**Giving Good Gifts to Our Children**

*Matthew 7:7-12*

**Introduction**

1. **Matthew 7:7-12** – It is interesting that Jesus’ emphasis on the Father’s understanding of us, and ability to give us what is good is prefaced by our understanding of our children, and ability to give them what is good.
2. We should ***“know who to give good gifts to [our] children.”***
3. However, societally, this is a lost virtue. Too many are negligent in their parenting, and the children suffer for it throughout life. (This is often unintentional. “Where did I go wrong?”)
4. Parents in the Lord should make sure they’re giving good gifts to their children.
5. Interest, not Indifference
6. We live in a culture that suffers from perversions of some of the most basic matters to human existence.
	1. **1 Timothy 1:8-9** – ***“murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers”***
		1. ***“he need not honor his father or mother” (Matthew 15:6).***
	2. **Romans 1:28, 30, 31** – ***“disobedient to parents…unloving”***
		1. ***“unloving”*** – *astorgos* – "’Without natural affection’ is astorgos, referring to love of parents for children, children for parents, husband for wife and wife for husband.” (WUEST)
	3. It is so sad that children are often viewed as a burden – this is so even on a subconscious level where people utter words concerning their children in jest that should not so easily come out of their mouths.
7. Consider the circumstances for Hannah, and how precious Samuel was to her – **1 Samuel 1:2, 6, 11, 20-22, 27-28; 2:1**
	1. **(vv. 2, 6)** – Hannah was barren, Peninnah abused her.
	2. **(v. 11)** – turned to God, petition for a child.
	3. **(vv. 20-22)** – God blessed her, and she treasured her time with Samuel, prioritizing it, and taking it very seriously.
	4. **(vv. 27-28)** – her heart of gratitude led to her following through with her vow.
	5. **(2:1)** – Her joy by the Lord was through the blessing of her child.
8. Children are a blessing! – **Psalm 127:3-5**
9. Too often parents fail miserably by doing exactly what the Lord showed shouldn’t be done – **Luke 18:15-17** – ***“do not forbid them”***
10. Time, not Toys
11. Some parents are not indifferent toward their children entirely but are mistaken in the attention they seek.
	1. ***“Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child” (Proverbs 22:15)*** – children are foolish, they don’t know the most meaningful things in life, and they certainly are not clear one what they need most.
	2. **Parents ought to know better than their children – they may hear their child express desire for material things, but what their children need most is their parents!**
	3. Many in the world are at a loss concerning their children’s behavior – disobedience, resentment, sorrow, etc.
		1. They wonder why their children act in this way because they’ve shown them so much love.
		2. This love is often expressed in gift giving – “I’ve worked hard to give you the life that I didn’t have. Why do you disobey? Why are you sad? Why do you resent me so much?”
12. **God entrusted parents with children, not so that they can farm out their care to other people or other things, but for them to dwell with them!**
13. God requires time of the parent with their children – **Deuteronomy 6:4-9, 20-25**
	1. It is important to teach children God’s will, and to teach them love for God.
	2. However, much of this teaching will only come in the practical use of time spent with them! – ***“when you sit in your house…walk by the way…lie down…rise up”*** – THIS IS SPENDING TIME WITH THEM.
	3. **(v. 20)** – when they demand your time with questions, and interests.
14. **Ephesians 6:4; Colossians 3:21** – provocation and discouragement often come through negligence of time and attention.
15. Rather than teaching our children to treasure the things of this earth we should teach them to long for heaven – **Matthew 6:19-21** – this will not happen if we replace time spent with money spent.
16. Discipline, not Disorder
17. **Proverbs 22:6, 16; 29:15** – children must be trained, shaped, pruned, raised – otherwise they are being set up for failure.
18. Parents often refuse to discipline their children out of love. This fails to realize the intelligence of love which sees things for what they are, and/or what they will be.
	1. **Mark 10:20-21** – Jesus instructed him to do something He knew he wouldn’t want to do because He knew it was necessary.
	2. **Proverbs 3:11-12** – Discipline comes from love though it is painful in the moment (**cf. Hebrews 12:9-11**).
	3. **Hosea 11:1-4** – God laments His disobedient children – mentions discipline out of love.
19. What have they done to you that you would withhold saying “no” to them, or disciplining them – **Exodus 32:19-21, 25; 1 Samuel 3:11-14** – Aaron with the children of Israel, Eli with his own children.
20. Fathers are to bring children up in training and admonition – **Ephesians 6:4**
	1. Every time a child does something wrong they are “asking” for discipline and instruction, and when such is neglected disorder is given instead.
21. Prudence, not Prodigality
22. Prudent – acting with or showing care and thought for the future. (New Oxford American Dictionary)
23. Prodigal – spending money or resources freely and recklessly; wastefully extravagant. (New Oxford American Dictionary)
24. The idea is to instill in our children the reality that they have a soul, and will be judged according to their deeds in the flesh one day. Therefore, do not spend the currency of life in a reckless way, but store up eternal treasures in heaven.
	1. **Ecclesiastes 11:9-12:1, 6-7, 13-14** – every child should be taught their purpose in life.
25. They should know the dangers of sin and immorality – not be left to themselves to be taken advantage of by the enemy.
	1. **1 John 2:15-17** – taught true love for God, identity of that is in the world, the true nature of those things – they are fleeting, not worth it.
		1. **(v. 17)** – those doing God’s will abide forever – they should be taught the true worth of things and encouraged to mold their lives with those things in mind.
	2. **John 17:15-16** – they need to be taught their true place in this world.
		1. **Hebrews 11:13-16, 24-26** – they need to be reminded of where their true home is, and what true treasure looks like.
	3. **Proverbs 1:8-19; 6:23-29** – they need the ugly peek into the reality of a life given to ungodliness.
		1. We often aim to protect our children from these things, and “keep them innocent.”
		2. This is a noble thought, but as we monitor their maturity level, it is up to us to teach them the reality about these things according to God’s word before the world can warp their understanding of it, and suck them in.
	4. **Mark 6:34** – children are sheep who need a shepherd, and we need to teach them.
26. They should know the value and joys of life spent in fellowship with God – not left to themselves to try to figure it out on their own.
	1. **Philippians 4:4** – Children need to see this, hear about it, and experience it with their parents.
	2. **Hebrews 10:24-25** – assembly should not be a grudging obligation in the family, but something children are raised to cherish.
	3. **John 17:20-24** – they should know of the value and joy of fellowship and unity with Jesus and His people so that their priority is to see Jesus one day in His glory.

**Conclusion**

1. Our children need our interest, care, and concern.
2. They need our time. They want to experience life with us, and have us guide them through it, not simply throw distractions their way with material things.
3. Children need our direction, and discipline. This is something they desperately ask for in every way except their speech. It is our duty to listen to them, and to God who demands action.
4. We need to teach our children to live their lives with purpose, not wastefulness. They are meant for heaven, and we need to mold them for it.