The Upbringing of Children Today: A Biblical and Spiritual Reflection on Parenting and Lifestyle Influence

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## Introduction: A Generation at Risk

In today’s **fractured world**, the upbringing of children has become a **significant challenge**. Modern lifestyles, societal pressures, and a **widespread spiritual vacuum** have left many children **emotionally wounded**, **spiritually barren**, and **confused**. The rapid pace of life, coupled with constant distractions and technological noise, has created a generation where children often feel **lost** in the chaos. They are searching for **meaning**, **identity**, and **purpose**, but many are doing so without the **firm, loving foundation of godly parenting** and **spiritual guidance**.

The influence of **social media**, **peer pressure**, and a culture that increasingly rejects **traditional moral values** have further compounded the struggles children face today. Many are exposed to **confusing messages** about **gender**, **identity**, **success**, and **relationships**—often at an age when they are still trying to make sense of the world around them. These **external pressures**, combined with the lack of proper **emotional** and **spiritual support** from their families, leave many children feeling **isolated** and **misunderstood**.

The result is a generation vulnerable to a host of **emotional and psychological struggles**, such as **depression**, **identity crises**, **rebellion**, **anxiety**, and destructive habits like **substance abuse** and **self-harm**. Many young people are grappling with the weight of these issues in **silence**, unable to fully understand or communicate the depth of their inner turmoil. These struggles are often compounded by a **lack of guidance** or **intervention**, leaving children to navigate an increasingly confusing world on their own.

In the midst of this, the **sacred calling of parenting** has never been more urgent. Parenting is not merely a task or a series of duties—it is a **divine assignment**. Children are not random beings who simply grow up to become adults; they are **masterpieces**, fearfully and wonderfully made by God (Psalm 139:14), each carrying a **unique divine purpose** within them.

The importance of parenting lies not only in preparing children for the challenges of this world but, more significantly, in **nurturing their eternal souls for God’s Kingdom**. It is a responsibility that cannot be taken lightly, for the **future of children**—both spiritually and emotionally—**hinges on the love, guidance**, and **wisdom imparted by parents**.

Parenting, therefore, is not about merely preparing children for the challenges of the world but about preparing them for **eternity**. In a time when so much threatens to derail the hearts and minds of the young, it is the responsibility of parents to **lay down a firm foundation of faith, love, and wisdom**, so that children can navigate the complexities of life with **hope, resilience**, and an unwavering sense of **purpose**.

## 1. Children Are Born With Purpose – Parents Are Vessels

Every child enters the world with a **divinely ordained purpose**, known only to God. Each child is not the result of mere chance or happenstance but is a **unique creation**, intricately designed with a plan and destiny that transcends the limits of this earthly life. **Parents are the vessels** through which God brings these children into existence, and with this divine responsibility comes the solemn task of guiding them toward fulfilling **God’s purpose** for their lives.

The Bible makes this truth unmistakably clear in **Jeremiah 1:5**:

*“Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you. Before you were born, I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.”*

This profound verse speaks directly to the reality that **every child is known to God before they are even conceived**. Before the first breath, before the first cry, **God has already set each child apart**, with a **unique calling** and purpose. **No child is born by accident**, and **no child is without divine significance**. While the world may view a child simply as a future adult, **God sees the fullness of their potential**—their **God-ordained calling** and the **destiny** He has prepared for them. Each child is a vessel of **God’s divine purpose**.

Parents, therefore, are entrusted with the **sacred responsibility** of nurturing, protecting, and guiding their children not just for this life but with **eternity in mind**. It’s not simply about raising a child to survive in the world, but about preparing them to **fulfill the purpose for which they were created**. This means that in the midst of **daily routines, societal pressures, and personal ambitions**, parents must recognize the **sacredness of their role** in shaping their child’s future, both spiritually and personally.

Although parents may not fully understand the specific **destiny** of their children, it is their responsibility to **steward this divine calling**. They are appointed to walk alongside their children, supporting them through the **ups and downs**, instilling faith, love, and values that will **guide them toward their God-given purpose**. This requires **spiritual awareness**—parents must learn how to best cultivate an environment where their children can grow into the person **God has called them to be**.

In this context, it is important for parents to understand that their role is not to impose their **own unfulfilled dreams** or desires onto their children. Instead, parents are called to seek **God’s guidance** in helping their children discover their **unique calling**. This means understanding that each child is different, with their own gifts, strengths, and potential. It’s not about molding children into a **carbon copy of parental expectations** but about nurturing them so they can **flourish in the destiny God has set for them**.

Through **prayer, teaching, and example**, parents can help their children recognize and walk in the **purpose God has for them**. A parent’s role is to **guide, encourage, protect**, and pray for their child, trusting that **God’s plan** for that child is already in motion. They are to nurture their children spiritually, emotionally, and physically, providing them with the **tools they need** to thrive in their unique calling.

The responsibility of parents, then, is much more than providing material needs. It is about **laying the foundation** that will lead their children to discover and live out the **divine destiny** God has planned for them. This requires **intentional, prayerful parenting** that seeks **God’s will in every decision**, trusting that every child—though unique in their journey—has been created with a **divine purpose** that is greater than themselves.

As **Psalm 127:3** reminds us, *“Children are a heritage from the Lord, offspring a reward from him.”* Every child is a **precious gift** from God, and parents are the stewards of that gift, entrusted to guide them toward their **God-ordained purpose**.

## 2. Wounds Begin in the Womb – The Power of Rejection and Neglect

Many parents are unaware that a child’s **emotional and spiritual well-being** begins long before birth. It is not just the physical environment that shapes a child’s development; the **emotional and spiritual climate** within the womb can have profound effects on their life later on. A child in the womb can experience **feelings of love**, **rejection**, or **trauma**, which can lay the foundation for the emotional and spiritual struggles they will face later. For instance, the **rejection of a pregnancy**—whether through thoughts of abortion or negative emotions surrounding the pregnancy—can create **deep, lasting scars** that lead to feelings of **insecurity, fear**, and **rejection**. Even if the child survives, the emotional and spiritual impact can be devastating.

The Bible highlights this concept in **Luke 1:41**:

*“When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.”*

This powerful moment demonstrates that **even unborn children are spiritually aware**. In this passage, **John the Baptist, while still in the womb**, responds to the presence of Jesus, indicating that **a child’s spirit is sensitive and capable of responding to spiritual realities** from the earliest stages of life. The child’s response, even before birth, highlights the significance of the **womb as a place of spiritual formation**, not just physical growth. This is a powerful reminder that the child is not just a biological entity but a **spiritual being** from conception, and that their emotional and spiritual well-being begins in the womb.

When a child experiences **emotional neglect** or **physical abuse** during pregnancy, these experiences can translate into **spiritual and psychological wounds** that may shape their future. **The womb is not just a physical environment**—it is a **spiritual and emotional environment**. What happens in this sacred space matters. Parents may not be aware of the far-reaching impact their emotions, actions, or attitudes can have on their child’s developing soul. For instance, a mother who experiences **fear, anger, or trauma** during pregnancy may unknowingly pass these emotions onto her child, creating an atmosphere of **anxiety** or **rejection** that the child carries for the rest of their life.

The Bible reminds us of the **spiritual sensitivity** of children in the womb. In **Jeremiah 1:5**, God speaks of the prophet Jeremiah, saying:

*“Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you. Before you were born, I set you apart…”*

This speaks to the divine truth that even before the child is born, they are known and **set apart** by God. The child is not just growing physically but is being **shaped spiritually** from the very moment of conception. Every feeling of **love or rejection**, every word spoken, every action taken by the parents during pregnancy has the potential to affect the child’s spiritual health.

If a child is conceived in a context of **rejection, fear**, or **violence**, the emotional and spiritual wounds inflicted during this time can manifest throughout their life. A child may grow up with feelings of **unworthiness**, a deep-seated fear of rejection, or struggles with forming healthy relationships. These early wounds are not just **psychological** but **spiritual**, as they often affect the child’s understanding of their **identity** and **value in God’s eyes**.

Parents may not recognize the power of their words, actions, or attitudes during pregnancy, but these can deeply affect the spiritual and emotional future of their children. **God, however, is aware of the deepest needs of both parent and child.** Even if parents have unknowingly caused wounds, **God can bring healing**. Parents are called to **embrace their divine role** in nurturing their children, beginning **before birth**. This means parents must not only ensure physical health but also create an environment of **peace, love, and affirmation**, knowing that these early influences are foundational for the child’s emotional and spiritual development.

Therefore, it is crucial for parents to understand the importance of their actions during pregnancy and to consciously seek to create a **healthy, nurturing environment** for their child. This may involve **praying over the child** even before birth, speaking words of affirmation and life, and rejecting any fear, anxiety, or negativity. As **Psalm 139:13-14** affirms:

*“For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made…”*

This verse speaks to the profound truth that every child is **fearfully and wonderfully made** by God, even in the womb. As parents, we are called to **nurture this truth** by providing a **spiritually healthy environment** that encourages the child to grow in the **love and security** that only God can provide. Every moment, beginning in the womb, is a **sacred opportunity** to affirm the child’s **divine value** and **purpose**.

## 3. Children Are Not Inferior – They Are Spiritual Beings Too

There is a prevalent misconception in society that children are **inferior** beings compared to adults. However, this perspective fails to recognize the profound **spiritual reality** of childhood. **Children are spiritual beings** with **souls** and **spirits**, just like adults. The primary difference between children and adults is that children enter the world with a **blank slate**, eager to absorb the teachings, values, and experiences that will shape their identities. They are **not lesser** beings, but rather, they are **incomplete individuals** in need of guidance, nurturing, and love to grow into the people God has designed them to be.

The environment in which children grow up plays a critical role in shaping their development—emotionally, spiritually, and psychologically. What they see, hear, and experience on a daily basis **shapes their perception of themselves** and the world around them. Children are like sponges, absorbing information and forming their identity based on what they encounter. The attitudes and behaviors of the adults around them—particularly their parents—leave lasting impressions that can either nurture or damage their emotional and spiritual growth.

The Bible offers wisdom on the power of words in **Proverbs 18:21**:

*“Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof.”*

This verse speaks to the incredible **power of words**—the words spoken to a child can either **build them up** or **tear them down**. Words like “useless,” “stupid,” or “evil” can deeply **wound** a child’s sense of **self-worth**, leaving them to internalize these negative labels and carry them throughout their life. It’s not merely a psychological issue; **it is a misuse of spiritual authority**. Parents, as the primary spiritual authorities in their children’s lives, have a **tremendous responsibility** to speak life into their children.

The Bible teaches that **life and death** are held in the power of the tongue. When parents speak words of **encouragement**, **affirmation**, and **love**, they can help shape a child’s identity in a way that aligns with God’s purpose for them. In contrast, harsh or destructive words can lead to a child feeling **worthless**, **rejected**, or **unlovable**, which may impact their spiritual growth and sense of identity in Christ.

Children are highly **impressionable** and, therefore, they are more likely to accept the words of their parents as **truth**. If a parent repeatedly tells a child they are worthless or incapable, the child may begin to believe these words and live accordingly. But, if a parent speaks words of encouragement, hope, and truth, they help the child **develop a positive identity** rooted in the **truth of who they are in Christ**. This can have a transformative effect on their emotional, spiritual, and mental health.

Jesus Himself demonstrated the importance of speaking words of life. **Matthew 19:14** says:

*“Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven.”*

Jesus valued children and understood their **spiritual significance**. Parents must recognize that their children are not just physical beings; they are **spiritual beings** with eternal significance. Every word spoken over them, whether positive or negative, has a **spiritual impact**. Children must be surrounded by words that affirm their **identity in Christ**, their **worthiness of love**, and their **purpose in God’s plan**.

As spiritual beings, children are also **open vessels**, eagerly learning from the world around them. It is the responsibility of parents to fill these vessels with truth, love, and wisdom. This is why it is crucial to be mindful of the environment children are placed in—what they hear, what they see, and what they experience shapes the **foundation of their spiritual identity**.

Parents must not only be careful with their words but also intentional with their **actions and attitudes**. Children are constantly observing their parents and imitating their behavior. If parents model **love, kindness, respect**, and **spiritual maturity**, children are more likely to adopt these values as their own. Conversely, if parents model **anger, hatred, or harshness**, children may internalize these behaviors and struggle with **negative patterns** later in life.

Ultimately, **children are not inferior**; they are **spiritual beings** who are **open to God’s truth**. As parents, it is our responsibility to guide them in a way that aligns with God’s will, nurturing them through words and actions that build them up, rather than tearing them down. Every child is a precious creation of God, and it is our role to help them discover their true identity in Christ and grow into the person God has designed them to be.

## 4. The Role of Parents: Presence Over Provision

In today’s **fast-paced world**, the demands of careers, financial goals, and social status often dominate the priorities of many parents, leaving little room for **emotional connection** with their children. This imbalance has led to a growing crisis where children are increasingly raised by others—whether grandparents, house managers, or digital devices—rather than by their **biological parents**. While providing for a child’s **physical needs** is undeniably important, it can **never** replace the critical need for **emotional connection** and **presence**.

True parenting is about more than just securing a child’s material needs—it’s about being **present** in their lives. This presence goes beyond being in the same room; it involves **engaging** with them, listening to their concerns, **hearing their hearts**, and consistently **showing love and affection**. Children need to feel **seen** and **heard** by their parents. This connection is the **foundation** of a healthy parent-child relationship and a critical component in the development of a child’s **emotional health**.

Sadly, in many homes today, children experience a **lack of real connection**. Parents may be physically present but **emotionally absent**, consumed with the busyness of life. Outsourcing the responsibility of raising children—even to trusted family members or hired help—can result in emotional distance that is difficult to mend. While these external figures may provide for the child’s **basic needs**, they cannot provide the **deep emotional nurturing** that only parents can offer.

Even worse, when parents delegate their parenting role to others, children may be left **vulnerable** to abuse or neglect from those entrusted with their care. **Cases of child abuse**—often perpetrated by relatives or hired help—are tragically common. These abuses can leave children **emotionally scarred** and **confused**, often in silence. Why? Because the child feels that their parents are **too busy** or **emotionally unavailable** to notice their distress. As a result, the child may suffer in silence, too afraid or ashamed to speak up for fear of retaliation or misunderstanding.

Moreover, the lack of presence can lead children to **withdraw inwardly**. When a child feels ignored or that their struggles are invisible to their parents, they may retreat into themselves, often manifesting symptoms of **loneliness**, **anxiety**, or **emotional numbness**. In these cases, the child may feel that they are not valued or loved, leading to a breakdown in communication and a weakened bond between parent and child. This can have long-lasting consequences, including:

* **Emotional numbness**: Children may become disconnected from their feelings, unable to express themselves or seek comfort when in pain.
* **Depression**: Feeling unseen or unheard can lead to profound sadness and a sense of hopelessness.
* **Increased vulnerability to peer pressure and external influences**: Without parental connection, children may look for validation or attention from others, which could expose them to unhealthy influences, including drugs, bad company, or harmful behaviors.

It is essential for parents to recognize that **true parenting involves sacrifice**—sacrificing time, energy, and personal pursuits to **invest emotionally** in their children. Being physically present in a child’s life is not enough; parents must actively **engage** with their children, offering not just food and shelter, but a **listening ear**, **affirming words**, and the **security** that comes from knowing they are loved unconditionally.

In this age of digital distractions, **screen time** has further reduced the quality of connection between parents and children. Rather than spending time engaging with their children, some parents allow **digital devices** to act as stand-ins for real relational connection. However, these devices cannot provide the **emotional nourishment** a child needs. **Technology cannot replace love**. The more parents allow these devices to take precedence over genuine human connection, the more likely their children will feel neglected or ignored.

The **biblical principle** of parenting underscores the importance of being **present**—both physically and emotionally—in a child’s life. Proverbs 22:6 says:

*“Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old, he will not depart from it.”*

Training a child requires more than just instructing them with words; it involves walking alongside them, offering consistent **support**, **guidance**, and **love**. This can only happen when parents **prioritize presence** over provision and actively invest in the emotional and spiritual growth of their children.

Parents are called to be **actively involved** in their children’s lives, offering the kind of care and attention that **leads to meaningful relationships**. Children are not simply physical beings; they are **emotional and spiritual beings** who need love, affirmation, and emotional connection to thrive. As parents, it is critical to understand that emotional neglect is just as damaging as physical neglect, and the absence of emotional connection can have profound and lasting effects on a child’s well-being.

In conclusion, **true parenting requires presence**—being fully engaged in a child’s life, offering both guidance and love. The emotional connection between parent and child is a **sacred bond** that must be nurtured daily. When parents prioritize their relationship with their children over material gain or personal ambitions, they invest in a future where their children can grow emotionally healthy, spiritually grounded, and confident in their identity in Christ.

## 5. Boarding Schools and the Separation from Parental Guidance

In today’s fast-paced world, one of the growing concerns in modern parenting is the increasing trend of sending children to **boarding schools** at a young age. While these institutions may offer academic advantages, such as better facilities, extracurricular activities, and a more structured environment, the emotional and spiritual costs of such a separation can be significant, particularly for younger children.

The fundamental role of a parent—being the **primary source of emotional, spiritual, and relational guidance**—becomes compromised when children are sent away to boarding schools, especially in their formative years. In the early stages of development, children are **emotionally vulnerable** and require their **parents’ consistent presence** to nurture their emotional and spiritual well-being. **Mom and dad** are not just the providers of food and shelter, but are meant to be the **anchor** and **foundation** for the child’s sense of identity, security, and love.

When children are separated from their parents at a young age, especially in **lower schools**, they are often not equipped to handle the emotional strain of such an adjustment. The absence of **consistent parental guidance** can lead to a host of issues. For instance:

* **Emotional withdrawal**: Children may become emotionally detached as they lack the emotional support that parents typically provide.
* **Feelings of abandonment**: Being away from home for extended periods, without the comforting presence of their parents, can foster a sense of **neglect** and **isolation**.
* **Lack of spiritual guidance**: Children raised in a home where **faith** is an essential part of life benefit from the **daily spiritual practices** and teachings of their parents. A boarding school environment, though structured, may not provide the same level of **spiritual nurture** and guidance.
* **Confusion about identity**: Without the emotional and spiritual anchoring of their parents, children may struggle to maintain a sense of identity and purpose, especially during their formative years when they are figuring out who they are.

**Psalm 127:3** reminds us that children are a **heritage** and a **gift from the Lord**:

*“Children are a heritage from the Lord, offspring a reward from him.”*

It is crucial for parents to recognize that their **primary responsibility** is not just to provide academically for their children but also to ensure they are nurtured emotionally and spiritually. The lack of **parental connection** due to boarding school placement can inadvertently create a **gap** in a child’s sense of belonging and trust. This gap can lead to **emotional instability** or strained relationships, which could persist into adulthood.

The importance of parental presence cannot be overstated. **Parents are the primary role models** and spiritual mentors for their children. When children are sent away from home, especially in their younger years, it can become difficult to establish or maintain that deep **parent-child bond**. This **separation** can often lead to **confusion, loneliness**, and, over time, a **deterioration of trust** between parent and child.

It’s not just about academics. A **child’s emotional well-being** and **spiritual formation** depend heavily on the **presence** of loving, attentive parents. **Proverbs 22:6** highlights the importance of **parental influence**:

*“Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.”*

When children are removed from the everyday influence of their parents, it becomes increasingly difficult to instill the core values, **spiritual lessons**, and **emotional tools** that will guide them throughout their lives. This absence may inadvertently create a **sense of abandonment** or confusion, causing the child to look elsewhere for direction—sometimes leading them down paths that are harmful or misguided.

In cases where **boarding school** is the only viable option for various reasons, it becomes even more crucial for parents to **maintain frequent and meaningful communication** with their children. Frequent visits, phone calls, and thoughtful care packages can help bridge the emotional gap and remind children of their parents’ love and **spiritual presence**. Parents should strive to remain **spiritually engaged** in their children’s lives, even from a distance, through prayer, encouraging words, and guidance.

The goal of **parenting** is not just to prepare children for academic success but to raise them in the **nurture and admonition of the Lord** (Ephesians 6:4). A child’s spiritual and emotional development is **equally as important** as their intellectual growth. Parents are called to be their children’s **first teachers** and guides, providing a stable, nurturing environment where they feel safe, secure, and spiritually enriched.

In conclusion, while boarding schools may offer certain academic and logistical benefits, **the emotional and spiritual costs** of separating young children from their parents can be profound. Parents must carefully weigh the **long-term effects** this separation could have on their child’s emotional well-being, **trust** in their parents, and spiritual development. When possible, **parental presence** should be prioritized above all other factors, as children thrive most when they are raised in a home where love, guidance, and **spiritual nourishment** are abundant.

## 6. The Danger of Silence and Exposure

In today’s world, where information is abundant and easily accessible, parents face an increasingly difficult task of shielding their children from harmful influences. **The power of media**, **social networks**, and **peer pressure** can shape the worldview of children in ways that are often detrimental to their spiritual, emotional, and mental well-being. When parents fail to teach their children about important topics like **boundaries**, **relationships**, **identity**, and **spiritual matters**, children will inevitably look to the world around them to fill in the gaps.

The exposure to inappropriate content, whether through television, social media, or peer interactions, can lead children into **unhealthy behaviors** such as **pornography**, **early sexual activity**, or even involvement in **occult practices**. These influences are not harmless; they often carry long-lasting consequences that shape a child’s values, beliefs, and behaviors.

The **media** and **entertainment industries** often propagate distorted views of reality—values that contradict biblical teachings and promote a **secular, self-centered worldview**. Without the **protective shield** of parental guidance, children are vulnerable to accepting these false ideas, leading them down dangerous paths. The world teaches them that **sexuality** is something to be explored without boundaries, that **identity** can be fluid and defined by personal preference, and that **relationships** can be based on fleeting desires and self-gratification.

**Matthew 18:6** provides a stern warning about the consequences of neglecting to protect children from these harmful influences:

*“But if anyone causes one of these little ones—those who believe in me—to stumble, it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.”*

This verse underscores the **seriousness** with which God views the **spiritual vulnerability** of children. **Leading a child astray**, either through direct action or through neglect, is a grave offense in God’s eyes. When parents fail to speak into their children’s lives and provide them with a solid foundation of truth, they are essentially leaving them exposed to the **influences of the world** that can lead to spiritual **ruin**.

**Ephesians 6:4** reminds parents of their responsibility to raise their children in the knowledge and guidance of the Lord:

*“Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.”*

It is not enough to simply avoid exposing children to harmful influences; parents must **actively teach** them about the dangers that exist in the world. This includes providing clear guidance on issues like **relationships**, **boundaries**, and **identity**—topics that the world often handles in ways that conflict with biblical values.

* **Relationships**: Children need to learn the importance of **healthy, godly relationships** based on respect, love, and commitment. They need to understand the significance of **boundaries** in relationships, especially in a world that often celebrates **promiscuity** and **casual encounters**.
* **Identity**: Children need to be taught that their **identity** is rooted in their **relationship with God**, not in what the world defines as valuable or popular. When they understand that their worth comes from being **fearfully and wonderfully made** in God’s image, they are less likely to fall prey to the identity confusion that society promotes.
* **Spiritual Matters**: Finally, parents must provide their children with a strong spiritual foundation, grounding them in **biblical truths** about **morality**, **holiness**, and the **love of God**. Without this foundation, children are left to navigate a confusing and often hostile world without the tools to discern right from wrong.

The world will **always** try to influence children, offering easy answers, counterfeit pleasures, and false promises. **Proactive parenting** is essential to ensure that children are not swept away by these waves of falsehood. Parents must teach their children the **truth of Scripture** and help them develop a **biblical worldview** that empowers them to stand firm in their faith and make wise choices.

The danger of **silence and exposure** is real. If parents remain passive, leaving their children to be shaped by a world that is hostile to God, they are failing to **fulfill their role** as the primary protectors and guides of their children’s hearts and minds. **Proverbs 22:6** challenges parents to be intentional in their teachings:

*“Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.”*

Parents must be proactive in **equipping their children** spiritually, emotionally, and mentally. **Training** them to discern the difference between truth and deception, right and wrong, is essential in preparing them to face the world and live out the purpose God has designed for them.

In conclusion, the **danger of silence and exposure** is ever-present. Parents must actively teach their children about the **dangers** of worldly influences and equip them with the **tools** to navigate a world filled with temptations. This is not only a matter of protecting them from harm but also ensuring they are spiritually prepared to stand firm in their faith, regardless of the pressures they may face.

## 7. The Spiritual Battle for the Next Generation

Throughout history, the enemy has waged war against the next generation, knowing that children are the vessels through which God’s plans for the future will unfold. This battle has been fought in many forms, from **ancient infanticide** to modern ideologies that seek to undermine God’s truth. In ancient times, **Pharaoh** ordered the killing of infants (Exodus 1), seeking to destroy the future leaders of Israel. Similarly, **King Herod** sought to eliminate the newborn Savior by massacring children in Bethlehem (Matthew 2). In both instances, the enemy recognized the potential of these children and sought to eradicate them, fearing the impact they would have on the world.

In today’s world, the battle for the hearts and minds of children is no less fierce, but it is fought through more **subtle and pervasive means**. The **media**, **education systems**, and **cultural ideologies** have become the modern battleground where children are exposed to ideas that **undermine biblical truths** and promote confusion about **identity**, **sexuality**, and **morality**.

### The Influence of the World

Children today are bombarded with messages that challenge the biblical understanding of **gender**, **family**, and **sexuality**. These messages are often presented as **progressive**, **inclusive**, and **empowering**, but in reality, they distort God’s design for human flourishing. Through **television**, **social media**, and **popular culture**, children are exposed to **witchcraft**, **rebellion**, and even **occult practices**, which have been glamorized and normalized.

* **Witchcraft and the Occult**: Many children’s shows, movies, and books promote themes of witchcraft, sorcery, and the supernatural. These messages are often disguised as harmless fantasy but subtly lead children into **spiritual darkness**, encouraging them to seek power outside of God’s will.
* **Rebellion and Lawlessness**: The entertainment industry often celebrates rebellious characters who reject authority, parents, and societal norms. This portrayal of defiance may seem appealing to children, especially those who feel misunderstood or disconnected. However, the **biblical principle** of honoring father and mother (Exodus 20:12) is vital for a child’s emotional and spiritual growth.
* **Gender and Sexuality Confusion**: One of the most pervasive ideologies being promoted today is the confusion surrounding **gender identity** and **sexuality**. Children are taught that gender is not defined by biological sex but is a **social construct** that can be chosen or changed at will. This goes against the biblical truth that God created man and woman in His image (Genesis 1:27). Without proper guidance from their parents and spiritual leaders, children are vulnerable to adopting these distorted views about their identity and worth.

### The Role of Parents in the Battle

Parents must be **spiritually alert** and aware of the forces at work in their children’s lives. They have been given the divine responsibility to guard their children’s hearts and minds, shielding them from harmful influences while also teaching them God’s truth. This is a **spiritual battle**, and it requires parents to **actively engage** in the spiritual upbringing of their children.

* **Prayer**: Parents must be praying for their children daily, asking God to protect them from harmful influences and to open their hearts to His truth. Prayer is the first line of defense in the spiritual battle for the next generation.
* **Teaching**: The Bible commands parents to teach their children God’s Word diligently (Deuteronomy 6:6-7). Parents must instill biblical values and truths in their children so that they can discern right from wrong and stand firm in their faith.
* **Modeling**: Parents must be **examples** of godliness in their own lives. Children learn more from what they **see** than what they are told. By living out their faith authentically, parents can model how to walk in truth, grace, and love, even in a world that promotes lies and confusion.

### Spiritual Armor for the Battle

The **spiritual battle** that children face is not one they can fight on their own. As the enemy seeks to steal, kill, and destroy (John 10:10), children need the **armor of God** to protect them. Parents must teach their children to put on the full armor of God (Ephesians 6:10-18), which includes the **belt of truth**, the **breastplate of righteousness**, the **shield of faith**, the **helmet of salvation**, and the **sword of the Spirit** (which is the Word of God). Only through these spiritual defenses can children stand strong against the forces of darkness that seek to draw them away from God’s purpose.

The **enemy** will not relent in his pursuit of the next generation, but **God** has promised that His Word will never return void (Isaiah 55:11). When parents and children stand together in faith, seeking to live out God’s purpose for their lives, they will have the strength to overcome any spiritual attack.

### The Call to Action

As believers, we are **called to protect** the next generation and equip them to stand firm in their faith. The spiritual battle is real, and it is **intensifying** as culture continues to move further away from God’s truth. Parents, churches, and communities must unite to **teach** and **protect** the children in their care, ensuring that they are spiritually prepared for the challenges they will face.

In conclusion, the **spiritual battle for the next generation** is ongoing, and the stakes are high. Parents must be **vigilant**, **prayerful**, and **intentional** in raising their children to know and love God. As children face the pressures of the world, they must be anchored in the truth of God’s Word, equipped to stand firm, and empowered to live out their purpose as children of God. May we, as parents, leaders, and the body of Christ, rise up to this challenge and protect the next generation from the lies and attacks of the enemy.

## 8. The Role of Parents: Presence Over Provision

In today’s fast-paced world, many parents are consumed with careers, financial goals, or social status, often leaving their children to be raised by grandparents, house managers, or digital devices. While providing for a child’s physical needs is important, it can never replace the essential need for **emotional connection**.

True parenting involves being **present**—physically and emotionally. Children need to feel seen, heard, and loved by their parents. Sadly, in too many homes, children experience a lack of real connection. Outsourcing parenting, even to trusted family members or hired help, can lead to emotional distance that is difficult to bridge. Worse still, children may be left vulnerable to abuse or neglect from those they are entrusted with.

### **Beware of Sending Children to Stay with Relatives**

One of the potential dangers parents may overlook is the practice of sending children to stay with grandparents or relatives during holidays or vacations when they are not present. While this may seem like a way to offer children a change of environment, it can inadvertently expose them to harmful influences. **Not all relatives** have the best intentions, and even well-meaning family members can expose children to unhealthy situations.

Parents must be **careful** when sending children to stay with relatives, especially if they do not have a strong, trusting relationship with them. Children might be exposed to **inappropriate behavior**, **neglect**, or even **jealous relatives** who may harbor ill intentions and seek to harm or manipulate them. These situations can have lasting negative effects on a child’s emotional, psychological, and spiritual well-being.

There may be **evil family members** or individuals who take advantage of the absence of parents to introduce children to dangerous ideas, behavior, or even **dark spiritual practices**. Whether knowingly or unknowingly, these relatives can expose children to harmful environments, from unhealthy relationships to malicious behaviors, which may deeply affect their development and worldview.

Parents should be **vigilant** in ensuring that any extended family or relatives they entrust their children to are aligned with their values and are genuinely nurturing and protective. It’s crucial to prioritize children’s emotional security and well-being by maintaining **direct involvement** in their lives and not leaving them vulnerable to potential harm or negative influences.

### **The Impact of Emotional Disconnection**

Many children, especially when left in the care of others, become withdrawn and disconnected. If a child feels that their parents are too busy to notice their struggles, they may retreat inwardly, suffering in silence. The lack of emotional connection can have lasting consequences on a child’s mental health, leading to feelings of loneliness, anxiety, and emotional numbness.

## 9. Parenting by God’s Design

God’s design for parenting is clearly outlined in Scripture, providing a blueprint for how parents are to guide, nurture, and protect their children. Parenting, when done according to God’s will, encompasses love, correction, teaching, example-setting, and leaving a legacy. Each of these principles is rooted in the Scriptures and reflects God’s heart for the family.

### **I. Love and Correction**

One of the most important aspects of parenting according to God’s design is the balance of **love and correction**. As much as parents are called to love their children unconditionally, they are also called to **correct** them when necessary. God Himself corrects those He loves, and parents are to follow His example in disciplining their children with love and care. This correction is not about punishment but about guiding children towards maturity and godliness. Proverbs 3:12 states:

*“Whom the Lord loves He corrects, just as a father the son in whom he delights.”*

This passage emphasizes that correction is a **sign of love** and is essential for the growth and development of a child. **Discipline** is an act of love, aimed at steering children away from destructive behaviors and towards the path of righteousness.

### **II. Spiritual Teaching**

God has entrusted parents with the responsibility of **teaching** their children His ways. Spiritual education is not something that should be left to the church or school alone—it begins in the home. Parents are called to **diligently** teach their children about God, His Word, and His ways. In Deuteronomy 6:7, it says:

*“You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise.”*

This verse highlights the **intentionality** required in teaching children. Parents are called to incorporate God’s truth into the rhythms of daily life, making faith an integral part of every moment. It’s not just about formal lessons but about fostering an environment where children encounter God throughout their daily activities.

### **III. Being Examples**

Parents are not only called to teach but also to **model** the Christian faith. Children learn more from what they **see** than what they hear, which is why parents must be intentional about living out their faith authentically. In 1 Corinthians 11:1, Paul encourages believers:

*“Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.”*

As parents, we are called to live in such a way that our lives reflect Christ. Our children should be able to look at us and see a **living example** of the values we teach them. Whether in our words, actions, or relationships, we must strive to reflect God’s love, grace, and truth, knowing that our example will shape the way our children view and follow Christ.

### **IV. Protection and Legacy**

God’s design for parenting also involves **protection**—not only in terms of physical safety but also emotional, spiritual, and mental well-being. Parents are called to guard their children from harmful influences and lead them into a life of righteousness. Additionally, parents are responsible for leaving a **legacy**—one that transcends financial wealth. Proverbs 13:22 states:

*“A good man leaves an inheritance to his children’s children.”*

This inheritance is not merely material wealth but a **legacy of values**, godly teachings, and a spiritual heritage that will impact future generations. Parents are called to invest in their children’s lives in ways that leave an eternal impact—by teaching them to walk in faith, love, and integrity.

A legacy of faith ensures that children not only inherit material wealth but also the wisdom, guidance, and strength to pass down those same values to their own children.

### **Conclusion**

Parenting by God’s design is a sacred calling. It is a task that requires deep intentionality and commitment, rooted in love, discipline, teaching, modeling, and leaving a lasting spiritual legacy. As parents, we are to reflect God’s heart in our relationship with our children, guiding them toward their divine purpose and helping them grow into mature, godly individuals who will impact future generations for Christ.

## 9. Call to Parents and Guardians

Parents, your role is not just to raise children for **earthly success**, but to raise them for **eternity**. The stakes are far higher than academic achievements or career advancements. Your task is to shape the hearts, minds, and souls of your children, leading them toward their divine purpose. Be **present**—both physically and emotionally. In a world that is increasingly divided by technology and distractions, your presence is irreplaceable. Do not let the busyness of life steal the precious moments you have to connect with your children.

Be **discerning**. Understand the **pressures** and **challenges** your children face in this broken world. The external forces—peer pressure, social media, cultural ideologies—are relentless, and they are shaping your children in ways that may be difficult to see at first. You must be spiritually **alert** and **actively involved** in your children’s lives, aware of what they are experiencing, and always ready to provide guidance, correction, and love.

Do not **outsource** your children’s **emotional** or **spiritual** needs to others, whether to extended family, friends, or even digital media. The emotional and spiritual nourishment that your children need must come primarily from you, their parents. It is through the strength of your connection, your example, and your prayers that their hearts will be anchored in truth.

**Build deep connections** with your children. The world may pull them in many directions, but your love and care can create a safe, nurturing environment where they can be themselves, express their struggles, and grow in their relationship with God. Give them the **spiritual guidance** they need to navigate life’s challenges, teaching them to seek God in every circumstance.

To the young people—understand this truth: **your worth is not found in trends, social media, or fleeting friendships**. The world will try to define you by its standards, but you were created in the image of God, and your **identity is in Him**. He knew you before you were born, and He has a plan for your life that is far greater than anything the world can offer. **Seek God’s truth** and **godly counsel**. Do not let the confusion of this age define who you are. Stand firm in your identity as a child of God, and know that He has a purpose for your life that is **eternal**, not temporary.

**Parents, your responsibility is sacred.** You are the spiritual leaders in your children’s lives, entrusted with shaping the next generation. Guard this responsibility with prayer, wisdom, and love.

## Conclusion: The Time Is Now

Parenting is not just a responsibility—it is a **spiritual assignment**. Children are not merely individuals to be raised, but **arrows in the hands of a warrior** (Psalm 127:3-4). They are entrusted to us as **divine gifts** with the potential to bring **light** to a dark world. How we guide them—whether with wisdom and love or neglect and apathy—determines whether they will fulfill their God-given potential or be lost to the forces of this world.

The **time to act is now**. We cannot afford to delay or overlook the importance of our role as parents and guardians. Let us return to the **ancient paths**, where families were **rooted in God’s Word**, where children were seen as **blessings**, and where homes were sanctuaries of **righteousness**. In those foundations, children flourished spiritually, emotionally, and mentally. They were nurtured by parents who understood that their duty was to prepare them for eternity, not just for the temporary things of this world.

The future of our generation—and indeed, the future of the world—**depends on it**. We are shaping the leaders, the warriors, the mothers, and fathers of tomorrow. If we take our roles seriously, we will not only secure the future of our children but also impact the world in ways we cannot yet fully comprehend.

So, parents and guardians, the question is not whether we have the time; the question is: Will we make the time? Will we step into our sacred calling and **raise children for eternity**? The time to act is now. Let us commit ourselves to the task with urgency, faith, and hope, knowing that the seeds we sow today will bear fruit for generations to come.

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