



State of the Family - Part 4 Sermon Discussion Notes

Opening Thoughts

Having children is the greatest privilege God ever gives a family. It is also our greatest responsibility. Children are a major theme in the Bible because God deeply cares about children. 435 times the word “children” is mentioned in the scriptures (NIV version). Jesus himself paused in his ministry to show his love and to bless children. Children are highly valued by the God of the universe.

Mark 10:13-16 13 People were bringing little children to Jesus to have him touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. 14 When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. 15 I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." 16 And he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them. NIV

Discussion Questions

1. When we are getting acquainted with someone at work or at church we often ask them "do you have any children" or if they are older "do you have any grandchildren?" Ironic language when the Bible says that children come from God to us - we don't own them but children are entrusted to us from God himself. Discuss the verse and quote in light of this concept.

Psalm 127:3-5 3 Behold, children are a gift of the LORD; The fruit of the womb is a reward. 4 Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, So are the children of one's youth. 5 How blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them; They shall not be ashamed, When they speak with their enemies in the gate. NASB

"Psalm 127:3 states that children are gifts. We don't own them; they've been loaned to us temporarily to raise up and let go. They are not given to us to meet our needs and expectations. They're not here for us; we are here for them until they are grown and on their own. Their purpose in life is not to please us but to grow up and please God. We treat them with the same respect we want to receive. We don't confine them or define them with our expectations." Carol Kuykendall

2. Do you think sometimes a surprise pregnancy is a surprise to us but not to the one issues children and their gifts? Do you know someone that needs to reframe a surprise child or pregnancy in a positive light? What about special needs children? Is it possible that sometimes these special need children present to us a level of innocence and beauty that reflect God's character in a very special way? Discuss these ideas.
3. Children are gifts and all gifts are not identical. Each child has his or her own uniqueness. How does this affect how we parent them? How does this verse illustrate the uniqueness and varied giftedness of children?

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

4. Some children are more athletic and some are more academic, some are more mathematical and some are prone to art. How does this phrase help us in encouraging children in their unique gifts: *Equal praise for equal effort?*
5. The Hebrew word *derek* that translates to the phrase "*the way he should go*" in Proverbs 22:6 - the root of this word is used to bend a bow (see Lamentations 2:4, 3:12,). What is the significance of that image or metaphor?
6. If you have children discuss this truth regarding your own children: Children have different personalities, different gifts and different capabilities.
7. Children need unconditional love from their parents - how is unconditional love expressed to our children - how is it not expressed?
8. Why is it important that fathers pursue their children throughout their whole life? In what ways can dads take the initiative to show their children how important they are to them? How is this a reflection of God pursuing us?
9. Children come with gifts but they come emotionally empty and they need us as parents to pour love into them. We do this through our words but also through our touch. Hugs and positive contact is important for kids to know they are loved. Discuss how Jesus models this principle in Mark 10:13-16.
10. Discuss the importance of the spiritual influence of parents on their children through the following verses. Review these scriptures: Deuteronomy 6:4-9, 2 Timothy 1:5-6

Concluding Thought

Our job as parents is not to make children into what they are not but to enhance what they already are.