

Introduction

Children are a gift from the Lord (Psalm 127:3), and with that gift comes a divine responsibility. As parents and guardians, we are not only called to provide for their physical needs but also to secure their spiritual foundation. The enemy Satan is not selective by age. He seeks to destroy, starting as early as possible.

In Mark 9:17-29, we encounter a boy possessed by an unclean spirit that had afflicted him since childhood.

This incident reveals a profound spiritual reality: children can be spiritually oppressed, and it's the duty of parents to stand in the gap.

Let's explore what this means and what practical steps a godly parent can take.

1. Spiritual Warfare Can Begin in Childhood

Mark 9:21 (ESV)

“And Jesus asked his father, ‘How long has this been happening to him?’ And he said, ‘From childhood.’”

Jesus, knowing all things (John 16:30), asks this to emphasize how early the boy's suffering began. This is a warning to all of us spiritual battles do not wait for adulthood. The enemy begins early because he knows the foundation is everything.

Proverbs 20:11 (ESV)

“Even a child makes himself known by his acts, by whether his conduct is pure and upright.”

If a child can be known by his actions, it means the battle for character and righteousness begins early and so can demonic influence.

2. The Devil Targets Children to Destroy Futures

John 10:10 (ESV)

“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.”

The demon in Mark 9 tried to throw the boy into fire and water to destroy him (Mark 9:22). This is symbolic of Satan's mission: destroy destinies before they even begin.

Ephesians 6:12 (ESV) reminds us:

“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness...”

As a parent, you're not just dealing with behavior you're in a spiritual battle for your child's soul.

3. The Parent's Responsibility: Laying a Strong Spiritual Foundation

Proverbs 22:6 (ESV)

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

If we don't teach our children the ways of God, the world and worse, the devil will gladly step in to fill that gap.

This training involves:

A. Discipline in Love

Discipline is not abuse; it is correction for righteousness.

Proverbs 23:13-14 (ESV)

“Do not withhold discipline from a child; if you strike him with a rod, he will not die. If you strike him with the rod, you will save his soul from Sheol.”

Discipline done prayerfully and in love teaches children about boundaries, obedience, and consequences all vital in the spiritual life.

B. Teaching the Word of God

Deuteronomy 6:6-7 (ESV)

“And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children...”

Teach your child to:

- Memorize Scripture
- Sing hymns and worship songs
- Pray
- Read the Bible (or listen to stories from it at their level)

Even if they don't understand fully now, the Word will dwell in their hearts and guide them in the future.

C. Consistent Intercessory Prayer

Job 1:5 (ESV)

"Job would send and consecrate them, and he would rise early in the morning and offer burnt offerings... Thus Job did continually."

Job regularly prayed for his children. Parents are priests in their homes we must cover our children with prayer daily, pleading the blood of Jesus over them.

D. Guarding Their Eyes, Ears, and Surroundings

Psalms 101:3 (ESV)

"I will not set before my eyes anything that is worthless."

Monitor:

- The shows and videos they watch
- The music they listen to
- The games they play
- The clothes they wear
- The friends they keep

Not everything that entertains is spiritually safe. Teach your child discernment and model it through your own lifestyle.

4. The Enemy Will Strike If You Don't Build the Hedge

1 Peter 5:8 (ESV)

“Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.”

If you don't lay the spiritual foundation for your child, the devil will gladly lay his. The boy in Mark 9 was afflicted from childhood. How many children today are carrying invisible battles because no one ever prayed for them, corrected them, or led them to Jesus?

Final Word: Build Their Future Today

Every godly parent has the privilege and the command of standing as watchmen over their children's souls.

- Discipline with love
- Teach the truth

- Pray without ceasing
- Guard their minds and hearts

When we do this, our children will be like trees planted by streams of living water (Psalm 1:3), and they will not be easily shaken when trials come.

Isaiah 54:13 (ESV)

“All your children shall be taught by the Lord, and great shall be the peace of your children.”

And the Lord will bless you.

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