

What We Should Teach Our Children

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen's sermon highlights the critical role of parents and grandparents in teaching children to respect God and elders through everyday life and conversations.

Duration: 13:01

Scripture: Leviticus 19:32

Topics: "Parental Guidance", "Respecting God"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of teaching children and grandchildren to fear and respect God, drawing lessons from the Old Testament teachings to honor older people as a sign of reverence for God. It highlights the need for parents to instill a deep respect for God and others in their children, even in everyday conversations and interactions, by keeping God's word in their hearts and homes.

Transcript

Okay, we'll look at something concerning what God taught the Israelites about their children. See the Old Testament has been written for our instruction and the way God dealt with the Israelites when they brought them out of Egypt is a picture of our salvation. So if you turn with me to Deuteronomy chapter 6, this whole chapter there's quite a lot about parents and children and I would encourage you to read it.

Deuteronomy chapter 6, now this is the commandment, the statutes and the judgments which the Lord your God has commanded to teach you when you go into the land, that is referring to the life you have to live, and listen to this, so that you, your son and your grandson, do you know that grandfathers also have a responsibility to teach their grandchildren about the ways of the Lord? It's not just something we dump on the fathers, that you, your son and your grandson might fear the Lord, your God. It's the most important thing that we have to teach our children and grandchildren, to reverence God, respect God. Not fear that God will hurt us, but fear that we might hurt God.

That's the fear we've got to put into our children and grandchildren, not the fear that God will hurt them, but the fear that they might hurt God by the way they live or the way they speak or the way they behave. So that's the main thing to teach the children, reverence for God, respect for God. And in the Old Testament, we read in the book of Leviticus, if you turn back, one proof of reverence for God that the Lord gave Israelites, Leviticus 19 and verse 32, there are ways in which they could find out whether they feared God or not.

One was Leviticus 19 verse 32, you shall rise up before a gray headed person and honor those who are aged and thus you will fear God or revere God, I am the Lord. So one way the Lord taught the Israelites to show their fear of God was by respecting older people. And if you look around today, habits that began in the western countries have come to eastern lands as well.

Young people have no respect for older people. Now if you go into the remote villages of India, it's very different. They respect older people so much, I mean they go to the extreme, even touching the feet of their parents.

Now I'm not saying we should do that, but that respect which is almost inbuilt even among Hindus and villagers who have no religion, who taught them to teach their children to respect their parents? They don't have the Bible in those villages. And why is it so many countries that have the Bible, young people grow up with no respect for their teachers, no respect for their parents and no respect for older people at all. And when we say older people, it doesn't mean older people of a certain society.

We had servants in our home and I taught my children that you must respect them. They're older than you. There's no question of social levels in God's eyes.

All are created in the image of God and you must respect anyone who's older, even if it's a beggar, he's older than you, you don't speak disrespectfully to him. These are evidences of a world that has lost its fear of God completely. And some of you older people can also examine yourself.

See that's why in our Indian culture, whenever you speak to an older brother, you don't call him by his name, John, David, Paul, no, you call him brother John, brother David, brother Paul. And in our entire Indian languages, there's always a way of addressing older people with a respectful title, universal, that's not among Christians, it's among all Indians. But that is not there in Western countries.

They've lost it. They call people who are 50 years older than them by their first name. I'm not saying it means anything.

To me, it is an indication of a lack of the fear of God in their life, because you examine such people who speak like that, you'll find in the other areas of their life, they don't fear God. How did they grow up like that? I'll tell you. Because when their parents heard them as little children talk like that, they never corrected them.

And that disease has spread all over the world now, you know, almost anything that begins in America finally spreads over the world because they've got money and they've got television programs that a lot of people watch. So I want to say, don't let your children grow up like that. Teach them to fear God, to respect God, to respect older people, to speak respectfully to older people.

You know, even Paul told Timothy in 1 Timothy chapter 5, he said, you know, Timothy was an elder. And so, some of the people, a number of people in his church were older than him. Timothy was maybe 40, 45 years old.

And there were probably people in his church 60, 65 years old. And sometimes they do something wrong, older people, they need to be corrected. And Paul told Timothy in 1 Timothy 5, do not sharply rebuke an older man.

You can sharply rebuke younger people, permitted, if you're an elder. But when you have to correct an older person, appeal to him as to a father. And when you speak to the younger men as brothers, to the older women, speak to them as mothers.

I want to ask you, how many of you speak to, I mean, people, I don't mean someone who's two or three years older than you, but I mean, when you see a person who is definitely much older than you, you know, a much older person who's a father of many children. Do you speak to him with respect? And what about your sisters? How do you speak to a sister who is older than you? Even 10 years older than you? How do you speak to her? With respect? No. It's because you lack the fear of God.

If you face up to it, it'll change your life. If you don't see these as indications that you lack the fear of God, you'll remain in the same condition and degenerate, finally degenerate to the level of what you see in many western lands. These are the things the Lord was trying to correct in Israel right at the beginning.

And then he said in Deuteronomy chapter 6 again, verse 6, Deuteronomy 6 and verse 6, these words that I'm speaking to you, commanding you, shall be on your heart. You must keep God's word in your heart so that you don't need to open a Bible. Wherever you are, you can teach them diligently to your sons and to your grandsons also.

And where should you talk about these things? It's not when you open the Bible, because you don't always have the Bible with you, but you have it in your heart. And you talk of them when you're sitting down in your house, when you're sitting down for a meal, when you're sitting down in the family room, and when you're walking on the road with your children sometime, that's also written there, when you sit down, when you get up and go for a walk, or you're walking towards some place, and when they're going to bed, and you go to their room and see the little children going to bed, what are you going to talk about? The word of God. And when they get up in the morning, that's what you're going to talk about.

And you shall bind them as a sign in your hand, they shall be as frontals on your forehead. That means, you know, something which is always on your mind, that's the meaning of frontals on your forehead, and always in your hand, a hand we use so often, that means it's something that's so much a part of our life, that we talk about it all the time to our children. Some occasion arises somewhere and we say, hey, that reminds me of a scripture.

That's how we should be talking to our children. That's why we need to have God's word in our heart. And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house.

Write them on the walls of your house. We have scripture here on the walls. In the olden days, I've seen God-fearing people who have verses on the walls of their home, but that's out of fashion now in many fashionable homes.

Fashionable homes have now started, even Christian homes have started following the fashionable styles of Western homes where they have pictures, nothing to do with the Bible, but paintings of sceneries and odd designs which are crazy, which mean nothing, but it's like a child scribbling something or flinging paint on a wall and they pay thousands of rupees to buy that and keep it up there, some stupid painting, instead of the word of God. No wonder the children go astray. They're not going to fear God seeing all these useless paintings.

Imagine if they get up and they go into every room and they find, hey, there's a word of God here, something to remind you. Imagine if visitors come to your home and they see, hey, the word of God. That is how the Lord taught his children.

Don't follow the fashions of the world. Put my word there for people to read it. And then, later on he says in verse 20, when your son asks you in time to come, what do these things mean? I mean, what do these words mean? Then you have to tell them.

In their case, they had to tell them, we were slaves in Egypt and the Lord brought us out showing great signs and wonders and we tell them, we were such wretched sinners. Listen, children, you're not the only ones who have got a bad nature. Dad and mom, we also have a very bad nature when we grew up.

But Jesus came into our heart and changed our nature. That can happen to you. That's what we need to tell them.

And then, verse 25, it will be righteousness for us if we are careful to observe this commandment before God just as he commanded us. It will go well with you if you take these things to heart.

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