

Empire Church of the Brethren

Sunday Service Sermons

18 May 2025

He Took a Child

Text: "Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it." *Proverbs 22:6*

My parents believed this passage and the one about beating children.

Who ever spares the rod, hates the child.

No rod was spared in my home.

I did my best to train without the rod used harshly.

Most Sunday School areas had the picture of Jesus and with the children.

Forbid them not to come unto me.

In one picture Jesus has a child on his lap and other children standing or seated all around him.

This picture was to show that Jesus was a child's friend.

As a child I talked to God, not Jesus.

I had to learn that it was Jesus that interceded for us to The Father God.

I imagine that those communications went to Jesus as well as to God.

The picture was to give the idea that God loves us and cares about us, and we have worth even as children.

Another such memory is the singing of the song, Jesus Loves Me for the Bible tells me so.

This became a part of me as I sang it week after week.

We often see this as a children's song but it is a life giving song for all people.

We need to sing it often, to ourselves.

The importance of children.

Children are tremendously important.

Look at the prominence of children in the ministry of Jesus.

Not only did he take them in his arms and bless them but on one occasion he placed a child in the midst of the disciples and used the youngster to teach that we must become as little children if we are to enter the kingdom of God.

When God came to earth, he came as a child.

He grew up in the person of his Son.

Jesus was child in a working-class home in Nazareth in Galilee.

As a child, Jesus grew physically, mentally, spiritually, and socially just as our children grow today.

We have recognized the importance of children throughout the years.

President Abraham Lincoln wrote these words: "A child is a person who is going to carry on what you have started. He is going to sit where you are sitting when you are gone. He will attend to those things which you think are important. You may adopt all the policies you please, but how they are carried out depends on him. He will assume control of your cities, states, and nations. The fate of humanity is in his hands, in the hands of a child."

The rights of children.

Every child has a right to be loved and cared for.

Not every child receives affection, but every child deserves it.

Every child has a right to nourishment and health care.

Every child has a right to education and training that will equip them to live as a useful citizen.

Society has the responsibility to provide these things.

The rights of children often come into conflict with the concerns and rights of adults.

In recent years we have been hearing a great deal about over population.

There has been a call for responsible family planning so that children may have an opportunity for

a quality of life that provides human dignity.

One negative effect of the problem of over population is that children may very well come off feeling as though, just by their existence, they have caused the problem.

Abortion is another violation of the rights of children.

Many see abortion as a casual method of birth control, and this leads to a cheapening of the value of life.

Children in the womb have rights as well as adults.

We have to keep those rights in balance.

Still another matter that needs to be addressed is child abuse.

Millions of children in America are abused by their parents or guardians each year, and thousands of them die as a result.

Moreover, adults who have been abused as children in turn are likely to abuse their own children.

The discipline of children.

To say that we are to communicate love and worth doesn't mean that we are to be permissive with our children.

Many people in America grew up deprived of a lot of material things, many of which they really needed.

People of that generation say, "My child will not have to do without the things I did."

Therefore, some of those parents have been overly permissive, overly generous, and lacking in discipline in the home.

It's an understandable reaction, but it is not the healthiest response.

We need to let our children know our expectations of them.

Discipline is a sign of our love for them.

We desperately need the wisdom to strike a balance between disciplining our children in anger and being too permissive with them.

Children are not human pin cushions whom we can jab at will because we happen to be their parents.

But neither do children need their parents to be their pals.

They need for us to be their parents, emphasizing love and worth and caring discipline.

Children and priorities.

We do not own our children.

They are given to us as a trust from God.

We need to communicate our love for them and our expectations of them.

The most important thing we can do is to set the right example before our children, an example of integrity and faith.

Our children know what our priorities are.

They know when we are more concerned about golf than God.

They know when we are more concerned about sleeping in on Sunday than being in worship.

By ordering our priorities right, we set the best example for them.

Children need the affirmation of our love.

They need to know the expectations of our discipline.

They need our example.

And they need our time and interest.

Wayne Oates once said, "We need to give our children two things. The first is roots, and the second is wings. We need to give them a sense of belonging. We need to give them freedom to prepare to be on their own."

Our greatest dream for our children is that one day we will be instrumental in placing their hands in the hand of God.

This is not automatic, nor is it something we can force.

There is no guarantee that our children will grow up to be Christians.

The church must join parents in helping them place their children's hands in the hand of God.

Training children in the way they should go calls for dedication of parents, extended families, and the church.

God, give us Christian homes that all of this may happen.
It is vital!