jesus name. That only in life the child will give their life to Christ. And that from the time they are born, that your main goal is that that child, we want our children to be healthy, of course, but they'll be spiritually healthy.

I wish we have a burden for their spiritual health as much as we have when a child gets a little fever or gets a cold and we get all, what shall we do? Go to the doctor. Good. We want children to be healthy.

I wish we'd have the same concern when as they grow up and we discover certain traits in them, which are not good, that you immediately put an end to it. I have warned some parents here in years past, when I saw their children behaving rudely to them. I said, don't ever allow your child to do that to you as a father.

I don't know whether it took me seriously. The children are gone astray. Don't allow your children to speak rudely.

There are only two things primarily that you must be very careful with. Children must respect parents. And that means also older people.

I would not allow my children to speak rudely to anyone older than them, even to a servant in the house. But I've seen some CFC children who speak rudely to some servant working in the house. It gives me the shivers.

I say, I'm scared what's going to happen to this child when they grow up, just because they're in a lower class society. Yeah, these are the things, you know, if you're not careful, our children pick up certain habits. It's very difficult to change it later.

You know, like they say, if you want a tree to grow straight, if it's growing crooked as a plant, straighten it, put some ropes and make it straight. If you allow it, try to change it after a few years, it's impossible. So, teach them to respect.

That's number one. Very important to speak respectfully. Go and apologize to mommy immediately before you do anything else.

Don't spare them. And secondly, never allow them to tell lies. That's very serious.

The Bible says children go astray telling lies from birth in the Psalms. That's something we've got to help them get over. And we must tell them, listen, I don't care if you broke the most expensive thing in my house.

Don't tell me a lie. I will not punish you. It's okay.

Things don't mean anything to me. If things mean something to you in your house, you better get rid of that. A lot of our anger is because we love material things.

I remember somebody telling me, I've got a problem with anger. I said, do you love material things in your house? Maybe that's a problem. And you'll never get over anger till you get rid of your love for material things.

Because when you lose them or something's broken, you get upset. If you're free from that love, you won't get upset. So, some of these sins are interconnected.

So, you know, children at home, they can upset so many things and disturb the neat arrangement in your house and so many things. Those are not important in my brother's system. They run around, they scream, they do so many things.

It's okay. They're children. They've got to grow up.

But the things we need to really correct them in is speaking respectfully and telling the truth always. Those are the things we have to highlight and emphasize. And if we start from the beginning and they understand, don't think they have to be four years old before they understand.

One year they can understand the word no. It's amazing. And they are pretty sharp and quick to disobey.

I've forgotten how my own children were because it's happened so long ago, but I got a second chance now seeing my grandchildren. And I remember seeing one of my grandchildren walking up to the stairway in the house. And the father said, no, because it's too small to go up the staircase and fall down.

But turned around and came back. It's only one year old. The next day, I saw the child going up to the staircase and looking back.

What did that indicate? Is anybody watching me? No different from any other child in the world. Exactly the same. Exactly like you and I were when we were one year old.

We have to help them to guide them in the right path. Just like we take a knife out of their hand, even if they scream. You have to discipline them, correct them even if they scream.

We pray that all our children will be saved. It's one of the things I used to emphasize when I was here. We want every child in CFC to be in heaven.

We don't want one of them to be lost. And we strive, and I know I have striven all these years to direct parents in that way, but it cannot be done just by the elders in the church. You have to cooperate too.

And it can be done. See some of the excellent young people that we have seen growing up in CFC. Not excellent in terms of being gifted or they got big jobs.

No, no, no. I'm not worried about all that. But who are humble, who will speak to the most ordinary poorest person here.

That is greatness. Not that don't boast that your children are highly qualified and earn a lot. That's a lot of rubbish.

There are people in the world who do that. But who got character, who got humility and willingness to fellowship and talk to the lowest and the poorest in the church. May God help us to raise children like that.

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