

Series: “Surrender”

Raising Thirsty Children

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Main Point:

God's creation of children in the womb is a masterpiece of His design and workmanship, and every child is a gift from God. Even before your child was born, God established His plan for them and the days they would live. The greater role of a godly parent starts with our own submission to God and that Jesus Christ is to be a part of everything that we do. Raising kids isn't easy, but God has called every parent to develop within our children an internal motivation—a thirst—to know and love the Lord.

Introduction:

- God is after total surrender—in every area of our life—and He will continue to work on us until we give Him permission to invade and conquer that last little corner of our heart and mind.
- One of the greatest failures of Christians is keeping the “spiritual stuff” separate from all our other “stuff”.
- Surrender and submission should be in all areas of our life—not just marriage, but also in our parenting, in our jobs and occupations, our hobbies and pastimes, our free time, all of our time!

Message Outline:

I. Our parenting must be brought into full surrender to Jesus. God has uniquely wired your child, and He has given you the privilege of helping your child to discover what God has in mind for him/her.

- Did you realize that you are setting your child up for frustration, confusion, and maybe even rebellion when you lead your child in the way that you think they should go as opposed to how God created them to go?
 - **Psalms 127:1-6:** *Unless the LORD builds the house, those who build it labor in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain. It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil; for he gives to his beloved sleep. Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD, the fruit of the womb a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children of one's youth. Blessed is the man who fills his quiver with them! He shall not be put to shame when he speaks with his enemies in the gate.*
 - **Psalms 128:1-6:** *Blessed is everyone who fears the LORD, who walks in his ways! You shall eat the fruit of the labor of your hands; you shall be blessed, and it shall be well with you. Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house; your children will be like olive shoots around*

your table. Behold, thus shall the man be blessed who fears the LORD. The LORD bless you from Zion! May you see the prosperity of Jerusalem all the days of your life! May you see your children's children! Peace be upon Israel!

- First, for our encouragement, we need to understand what our children truly are from God's perspective: Ps 127-128 describes children in 4 definite ways:
 1. children are a heritage from the Lord
 2. fruit of the womb is a reward
 3. children are like arrows in the hand of a warrior
 4. children are like olive plants transplanted around your table
- While many parents might argue that their experience with children was never this picture perfect, it doesn't change the truth or validity of God's word.

II. God has provided His instruction manual concerning the care and maintenance of our children. If we do not read this manual, or ignore its instructions, we will have unbelievable trouble with our children, resulting in physical harm or even death?

- **Proverbs 22:6** *“Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.*
 - **train up** – the palate, the roof of the mouth, the gums, in verb form: to break a wild horse by placing a rope in its mouth to bring in into submission.
 - Also, to describe the action by a midwife who would dip finger into crushed dates and rub the palate and gums of a newborn baby to stimulate the baby to begin sucking, creating a thirst in that infant
 - **child** – any age between birth and marriageable age
 - **in** – in keeping with, in cooperation with, in accordance to the way he should go, or even “his way” – “his road, his path, his characteristics, his individual gift or **bent**”
 - **bent** – Ps 7:12; 11:2 – a verbal form of the word “way”; “the bending of the bow”
 - **the way** - Proverbs 30:18-19 *Three things are too wonderful for me; four I do not understand: **the way** of an eagle in the sky, **the way** of a serpent on a rock, **the way** of a ship on the high seas, and **the way** of a man with a virgin.*
- God did not give us a chunk of stone and ask us to carve out a child; He gave us a complete, gifted, talented, thinking, total person that He equipped to be a choice vessel in His hands for the accomplishment of a God-ordained task in life—God wired that child Himself!
- **Psalms 139:13-16** *For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your*

book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them.

- The challenge for parents is to:
 1. bring the child into submission to God,
 2. create a thirst in that child for God,
 3. help that child find his God-given bent (way),
 4. encourage and stimulate that child to develop his bent for God—and do it all in just a few years.
- This is an adventure; this is a wild ride; it is a discovery process. It means you are going to do things you don't like to do; buy things that don't get used very much; listen to half-baked ideas that don't make much sense; it means you are going to have to pray, and watch, and listen, and experiment with academic areas and hobbies and sports and fine arts in order to help your child discover his/her bent, and then help them develop it.

III. This is a Partnership! If you ask the Lord for help, wisdom, insight, and eyes to see what you need to see, the One who knit your child together will make sure you do not miss what He intends for you to see. The worst thing you can do to your child is not help them find out why God put them here.

- **Proverbs 29:15** *The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child left to himself brings shame to his mother.*
 - **a child left** - “untouched” (untrained, undisciplined, unguided—a bent undiscovered!) brings shame to Mom and Dad

Talk About It:

1. List the 4 ways God describes children in Psalms 127-128. Discuss the ways that you have found those descriptions to be true in your own family experience.
2. Explain in your own words what the biblical meaning of “train up” found in Proverbs 22:6 really is. Discuss how this meaning is different than what you expected it to be.
3. Give an appropriate age span for the meaning of “child” as it was used in David’s day. Is this different than how we would use “child” in our current culture and time? Explain.
4. Expand on the meaning of the simple preposition “in” found in Proverbs 22:6. What phrase does it connect with and introduce?
5. How is the phrase “the way he should go” usually understood in our current culture of parenting? Would believers in Jesus Christ define it differently? How so?
6. What is the biblical meaning of the phrase “the way he should go” as used in Proverbs 22:6?

7. To better understand how “way” is used in that verse, read Proverbs 30:18-19. Describe how “way” is used in each of the 4 examples given. What is the common theme with all 4 examples?
8. Discuss Psalms 139:13-16 as it pertains to God’s personal involvement in the creation process of each and every human being. What most amazes you? What most encourages you? What most blesses you? What does this tell you about the importance of every human being? What does this tell you about our God?
9. List the 4 challenges presented that parents should strive to accomplish while their children are still in the home. Discuss the obstacles that will present themselves throughout this process. What should be every parent’s first response to these obstacles? Where should they turn for wisdom? Read James 1:5-8.
10. Discuss all the many ways you tried to help your children discover what “bents”—talents, gifts, interests, curiosities—God placed in them when He created them. Which ways worked best? Which ways failed miserably?
11. How does Proverbs 29:15 encourage us as parents to never give up in training, disciplining, guiding, directing, encouraging, and loving our children? Discuss what “a child left to himself” might mean in today’s culture. Is it different in from the culture of Solomon’s day? How so?

Make It Practical:

- Read Ephesians 6:1-4. Focus on both the child’s and parent’s responsibility in the home life. Define and explain the more important words in each of those verses. (i.e., obey, right, honor, go well, live long, provoke, bring them up, discipline, instruction)
- Discuss how Colossians 3:20 adds more insight to the Ephesian passage. What are the similarities or differences?
- In 2 Timothy 3:16 and 2 Timothy 2:24, the Greek word “Paideia” is an important concept—a biblical, classical, and Roman practice. Discuss what it means and how you see it used in these verses. What parallels can you see with today’s goals and methods of parenting? What differences?
 - a. Both *way* and *goal* are indicated by “paideia”; goal is not just to get “educated”, but is the process by which it happens
 - b. Classical and Roman – goal of “paideia” was virtue and firmness of character
 - c. Above all parents must teach by example
- How does 1 Corinthians 13 offer an overarching protection from discipline that might be too harsh or not offered in the right spirit? Does this passage even apply to the discipline of our children? Why or why not?
 - If we consistently love our children with this kind of love, it will much easier for our children to consistently: “obey your parents in the Lord” and “honor your father and mother.”

Prayer Points:

- Thanks for the gift of our children/grandchildren

- Wisdom in parenting, patience and understanding, strength in challenges, guidance in discipline, peace in the home, divine protection from evil and sickness, guidance in teaching and instruction, encouragement and direction in their “way”, salvation, etc...
- Help in fostering an atmosphere of love, peace, and faith in the home and daily life
- Receive the strength and inspiration you need to bring your kids up in His ways
- May our children/grandchildren be continual reminders of God’s unwavering love.