

Children

by Charles Stanley

As a parent, it is essential to love, train, communicate, and pray for your child, while understanding that ultimately, it is their decision to make a personal relationship with God.

Duration: 6:00

Scripture: Deuteronomy 6:6-7, Psalm 127:3, Proverbs 1:8, Proverbs 22:6, Ephesians 6:4, Colossians 3:21, James 1:19

Topics: "Children"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes that while parents have a responsibility to teach and guide their children in their faith, ultimately each child must develop their own belief system and relationship with God. The speaker highlights the importance of providing a loving and supportive environment for children to grow in their faith, tailoring their expressions of love to meet each child's unique needs. The speaker also addresses the guilt that parents may feel when their children do not turn out as expected, reminding them that children are individuals with their own struggles and challenges. The sermon concludes with the reminder that training a child in the way they should go requires individualized attention and patient listening.

Transcript

When I think about rearing children, I think about some very practical things that I know work. And I think I would simply say to any parent who has a child, regardless of the age, number one, love that child. Ask God to show you the ways you need to express your love to that child.

You need to express your love to that child in the way that child needs to be loved. Every child doesn't need to be loved the same way. Some children need to be loved with lots of cuddling, lots of words.

Other children need to be loved with a sense of the awareness that you have confidence in them, that you trust them. They may not always need the kind of cuddling that others do. When the Bible says, train a child in the way he or she should go, when they're old they'll not depart from it.

That means we're to train each one of them individually. So first of all, there's a sense of love. Secondly, there is a sense of trust.

I think when a child perceives that their parents trust them, they are more than likely going to be trustworthy because they have this expectation that their parents have, that they have to face, and they

don't want to disappoint their parents. I think one of the primary principles of raising our children and raising them wisely is to teach them very, very early in life that they are accountable to God. While they are accountable to you as their parent, the awareness that they're accountable to the father very early in life is going to protect them from actions and attitudes and habits that do not fit who they are.

When they get away from parents, they don't have the idea, well, now that I'm away from home, I can do as I please. No. The same father to whom they were accountable to at home, the Heavenly Father, they were accountable to away from home.

Being able to listen to them is extremely important. When a child believes that their parents have really heard them, somehow it draws them to the parents. It binds them.

When a child does not feel that their parents are listening, what they interpret that to mean is this. I'm not important. You don't care.

I'm not significant. The things that concern me don't concern you. Therefore, how do I fit in this family anyway? It's devastating to a child to feel that their parents do not listen, and they cannot come to them and be transparent and share their hearts.

A kid's just like we are. They want someone to be able to listen patiently and quietly and lovingly. It'll transform a child's life.

Sometimes a parent has difficulty in disciplining a child because they feel so guilty. Sometimes a parent feels like, well, you know, I'm more guilty than my child, or this is my fault, or what have I done wrong? How can I correct this? And oftentimes it is not anything that a parent has done wrong because children are different. They all grew up with the same old sinful nature that all of us have.

And even after they become a believer, they have difficulties and hardships and trials and temptations and problems and frustrations in their school, with their relationships, and with parents. And so they have a lot to deal with. And oftentimes a parent can feel very, very guilty, down on themselves, and feel like a failure because their children don't grow up to be exactly what they planned or what they thought, or they do not respond in life, or do not respond to them the way that they think they should.

And so oftentimes a parent has this psychological kind of guilt. It's a false guilt. A parent may have done the very best they know how, and a child responded the wrong way.

And so you just have to give that to God, pray for that child. But feeling guilty will only cause a parent more than likely to do things that cause more guilt on their part, and less trust and respect in the life of a child. Giving them more things to atone for your own guilt ultimately is disastrous in the life of a child.

They see through that, and then they say, well, you don't really care because now you're giving me things instead of giving me yourself and your time, which is what I want above everything else. The most powerful thing a parent can do for their children is to pray for them. And I made the habit that when my children were first born, to kneel down by the bedside every single night that I was at home, always before they went to sleep.

Kneel down beside them, pray for them, call their name, ask God for some very specific things in their behalf that they would be saved early in life, that they would discover the will of God early in life, that they would marry the right person in life, that they would invest their life and not spend their life. I think when

you cover a child day after day, week after week, month after month, year after year with prayer, somehow in my thinking it's like God just stacks up all those prayers. And so when the child gets older and they begin to test life and test you and test God and test everybody else, I believe God just brings all those back in the life of that child.

And I believe that is the key. It's a major key in directing a child's life. But you don't start when they become teenagers.

You begin very early in life. I begin before my kids are ever born praying, God, the children you give me, here's what I'm asking you in their behalf. But you say, well, I haven't done that.

My kids are teenagers and they're just blowing it and making a mess of life. Then get on your face before God, confess your own failure, cry out to God to reach into your child's heart and turn their heart toward God. Sometimes we think it's our responsibility to change a child's heart.

It is not our responsibility. We can give them instruction, we can live before them a godly life, but ultimately it's a decision that they have to make in their personal relationship with the Lord. I think oftentimes the parents make the mistake of thinking, well, I'm just going to hand down my belief system and what I believe and my kids are to accept what I believe because I'm their parents and therefore they're going to get straightened out.

That's not necessarily true. A child has to develop their own belief system. They have to develop their own theology.

They have to understand how they feel about God. It is our responsibility to provide the environment, give the instruction, teach the truth, live the truth, but ultimately it is their decision.

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