

## Framing Values Part A (2 of 8) Psalm 127

### Introduction

1. They say that housing is one of the most important sectors of the American economy. It's housing that usually powers us out of recessions, but it was also the housing collapse that led to the Great recession of 08. I recently read a report that showed that the housing market has nearly recovered to pre 2008 levels. Those are all good signs. The problem we have is not in building houses, but in building homes. Anyone can build a house, but only God can build a home. The wisest man who ever lived, King Solomon, wrote these words in this psalm.

*"Unless the Lord builds a house, the builders labor in vain." (Psalm 127:1)*

2. Last week we began with the blueprints. You have to build your home according to plans. Next comes the foundation. Your home has to be built on a solid foundation. It doesn't matter how big or luxurious the home is, if it isn't built on a good foundation, it will fail. For the Christian home, that foundation is God's love. No other foundation will support all that a home demands.

3. After the foundation comes the next most important part of building a home and that is the framing. Everything else flows from the framing. The windows, the doors, the roofing, the siding, all flows from the framing. It is a crucial stage in the construction of the home. I remember a few years ago, the church I was serving at the time was building a children's building, and the builder we hired was branching out from home construction to commercial, and we were their first commercial client. They got the first floor framing all done, when we noticed it wasn't right. They had built all the walls 8 feet tall, the standard in home construction, but our walls were supposed to be 10 feet tall. They had to tear it all down and start over, because if the framing isn't right, nothing else will be right.

4. As we continue our Extreme Home Makeover, we need to deal now with the framing of our home. The framing of a home deals with children. I want to talk to you this morning about framing values in your kids. I want to talk this morning about early childhood. These are definitely the active years. This is a time when children are growing by leaps and bounds. You can see changes almost daily, both mentally and physically, taking place right before your eyes. Parents, without question, these will be the greatest years of impact you will be able to have in the life of your children.

These are the years when you set the tone and the pattern for the rest of their

childhood. It is also the time when many parents make their biggest mistakes.

Solomon gives us three principles for framing values in the lives of our young children.

## I. Direct Your Children Spiritually

1. Solomon, the King of Israel, who wrote this particular psalm, uses a couple of key words that describes children. First he says, "*Children are a heritage from the Lord, offspring a reward from him.*" (Psalm 127:3)

Your Bible might say, "Children are a gift from the Lord." The Hebrew word for "heritage" or "gift" literally means "property" or "possession". This doesn't mean that your kids are a personal possession. **What it means is that our children are a possession of the Lord. They belong to him.** As parents we have been entrusted with some of God's most valuable possessions, souls created in his image, to care for them, nurture them, and raise them, in a godly home. That means children are not just born from below, they are given from above. You ought to see your children, even at their worst times, as heaven's gift to you.

2. Notice what he says in verse 4, "*Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are children born in one's youth.*" He compares children to arrows. I didn't get started in archery until about three years ago, but I've learned a secret that essential to good archery. You want to know what my secret is? **The arrow must be shot in the right direction.** Profound, right? If an arrow isn't launched in the right direction it will never hit its intended target.

3. What is true of an arrow is true of children. Our job as parents is to make sure from the time they are born that they are shot in the right direction, and the target is eternal life and a relationship with God.

**If your children are the arrow, who is the archer? You are.** You are the one responsible for launching that life, and making sure that it goes in the right direction. No one else is the archer. You are.

4. The tragedy today is that many children are being launched without ever being aimed. Most children are given no spiritual direction by the average parent. They are like the arrow in this little poem.

*I shot an arrow in air  
When it landed I know not where*

5. There is a philosophy that's very popular in our culture. It hit the mainstream when **Dr. Spock's book on parenting, *Common Sense Book of***

**Baby and Child Care**, arrived in 1946, just in time for the baby boom, and now we've had three generations of his poisonous influence on parenting. For you kids, he's not the one with pointy ears. This philosophy says that it's the parent's job to just get out of the way. Children will thrive and excel if we just let them develop on their own. Our job, according to this philosophy is to give the children what they want and nurture and encourage in whatever way they want to go. Here's how one article described the change.

*Instead of stressing the importance of teaching self-denial and respect for authority, Spock discouraged directive training and emphasized accommodating children's feelings and catering to their preferences. No longer did children learn they could endure Brussels sprouts and suffer through daily chores. Using Spock's approach, parents began to feed self-indulgence instead of instilling self-control – homes were becoming child-centered. As parents elevated children's "freedom of expression" and natural cravings, children became more outspoken, defiant and demanding of gratification. In fact, they came to view gratification as a right.<sup>i</sup>*

6. The problem with this philosophy is that it is based on assumptions about human nature that are fundamentally false. It assumes that we are born basically good, and it is parents and the culture that mess kids up. But what does the Bible tell us? We are born with what? With a sinful nature. Our basic human nature is selfish and rebellious, and the parents must provide guidance so that

7. One thing I've learned about archery is this. **Almost everything that determines where an arrow hits happens before the arrow ever leaves the bow.** There is proper setup of the bow, correct arrow placement, how you hold the bow, do you have the right posture, what is your form when you release the arrow, and proper follow through all determine whether or not that arrow hits the target, and that all happens before the arrow is ever free from the bow.

8. Children are no different. Almost everything that affects how that child ends up as an adult happens before they ever go to school. Research shows that most of your adult character and adult personality is set by the age of 7<sup>ii</sup>. Obviously, we have to make room for the miraculous intervention of God. One study followed a thousand children born in the United States, Great Britain, and New Zealand found that adult character was pretty much set by the age of 3. Another study found that a child's personality was mostly established by the age of 3, and fully set by the age of 7.

9. I have a whole list of studies that show the same thing over and over again. This suggests these are the most critical, strategic years for raising children.

Now knowing that, where do you think parents should focus the bulk of their parenting efforts? Next week is the teenager sermon, but if you really want to know my personal opinion. The time to raise teenagers is before they're 5. If you wait until their 16 to deal with certain issues, you will fail 99 times out of a hundred. If you succeed with them before they go to school, most of the time you will succeed for the rest of their life.

10. Please understand that parenting is more than conceiving a child, feeding a child, clothing a child, educating a child, and then sending that child to live out on their own. We have the responsibility of preparing our children for their eternal destiny of meeting God.

11. Moms and dads, you are the spiritual leaders in your home and you've got to launch your children toward Christ spiritually directing your children. Let me give you some tips on how to do that.

- Begin when they are young and read Bible stories to them either at night or around the breakfast table.
- Pray with them. Pray for them. Let them hear you pray for them to know God.
- Take every opportunity to teach them spiritual lessons.
- As you take them to church explain what we do and why we do it: Baptism, the Lord's Supper, and offering. Why they are observed and why they are celebrated.
- Be sensitive to every spiritual question they ask and take the time to answer those questions thoroughly in a way they can understand.
- Expose them to Christian media. Buy them Christian DVDs, even biblical cartoons that present Bible truths on their levels. Right now media. Don't just raise them on Disney.
- Family Dinner. According to Gallup only 28% eat together regularly.

12. I heard about a man that once argued with the English poet, Samuel Coleridge, about the place of religious instruction and parenting. He said, "I don't think parents should indoctrinate their children to religion. Instead they should give their children the freedom to make their own choices." Coleridge didn't say a word, but instead invited the man into his backyard to look at his garden. The visitor exclaimed, "This is no garden. It is just a patch of overgrown weeds." Coleridge said, "Well, it used to be a garden, but I decided to give it the freedom to become whatever it chose without any interference from me." If you do not choose to cultivate your children's relationship with God in a spiritual direction, I can assure you the devil will see to it that their lives are filled with the weeds of this world.

## **II. Discipline Your Children Lovingly**

1. Remember that children are called, "arrows". Sometimes you can do everything right in shooting an arrow, but it still ends up off target. I remember doing some target shooting last year and three arrows would end up right where they should be, but the fourth one was way over here. That's when I realized something was wrong with the arrow. One of my vanes had torn, and I had to replace it.

2. Another time I found that one of my broadheads was messed up. It's no different with our children. They need correction. Things have to be fixed. If we want to launch our children in the right direction, then need to be lovingly disciplined.

### **A. From A Place of Love**

3. God really asks of parents is that they discipline their children the way He disciplines His. Proverbs 3:11-12 says,

*"My son, do not despise the Lord's discipline,  
and do not resent his rebuke,  
because the Lord disciplines those he loves,  
as a father the son he delights in."* (Proverbs 3:11-12)

4. Notice that God disciplines us, and he does it because he loves us. Discipline must come from a place of love. When you are madder than blazes at your child, is probably not the best time to discipline.

Dr. James Dobson puts it this way.

*"The parent must convince himself that punishment... is not something he does to the child; it is something he does for the child. His attitude toward his disobedient child is this: "I love you too much to let you behave like that."*

5. Discipline shouldn't be done in anger, or the heat of the moment. There is a difference between discipline and punishment. There is nothing vengeful about loving discipline. The object is not to hurt them emotionally, psychologically or physically, it's to change them, and not just their behavior, but their heart.

### **B. Consistent**

6. Secondly, discipline needs to be consistent. If there is a rule, that rule needs to be enforced all the time, every time. This is especially true when they are little. As the child get older, you can get into some of the finer nuances of things, but when we're talking two, three, four, and five years old, don't draw a line in the sand, if you aren't going to defend it. We have a rule in our house for our dog. The rule is this. The dog is not allowed on the bed, well sometimes.

7. If your rules for your kids are like that, they will obey no better than the dog. If you don't enforce it because you're too tired, or you're too busy, or they're too cute, you are sending mixed messages. If your child is not to mess with the remote in the living room, then there have to be consequences for that behavior every time.

### **C. First-time obedience**

8. Related to the principle of consistency is the importance of first time obedience. Children should be expected to obey the first time. I remember as a kid I had a friend that always got three warnings. Guess what he did. He ignored his parent's correction three times every time. They were teaching him it was okay to disobey 75% of the time. If you catch your child doing something they shouldn't do, and you say, don't do that again, you need to enforce it the very next time. Many kids learn that they don't have to obey until mom yells a lot and smoke starts coming out of her ears. Guess what that kid's going to be like as a teenager.

9. Moms and dads, this is a life and death situation. Imagine this scenario. You are doing some work out in the front yard, and your kid is riding a bike or playing with a ball and starts to go out in the street. You see a car coming, and tell your child to stop. If you have trained them to ignore you the first time you tell them to do something, what happens?

### **D. Natural consequences**

10. Finally, focus on natural consequences. God's word reminds us that God created this world so that actions have consequences. The Bible calls it sowing and reaping. Galatians 6:7 says we reap what we sow. This is built into life. If a toddler touches a hot stove, he gets burned. He will remember next time.

11. In discipline we can use consequences that are logically tied to the behavior. For instance, you tell your child to put away a certain toy, and 20 minutes later that toy is still there. A natural consequence to that could be that he is not allowed to play with that toy the next day. Another way of putting this is have punishments that fit the crime, because you're not only trying to direct behavior, but shape their heart.

12. I don't want to give you a bunch of one-size-fits-all solutions, because that would be misleading. Every child is different. What works on one child, won't work on another. With one child a stern word might lead to a cascade of tears and they never do it again, but with your other kid a spanking is just the price of admission. So it can take some creativity and exploration to find what works

with each child, and what speaks to their heart.

13. I do want to deal with this whole question of spanking, and I know this is dangerous territory, because people have strong feelings on this subject. Many regard it as abusive, and I'll be the first to admit that the way it has been done in many homes it has been. Because it hasn't been from a place of love, it hasn't been consistent, it hasn't been directed at shaping the heart. But the bottom line is I support spanking because the Bible does.

14. Now I'm not saying that spanking is the right answer every time, it isn't, but it certainly has a role to play.

*"He who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is careful to discipline him."*(Proverbs 13:24, NIV)

*"Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline will drive it far from him."* (Proverbs 22:15, NIV)

The truth of the matter is if you don't mind that your children don't mind, they won't mind.

15. Think about this. If you are one of those parents that believe that spanking is wrong and you take that out of your toolbox, then all you are left with is nagging, begging, belittling, or yelling. That is why God does talk about the rod.

16. I want you to understand what I mean and don't mean by spanking. Spanking is most useful with toddlers and preschoolers, 18 months to about 6 years of age. I am definitely not talking about physical abuse. Let me tell you the differences. A spanking is one or two spanks to the buttocks. Physical abuse is beating, kicking and punching. Spanking has the intent of training and shaping their heart. Physical abuse has the intent to harm them. The attitude of spanking is love and concern. The attitude of physical abuse is anger and malice. The effects of spanking is proper behavior. The effects of physical abuse is emotional and physical injury and bitterness.

17. Dr. Diana Baumrind, of the Institute of Human Development, at the University of California Berkley, conducted a 10 year study of families with children ages 3 to 9. Dr. Baumrind found that parents utilizing spanking at proper times experienced the most favorable outcome in their children.

10. Let me make sure you understand these guidelines.

- Spanking should be used selectively for clear, deliberate disobedience and misbehavior. That behavior must arise from a persistent defiance of a parent's instruction.
- Mild other forms of discipline such as verbal correction, time out, sitting in a corner, should be used initially and after carefully explaining what

will draw a spanking.

- Spanking is inappropriate before 15 months of age and is usually not necessary after 6 years of age and should rarely if ever be used after 10 years of age.
- Spanking should always be a planned action, not just a reaction. It should come only after the child has been forewarned.
- Spanking should always be administered in private, never to publicly humiliate.

### III. Develop Your Children Emotionally

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<sup>i</sup> Bradley, R. (2009, January 27). How Dr. Spock destroyed America. Retrieved January 19, 2017, from <http://www.wnd.com/2009/01/87179/>

<sup>ii</sup> Zinsmeister, K. (1988, September 25). IS DAY CARE RUINING OUR KIDS? Retrieved January 17, 2017, from [https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/opinions/1988/09/25/is-day-care-ruining-our-kids/b5a4df6f-4905-4fb9-9927-c65606e9fd69/?utm\\_term=.d1d3118d81c7](https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/opinions/1988/09/25/is-day-care-ruining-our-kids/b5a4df6f-4905-4fb9-9927-c65606e9fd69/?utm_term=.d1d3118d81c7) This article claims half of our adult character is set by the age of 4.

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