

The Heritage of the Lord

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Date: 31 August 2025

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- [0 : 00] We're going to look here this morning for a few minutes as we begin looking into God's word! Because when a parent makes a commitment to raise their children in the Lord, they make that! They make that commitment because they see the value in children.
- You know, one of the things today that as you look at society, you'll find that the value of children is degrading. And I'll make my point here in just a moment on that because as I see here, it's not that the child itself is not, but the idea of children is going away within society. And you see this trend.
- Birth rates have dropped dramatically in the last 20 years. Dramatically here in America, in Europe, you know, there's only a few places around the world where the birth rate has stayed up.
- And we find here, as it's continued to drop, matter of fact, last year, they tell us that the many states within the United States had more deaths than births. The current average in a family today is 1.6.
- Now, how you get 0.6 of a child, I don't know yet, but the average is 1.6. You know, even to maintain a society takes a 2.1. Just to break over and to break even in society and to have stability in that.
- [1 : 27] And studies have shown that the view and the priority of children directly impacts the fertility rates in a society. You know, now I want you to understand, it's not that everyone sees children as negative or unwanted, but they find it has to do with the priority.
- You know, the change has not been in the value of children, it's in the priority of children. And the preeminence of children. You know, God's first command to Adam and Eve was to go and to be fruitful and to multiply.
- And we see that throughout the scripture. It's a God desires for us to have children. But oftentimes, we view children in our culture in a way that is secondary instead of primary.
- And we're going to see a little bit of that here today, what God has to say about that. Because really, the question is, you say, what's that priority? Well, the question is, do you see your children as a blessing or a burden?
- You know, we have a society today that oftentimes they address children as a burden. They think of them as nothing as an expense or an inconvenience.
- [2 : 39] Even though they might value children, they put a secondary position upon children as a burden instead of a blessing. A child, when we have that, you say, preacher, what's the big deal about that?
- You know, the way you enter into something, the way you think about something impacts what you do with it. It impacts the priority of it. It impacts how we process what we do. And we see this, that we find that there's more of an emphasis is placed upon some things.
- In the current society, you'll find that more emphasis is placed upon work and personal priorities. The more that happens in society, they've done studies here in the last 10 years, the higher the priority is of work and personal priorities.

What's in it for me? How do I enjoy myself? How do I have self-fulfillment? You know, how do I have experiences? The higher rate that is, is a priority within society, the lower the birth rate drops.

The two run in contrast one to another. And we see this, it's interesting, even people who don't hold to a godly worldview, they have a new word they've coined.

[3 : 52] And it's called workism, where work has become a priority over everything else. Now, most of you might be familiar with a magazine out there or a newspaper, whatever you want to call it.

It's called The Atlantic. Not exactly what you call a conservative viewpoint, you might say. But they had an interesting thing in an article in The Atlantic. They call workism this, a kind of religion promising identity, transcendence, and community.

Think about that. Even somebody who doesn't believe, and most of them would actually try to call themselves atheists or agnostics, recognize that what they're becoming is they're worshipping something.

They're putting something on the forefront in their life. And we see this, it's where life choices are centered around career. Desiring to have a purpose outside oneself through accomplishment and connection through their work.

But you know, I want you to understand and to think, what does the Bible say about the focus in our priority? Because we understand where the world desires.

[5 : 03] But this morning, you know, as parents dedicate their children, I want you to understand the importance of it is the priority that's being placed in the way that we ought to think about our children and their value and their purpose in our lives.

So if you found Psalm 127 this morning, let's stand together and read the Word of God here, these five verses here today. Because think about, as we read through this, in verse 1, it says, Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain, which build it.

Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh, but in vain. It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrow. For so he giveth his beloved sleep.

Lo, children are a heritage of the Lord, and the fruit of the womb is his reward. And as arrows are in the hand of a mighty man, so are the children of youth.

Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them, and they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gates. Let's pray. Heavenly Fathers, we come before you this morning.

[6 : 13] Lord, we thank you for your Word. Lord, we're thankful for the importance that you place upon each individual, Lord, and even for your instruction. And Lord, I pray just have your hand upon each heart, each life here today, Lord, that we might take time to evaluate, Lord, where are we using to build our priorities, especially when it comes towards family, and what people desire, and what we are seeking in our life, what needs to be as the forefront of those things.

And Lord, we pray just have your hand upon each one today. You might stir our thinking, Lord, but also our hearts. And Lord, also where we stand before you. Lord, I pray just work in a mighty way as we walk through this passage here this morning, Lord, and we just give you all the praise and glory in Jesus' name.

Amen. You may be seated. You know, this psalm is a psalm focused on the house, on the home. When it talks about a house, it's not talking about the structure or the building.

It's talking here in reference to a household. It's talking about that family group that is there, because unless the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it.

You know, when you read through the first part of this passage, you can see that you can exert a lot of energy and resources trying to build life. You know, think about the dynamics that it speaks about here in this.

[7 : 39] It says, you know, it is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrow so that giveth his beloved sleep. I mean, you can put a lot of effort into the things of this life, to try to build things that people see.

You know, you can drive around. It's amazing. And I never realized this for a while, but when I was younger, when we lived in Southern California, it was interesting, because we lived in some very affluent areas you go through.

And I had a friend who actually was selling insurance. He says, you'd be amazed how many people have a fancy house, a fancy car, and he says, in an empty home. And I'm not talking just empty of family.

I'm talking empty of furniture. Empty of, I mean, basically, they had the bare necessities within a home, just because they were taking and looking at what everybody else saw. They wanted to keep up perception.

They were laboring two jobs and putting in all sorts of efforts, staying up late, getting up early, trying to do all these things to maintain a perception. You know what? That has infiltrated our society today.

[8 : 50] Unbelievers and sadly, believers alike, that they put their priorities on all the things, the externals that people see. Now, I want you to understand, notice what it says here.

It says, except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it. You know, you can do all those things. You can try to deal with everything. You can accomplish all that culture elevates as the goals and direction of life and be missing what God tells you that you ought to be looking for and that you ought to be paying attention to.

You know, when we understand, notice what it tells us here in verse 3. It says, Lo, children are what? A heritage of the Lord, and the fruit of the womb is His reward.

His reward. You know, when you are blessed with children, they are a heritage. That means it's something that's to be passed down, something that is lasting.

God entrusts the parents' children. It's a heritage. It's something that you've been entrusted with and have a responsibility to. As parents, we need to realize that we're supposed to be nurturing and guiding our children in the truth of the things of God.

[10 : 13] But you know, today, like I asked earlier, do you think to your children as a blessing or a burden? Do you see them as a reward or a burden? Do you see them the way God sees them and the way God has given?

Do you see them as something that you're building a heritage and a blessing from God? Your children, I want you to understand, God tells us our children are a heritage. Something that is important, has value, needs to be invested in, something that we need to hold on to because the counter-narrative in society promotes a narrative that children are a burden that must be managed or controlled, placed in a timeline of arriving or achieving.

Now, I want you, I'm going to explain that a little bit because what you see in society today, people look at marriage and children as I work towards those things to accomplish.

They look at it as a pinnacle or a capstone of my life, how I've arranged everything. They look at marriage and children and family as a capstone.

Well, when I get all this, now I can have this. That's counter to what God says because God doesn't say having a family is the capstone of life. Having a family is the cornerstone of life.

[11 : 32] It's the foundation and it's a starting point as people build lives together. You know, we have a society that wants to put marriage secondary as, well, I'll delay it for all these things because I want this first.

And then when I'm stable and everything's good and everything's going good, then I'll get married. They look at it as a capstone instead of a cornerstone. Of life.

God tells us that it ought to be a cornerstone of life and how that outlook towards children drives this narrative. You know, it's easy to view the responsibility of a child as overwhelming instead of a heritage from the Lord, a heritage that should be cherished and directed.

You know, go over to 1 Samuel this morning, 1 Samuel chapter 1, and you find here a lady, a mom, a wife. And when you read through, you understand that Hannah here couldn't have children for a long time and she'd been praying to God for God to give her a child.

And notice here in verse 27, it says this. It says, You know, I want you to understand what she did.

[13 : 02] She directed her child back to God, the one that's given her this child. You know, children are a heritage of the Lord. The fruit of the womb is his reward.

You know, when was the last time you looked at your children as a reward? As a blessing. Because oftentimes today the society is, is yeah, we're going to do all this and we're going to invest in them, but it's more of a burden mentality than a blessing mentality.

When she dedicated Samuel to the Lord, thankful for the gift that God had given her, her perspective was not one of burden, but a blessing, a reward that God had given.

You know, your perspective will determine the importance and the priority of children. You know, this morning, I want you to stop and consider in your life, how do you see children? Are they a burden or a blessing?

The world tells you they're a burden. God says they're a blessing. They're a blessing from God. It's something we need to have that right perspective. While the children are being a, bring a great responsibility as we are to nurture and to guide them in the things of the Lord.

[14 : 16] Now I want you to understand, it doesn't mean it's going to be easy because children come with needs. They come with things that need to take place because notice here, children require nurture and guidance.

You know, God instructs us that we have to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. That tells you there's going to be some effort involved because you're developing the very blessing God's given to you because God gives us these.

Now notice what it tells us here. Look at verse four back in our text. He talks about children this way. He says this, as arrows are in the hand of a mighty man, so are children of the youth.

Arrows, like arrows in your hand. Now I want you to understand, how is the referring here is important because today I think we have, sometimes we get, the way our culture operates, we kind of get a wrong perception.

Because today if somebody wanted arrows, they'd walk down here to shields, they'd go in and they'd just pick one off the shelf and then they'd pick the tip that they want and they'd preassemble everything. You know, everything's kind of put together and it's very quick and easy to go down and buy the bow and pull it.

[15 : 29] What it's talking about here is somebody who took the effort to create and to guide and to mold the arrow, to direct the fletching, that's the feathers that go on the arrow to help it spin and to maintain trajectory.

You have the tip, the arrowhead. All three of those components had to be developed, they had to be formed, and they had to have care to do it for them to operate correctly.

For an arrow to fly straight, all three of those things have to be in balance and in proper order for it to happen. It didn't happen by accident.

You know, you remember as a little kid, have you ever tried to make your own bow and arrow as a little kid? You know, I remember trying to go out and get a stick and a string and then you get this wiggly crooked little stick you picked up on the ground and you pull it back.

So you walk over there and you pull it up, you pull it back again, or it goes flying off someplace or pokes your sibling in the eye, you know, or all sorts of adventures that happen. But you know what?

[16 : 34] It was kind of haphazard and wasn't very effective. What I want you to see this morning when it talks about arrows in your hand, it's something your children need to be developed and formed and directed because they become effective as you send them out from your home.

Just as a warrior takes that arrow that he took time to develop. Now here a while back, I watched some weird things sometimes, but I watched them make arrowheads out of stone and just kind of watching the guy teach how to do that and how much time it takes in the study as they look at the rock and they figure out, okay, this is the stress fracture.

I got to strike it right there to form what I want and when they get done, it's like, how in the world did you beat that out of that? But it's like a great little shape that they've perfectly formed and corrected and it's balanced and it's formed and ready to go.

It didn't happen by accident. It happened because they were intentional. They had a purpose in mind that was guiding them in development of it. As a parent, we ought to have a purpose in mind.

What are we developing our children? to be because we understand that care is required to have an arrow that flies straight toward the target. It requires intention to detail.

[18 : 01] It requires careful shaping and preparation, direction to fulfill its purpose. Just in your life, as a parent, I want you to understand your children, that blessing that God's given to you is in raw form and God instructs you to form it and to prepare it and to be able to send it forth that it might fulfill what God's purpose was for them.

To prepare and equip them to do that. An arrowhead is carefully groomed to be effective and carefully remove everything that's not required to the point that it'll strike the target effectively.

You know, Isaiah 38 verse 19 tells us this, the father to the children shall make known thy truth. You know, how do we straight and prepare our children?

Teach them the truth of God's word. To teach them what God has said. Teach them what God expects. You know, one of the problems I find today is people treat what God says.

Well, that's a good option. Let me try another one. The reality is God says, hey, this is the guidebook. These are the parameters. This is what you're desiring. This is what, this is what you're looking at in the instructions.

[19 : 13] This is what you're aiming for. This is what you ought to desire. Now, I want you to understand not every child is going to be the same but everyone ought to understand the same truth. The reality of who God is, you know, Ephesians 6 verse 4 says this, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

To bring them up is an active thing. It's not a one-time event. You know, when you're investing in your children, it changes over the course of time.

You know, the requirements of bringing up children to become adults because that's another one. Nobody ought to have a desire to raise children. I think today we have a problem because we have a bunch of people who raise children.

Our goal is not to raise children. Your goal is to raise adults. That's the objective. That child will only be a child for a short period. You spend most of your life as an adult.

You spend most of your life doing out on your own away from your parents, at least hopefully. You know, the rise of people living at 40 plus in the parents' basement is increasing.

[20 : 22] You see all sorts of societal shifts that you have people that are raising children that are apathetic to life. That's just it. They've raised children and not adults.

God wants us to grow up to put away childish things, to do the things that God would have, to do those things that we ought to and to understand how to run our own household to do those things.

Just as God spoke about Abraham in Genesis 18 in verse 19, he says this, for I know him. He's talking about Abraham that he will command his children and his household after him.

You know, I want you to understand it takes some responsibility to say this is the direction my house is going to go. Think about Joshua's statement. As for me and my house, we will what? Serve the Lord.

You know what? He looked at everybody else and said what direction are you going? Who are you serving? Are you going to serve culture and society and self? Are you going to serve the Lord?

[21 : 28] It's a decision that has to be made and we've been talking about family. The decision is made with the dad. I want you to understand as a father, as a husband, God lays additional responsibilities for your household upon you.

You're going to stand before God and give account for your household. what you did and what you didn't do. Now I want you to understand there's no perfect parent. I don't think there's going to be a single dad that stands before God and says God looks at him and you did.

There's going to be some struggles. But your main movement and direction ought to be I want to be focused towards God. Because the great thing is God forgives, God overcomes even our inabilities and even our errors in trying to bring up our children.

You know, sometimes it amazes me my children are in spite of not because of. And we ought to be thankful that God can overcome those things. But notice here in Genesis 18 it says, And they shall keep the way of the Lord to do justice and judgment that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he has spoken of him.

You know, when we understand that children are not just a gift but arrows to shape and arrows to send out, the prevailing thought today is different.

[22 : 48] You know, they look at children as a burden but also they look at children, well, they'll figure it out on their own. You know, it's really appalling the attitude today that parents say, well, I don't want to push something on my children of what to believe.

When you say that, you're deceiving yourself. Because somebody is instructing and teaching your children. They're getting instruction and inputs from someplace.

The question is, as a parent, are you going to control what those inputs are? Are you going to direct what those inputs are? Or are you going to let somebody else do it? If you're going to raise your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, you have to be proactive, not reactive.

I've talked to many parents, well, I don't want to push my religion on my kids. You know, what I'm telling you is that they're getting a religion from someplace. Because everybody worships something.

I want you to understand they're going to worship and prioritize something. It's your job. God tells you to instruct them in the things of God. It's a proactive dynamic is to say, I want them to know this.

[23 : 56] It's my job to make sure they know this. But in culture today, oftentimes parents negate that to other people. Now, I'm putting it to you this way, very simply, that as a parent, you need to be actively engaged in what your children are learning.

You need to be actively engaged in what your children are learning. What that looks like may be different from each parent because of different dynamics in life and situations.

But whether you have your kids in public school or you homeschool them or you put them to a private school, as a parent, you ought to be actively involved in what are they being taught. I want you to understand the importance of what we're talking about because it's your job, your responsibility, responsibility because if you don't influence and educate and grab the opportunity to shape them in their thinking and perspective, somebody else will.

Because ultimately, it boils down to this. You're either going to be forming them in a godly direction in thinking or somebody else is going to be forming them in an ungodly thinking and perspective.

Today, many people think, well, I'm in the middle. It's like there is no middle. There's either righteousness or unrighteousness. There's either godliness or ungodliness. There's not an in-between. Think about that child's an arrow.

[25 : 11] You know, I've yet to see anybody that shoots archery that says, well, the target's down there and I got the arrow so let's just close my eyes and spin around a few times and let the arrow go and see if it hits the target.

What's their odds of hitting the target if they do that? Pretty much zero. But many times today, parents instead of taking the responsibility to form and to aim their children in a direction, they're instead spinning around and hoping they get sent out and they hit something.

God says they ought not to be a believer. A believer ought to take responsibility for their household. Think about, turn to 1 Chronicles chapter 28.

1 Chronicles 28 and verse 20. Here's David speaking to Solomon. This is David, you might say, sending out his son to fulfill what God has for him to do.

Look at David's statement. And David said to Solomon, his son, be strong and of good courage and do it. Fear not, nor be dismayed, for the Lord thy God, even my God, will be with thee.

[26 : 18] He will not fail thee, nor forsake thee, until thou hast finished all the work for the service of the house of the Lord. Now the context here, David could not build the Lord's house and God allowed him to assemble everything and he promised him that Solomon, his son, would build it.

In other words, David's saying, hey Solomon, I've given you everything you need to complete what God has for you to do. That ought to be our goal as parents because you cannot control everything your kids do but you ought to be able to say I did my best to equip them and give them everything they could to make sure they can accomplish what God has for them.

Because I'm most going to tell you that your children are going to make choices. Some choices you're going to like, some choices you're not going to like. But when you pray for them and you've put the right things as they're growing up, you know what?

Those are things that God can use in their life to help convict and convince and direct and to guide. Because I don't think one of us can say that they made their parents perfectly happy in every decision that they made.

You know, parents have a vision of where their kids are going to go or what they're going to do and these things but you know, sometimes God has other plans or kids make plans of their own. But we need to understand parents, we ought to be shaping and guiding our children in godly ways, preparing the arrow, giving them and trimming through and preparing everything that's needed for them to be able to fly and to hit the target that God has for them.

[27 : 45] But I want you to understand I can see everybody and that sounds like work, preacher. Yeah, it is. But there's not an installed work. There's a lot of fulfillment in family.

While children require investment, they also are a source of joy and blessing. Look at the verse 5 there. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them.

They shall not be ashamed but they shall speak with the enemy in the gate. You know, the tone here in verse 5 is one of joy, of fulfillment that echoes through a family just as grandparents are happy to see this generation follow the Lord.

These little ones will be instructed and guided by the word of God. You know, what a joy it is. You know, it's exciting to see another generation. That ought to be our goal is that our kids grow up to serve the Lord.

That's the objective. For them to know who God is, to know who Jesus is, what Jesus did for them, that Jesus Christ came and died because let me tell you, your little one that was born to you, or is going to be born to you, or is currently born to you, is not a little angel.

[28 : 57] They're born a little sinner. Just like you. The difference is what they've done with Christ. As a parent, that's our goal and that'll bring joy.

You know, think about what the Apostle John said over in 3 John. Now, he's speaking here of spiritual heritage, but in a sense, it applies to us as parents too because our goal ought to be that spiritually our children are walking with God.

Notice what he tells us here in 3 John 1, 4. It says, I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth. You know, the kids that you birth physically, there's no greater joy than to see them accept Christ as their Savior and serve the Lord.

To be born again into God's family. The joy of seeing children grow up and to walk in truth just as parents that prepare and guide their children will see and reap the blessing.

These blessings are physical as well as spiritual. The blessings here as a well-equipped, trained child is going to grow up to be a responsible adult that will take a strong stand in life and in faith.

[30 : 15] The picture here is a growing child that stands alongside, strengthening the family. Notice the end of verse 5 here. Why are they happy? Notice what it says.

They shall not be ashamed but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate. You know what? They're on board. They're part of the family. They're there. They're standing alongside. They became not just your children but people in the battle with you.

Looking out for one another. That ought to be our goal. When we understand children are a heritage of the Lord. They're a reward.

You know, this morning, how do you see children? We have a culture that tells us children are a burden are secondary or there's something that's a capstone.

You know, when I get everything organized then I'll have kids. God tells us that's the wrong order. He says family needs to be the cornerstone of society.

[31 : 13] A cornerstone of our life. That's the picture that we see. Are children a burden or a blessing? How can you celebrate the joy and purpose that kids bring to the family even this week?

You know, I want to encourage you to stop and think and consider what kind of joy do you find in the reward that God's given to you and family? You know, that applies both directions because as a growing adult you ought to look back and say, you know, I'm thankful for what my parents did or what my parents gave me and how my parents equipped me.

As a parent you ought to look and say, you know, I'm thankful for the things that my kids happened to catch. You know, things you were hoping you were guiding and directing them because you cherish as you guide them and send them out as arrows to fulfill God's plan and God's purpose.

You know, this morning what a blessing to see these young families dedicate their children and commit to raise them up in the Lord. You know, it's important to pass on to the next generation the knowledge of who Jesus is and what He's done.

How to live godly, what to do, live by example. You know, 2 Timothy 3.15 says this, and that from a child that has known the Holy Scriptures which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

[32 : 37] Because teaching them and raising them up allows them to move from just a physical family into a spiritual family. The family of God. That happens at a moment when they realize that they're a sinner and need a Savior and Jesus Christ is the one.

When they trust Him by faith. It happens in a moment when you acknowledge your sin and call upon the one that came and died taking your sin upon Himself but He defeated sin and death and is now alive at the right hand of the Father.

What a wonderful blessing we have in being part of God's family. Today, if you're not part of His family, I encourage you to make today the day that you call upon Him.

because it happens at a moment. It happens at a point of decision to say, who is the Savior and what's He done for me? But as a parent or grandparent or hope to be parent, I want you to understand the attitude we're talking about today starts beforehand.

It starts where you are today. How do you see, children? Will you honor the Lord in bringing them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord in the spirit and attitude as they are a blessing and a reward to you from God?

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