

Loving Your Children

Deuteronomy 6:5-7

Preface

Illus: Suppose I said that Pam and I are going to Mobile this afternoon to pick something up. This something we are bringing home is going to keep us up at night and require constant attention. Furthermore, this something is going to change our lives for the remainder of our days on earth. It is going to cost us money daily and completely alter the way we live. What in the world could we be going to get?

Of course there is only one thing that can have this type of life-altering affect; children. Children are a blessing and God has created in us the desire to have and nurture children. Children bring much joy and laughter but they require enormous responsibility.

Illus: Yesterday we went to Citronelle to visit some friends and see the progress on their new home and then went out to eat. Vicki is a counselor to children at a mental health facility and boy does she have some stories to tell.

Yesterday we were discussing how messed-up some children are that she counsels. For most of them, their problems stem from their home life. We live in a day when grandparents are raising grandchildren because their sons and daughters are too sorry to take the responsibility of raising the children they bring into this world.

One of the things I really value about our church is our emphasis on family. From our children's programs to the youth program, we are trying to help families have Christian homes. Right now our youth are in Panama City for a Back to School retreat.

God's word has some important things to say about families and children. Most importantly, God's word tells us that we should teach our children to have a thirst for knowing God and seeking God.

Read Text Deuteronomy 6:5-7

“⁵Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. ⁶These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. ⁷Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.” Deuteronomy 6:4-7(NIV)

Introduction

Children can be fun, rewarding and remarkable. They can also be devious, self-centered liars. They can be all this within the same minute. Children can be completely predictable; hence the saying “Eyes in the back of your head.” They can also be completely unpredictable. There are no two just alike even from same parents.

Illus: How the kids came down the bob sled.

My wife and I have parented two children to young adulthood. Still, in no way do I feel qualified to tell someone else how to raise their children. Each parent has the privilege and responsibility of raising their children to the best of their ability.

However, I would like to communicate four ways God's word is clear about loving our children.

Content

1. Love your children with your time

One of the most important things you can give your children is your time; yourself.

One of my greatest accomplishments as a father was the time I did spend with my children. Conversely, one of my greatest regrets is not having spent more time with my children.

When you are tempted to get involved in some energy-draining, time-consuming opportunity that will only increase the distance between you and your family, ask yourself hard questions about the price that will actually be paid.

Give your children the very best of your time.

2. Love your children with discipline

It takes love and determination to discipline our children. Disciplining children takes time and hard work on the part of both parents. You cannot afford to subrogate discipline to your spouse, the school or anyone else.

God's word says, *“¹⁵The rod of correction imparts wisdom, but a child left to himself disgraces his mother. Proverbs 29:15 NIV”*

Illus: We all know it isn't hard to spot a child who has not had proper discipline. Also, it isn't hard to spot an adult who lacked discipline in their childhood.

Discipline must be done with love by loving parents.

3. Love your children with grace

There are no perfect parents just as there are no perfect people. We have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. But God has shown us enormous grace.

We must also show grace and forgiveness. As important as it is to discipline, we must always provide room for forgiveness.

One of my favorite stories in the Bible is that of the prodigal son. I marvel at the father's strength in allowing his son to take his inheritance, knowing full well he would squander it and bring himself great heartache. I am even more amazed at the father's grace in allowing the young man to return home and resume his role as the father's son.

Even when you are preparing to discipline your children, be preparing your words of grace. Look for the words to begin restoring their dignity and assuring them they can overcome their mistakes and become the person God intends for them to be.

4. Love your children with God's Word

Jesus said, *"If you love Me, you will keep My commandments (John 14:15)."*

This translates into a question we must ask ourselves, "Do I love the Lord and do I obey His Word?" We must teach our children to love God by obeying God's Word ourselves.

Today in America most of the training of our children is not done by the parents or by their school teachers. Most training is done by the television! From the television, our children get their ideas about what is right and wrong, what is desirable and undesirable, and ideas about God, sex, marriage, family and life. This is destroying our families!

Someone once said; "As society goes, so goes the arts." That is incorrect. I say, "As the arts go, so goes society."

We must Not entrust our children's training to the writers and actors of today's television shows.

We must train our children in the word of God. Every parent needs to find their strength in God and tell their children about what God is doing in their life.

If you love your children, you will teach them the word of God.

Conclusion

In America, every 7 minutes a child is injured or killed by a gun; every day 100,000 children are homeless, every day 135,000 children bring a gun to school; every day 6 teenagers commit suicide; every day about 3,000 children see their parents get a divorce. This doesn't even touch the statistics related to alcohol, drugs and sexual conduct.

It is very tough being a kid these days.

Your children need your love.

Your children need God's love.

"Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it. Proverbs 22:6"

I once concluded a sermon with a difficult question. I asked the congregation, **"Is Christ Nothing to You, Something to You, or Everything to You?"** This message today wasn't about your children, it was about you. Before you can teach God to your children, He must be Lord of your heart!

Illus: My father left when I was 5 and my sister was 2 years old. When I was in high school and on a choir tour with the church my father came to a church to hear us and see his two children for the first time in a dozen years. My grandmother had told him we would be there. After seeing us almost grown, he realized he had wasted his life. He quit drinking and began trying to be a part of our lives. To his credit, he tried very hard. However, nothing he did could make him a real father. It was too late.

You have one chance to get it right. The right way of parenting is God's way and it takes commitment. It takes loving God, loving your spouse and loving your children.

It is not too late for you.
