

## MESSAGE FOUR

### **SUGGESTED PASSAGE:** Ephesians 6:4 (NASB)

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

### **MESSAGE GOAL:**

This sermon will help people understand how parents should raise their children to embody, reflect, and replicate the image of God.

### **INTRODUCTION:**

A mother and a daughter were shopping at the grocery store. The daughter kept misbehaving so the mother said, "Stop it, Suzanne. I'm going to spank you, Suzanne." But the daughter kept acting wilder and wilder. So the mother said, "Can't you hear me, girl. Suzanne, you better settle down or you're going to be in trouble!" The proprietor at the grocery store, after watching the scene and the little girl's disobedience, came over and knelt down in front of the little girl. She said, "Suzanne, you really need to listen to your mom and obey her." But the mother said, "Actually, my name is Suzanne. My little girl's name is Betty." The mother was correcting herself.

That sounds like our society today. We have a generation of out-of-control kids and the parents are the ones who are trying to keep themselves under control. That sounds a lot like Isaiah 3:3-5.

In Isaiah's day, the culture had so disintegrated that the children were living in rebellion against their parents. In fact, the absence of parenting is one of the reasons for a chaotic culture. Parenting has been turned over to the government, to schools, and even to churches. But God has given parents the responsibility of parenting their children and raising them to responsible adulthood. God commanded the first parents He created, Adam and Eve, to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. But not just to fill the earth with kids who looked like them and bore the same name. God commands parents to raise the next generation who will mirror the image of God. The biblical goal of parenting is to raise children who embody, reflect, and replicate the image of God and promote the kingdom of God. But when parents lose sight of God's goal, then parenting becomes whatever we want it to be.

### **SERMON POINTS:**

#### **1. PARENTS, RAISE YOUR CHILDREN TO REFLECT GOD'S IMAGE. (EPHESIANS 6:4)**

- The biblical goal of parenting is to raise children who embody, reflect, and replicate the image of God and promote the kingdom of God.
- Parents must train their children "in the Lord," which means to teach them how to live out their faith under God's rule.
- Mothers and fathers must pass down kingdom values to their children, who will in turn pass them down to their children.
- Parents must do the hard work of correcting their children and bringing them up "in the discipline and instruction of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4).
- The Lord models parenting by disciplining His children because He loves us and wants us to reflect His holy character. (see Proverbs 3:11-12 and Hebrews 12:4-11)

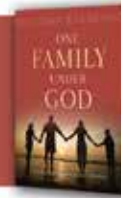
#### **2. ESTABLISH A BIBLICAL VALUE SYSTEM FOR YOU CHILDREN.**

- The job of parents is to establish the value system of children to reflect the value system of the kingdom of God.
- Saul's trip to recover his father's donkeys led him. When parents miss this kingdom role, you wind up with chaos in the culture—crime, a loss of personal identity, and the redefinition of values.
- Parents should filter out non-kingdom values and filter in kingdom values based on the Word and will of God.
- If parents don't raise their kids with kingdom values, their kids will get their values somewhere else—from the culture, from the media, or from their friends.
- When parents don't discipline their children, society has to set up systems to provide the missing discipline.

#### **3. LET GOD TRANSFER HIS VALUES AND BLESSING TO YOUR FAMILY FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION. (DEUTERONOMY 6:4-9)**

our society's problem  
is not solely our *government's* problem.  
it is **the church's** problem.  
it is *our* problem.





- In the Old Testament, God identified Himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob because He wanted to transfer His kingdom values and His image through the family.
- God wants parents to teach His law and His values to their kids both informally and formally.
- Parents should teach kingdom values informally through the normal circumstances of everyday life, "when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up." (Deuteronomy 6:7)
- Parents should teach kingdom values formally through Bible studies and family devotions and over time disciple them to spiritual maturity. (Psalm 128:3)
- God intended much of family life to be lived "around the table" where parents sit down to teach their kids about God and how His Word has relevance for everyday life, to encourage them, to correct them, and to prepare them to live as image bearers in society.

## SERMON ILLUSTRATIONS:

**ESTABLISHING KINGDOM VALUES:** Years ago, when you walked through the airport security, they had magnetic scanners that beeped when you had metal in your pockets. Then you had to back up, empty your pockets of your keys and loose change and walk through again. But every once in a while, you could walk through the magnetic scanners with your keys and several dollars worth of change and the scanners wouldn't beep. And that's because the magnetic scanners had to be re-calibrated every so often so they would keep sensing metal in travelers' pockets. But if over time the sensors lost their sensitivity, they would let people through with metal, possibly even weapons, in their pockets. Unfortunately today we have a generation of children whose consciences don't beep because their moral sensors haven't been calibrated. The job of parents is to establish the value system of children to reflect the value system of the kingdom of God. If parents don't raise their kids with kingdom values, their kids are gonna get their values somewhere else—from the culture, the media, their friends.

Teaching biblical values to children: After they're planted, it takes olive trees fifteen years before they start producing olives. For those fifteen years, the farmer tends the tree, prunes it regularly, and makes sure that its roots grow deep down into the soil. Then after fifteen long years of preparation, the olive tree starts

producing olives. Because its roots grew strong and deep, the tree will continue producing olives for thousands of years. There are some olive trees in Israel that have been bearing olives since Jesus walked the earth. Likewise, parents must take time to help their children grow deep roots into the soil of God's Word in order to prepare them for a lifetime of fruitfulness to the kingdom of God.

## QUOTES ATTRIBUTED TO DR. TONY EVANS:

"The absence of parenting is one of the keys to the chaos of culture."

"Here is the biblical goal of parenting: To raise children who embody, reflect, and replicate the image of God, promoting the kingdom of God."

"We're in a chaotic situation today and it boils down to kingdom values not being transferred from mother and father to children."

"The job of parents is to establish the value system of children to reflect the value system of the kingdom of God."

"If parents aren't raising their children with kingdom values, those kids are going to get some values elsewhere. But they'll be cultural values, or peer values, or media values."

"We've got a generation of unblessed children so we end up with unblessed adults having their own families."

"We have a generation of young people today who aren't being corrected at home so society has to set up systems to correct them."