

# Let the Children Come

Mark 10:13-16; Romans 8:12-17; Deuteronomy 6:4-9

January 10, 2016

I have told you before about the fact that our daughter Rachel and one year old grandson came to live with us, and stayed for 3 ½ years. **We loved having them with us.** Christine and I very much enjoyed having significant responsibility in caring for our grandson for those years. Even though we at times commented on the fact that we were more parenting, than grand parenting at during that time.

At some point during that great adventure, our other daughter, Hannah, who was married, but no children, asked me, **“When I have children, will you love them as much as you love Peter Daniel?”** My very quick answer was, **“yes dear, of course we will.”**

But then I did attempt to point out, we will love other grandchildren as much, **but that doesn't mean the same.** Peter was our first, he is named after me, and the fact that we raised him for 3 ½ years. **Hannah is now expecting, and due in March,** we will see how all that works out.

**Parents LOVE their children!** There is a connection between a parent and a child that is hard to explain, **but is generally all consuming.** We celebrate our children. We are protective of them, and want the very best for them. We feel similar about grandchildren. And we often react to any child that we see, with a smile, or a chuckle or a warm feeling, **which reminds us of the importance of family.**

**Here is a passage that gives us insight into Jesus view of children.**

Mark 10:13-16 “People were bringing little children to Jesus to have him touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. ‘When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.” And he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them.”

I guess the disciples didn't have children of their own, **or something.** Look how they reacted when parents were bringing children to be blessed by Jesus. **The text that I just read tells us,** “the disciples rebuked those parents.” They scolded them and restrained them from that action.

But then, **Jesus was indignant with His disciples.** You don't want Jesus to be indignant with your actions. Jesus demonstrates the value, for children to be brought to Him. **Parents feel that way, and grandparents feel that way,** we desperately wish and pray for our children and grandchildren to come to know Jesus Christ as their Savior and the Lord of their lives.

Through Child Dedication we attempt to begin on the right road in order for that to happen. **We call it Child Dedication, but it is as much about dedicating the parents,** and even fellow church members to that task. I would like to spend our time today in looking at that opportunity for influence from 3 perspectives.

## Parents

Parents have the greatest responsibility in raising our children and seeking to influence them in positive ways. A guiding principle as we consider influence is that children will learn more by what they see than what we tell them. **So live as examples of what you want your children to be when they grow up.**

Her little boy Len, who was 5 at the time, was on his mother's heels no matter where she went. **Whenever she stopped to do something and turned back around, she would trip over him.** Several times, she patiently suggested fun activities elsewhere. But he simply smiled an innocent smile and said, **"Oh, that's all right, Mommy. I'd rather be in here with you."** Then he continued to bounce happily along behind her.

After stepping on his toes for the fifth time, she began to lose her patience and insisted that he go outside and play with the other children. When she asked him why he refused to go and play, he looked up at her with sweet eyes and said, **"Well, Mommy, in SS my teacher told me to walk in Jesus' footsteps. But I can't see him, so I'm walking in yours."**

Our relationship with Jesus needs to be a priority, and our children need to see that lived out. **Not just going to church,** but reading our bible, praying and living out God's truth.

Our children need to see a loving and supportive relationship between their parents. **A healthy marriage doesn't happen just because you live in the same house,** it takes work and intentionality. Go to a class or a seminar, read books, talk and be honest with one another. Live out biblical principles of healthy relationships. **Love, respect, sacrifice, forgiveness, and many others.**

There is a great deal that can be said, and that needs to be learned, lets just say one more thing, **give your children quality time and attention.** There are many things that work against this. **But there is no substitute for it.**

Play games, where you have to interact. Go for outings to a park or a museum. Spend time talking, and really listening to your children, especially as they get older. **Make sure they always know that they are a priority in your life.**

## Grandparents

Based on our experience, and **I know many here who provide some care for grandchildren,** this is a growing demographic in our society. 44 % of grandparents provide more than 100 hours of care for their grandchildren.

Seal your lips

Remember they are not your children

Abide by the rules of the parents

Accept your role

Get a life

Let go of all expectations

## The Worth of Grandmas

A grandmother is a lady who has no children of her own, **so she likes other people's boys and girls.** Grandmas don't have anything to do except be there. If they take us for walks, **they slow down past pretty leaves and caterpillars. They never say, "HURRY UP!"** Usually they are fat, but not too fat to tie our shoes. They wear glasses, and sometimes they can take their teeth out.

They can answer questions like why dogs hate cats, **and why God isn't married.** They don't talk visitor's talk like visitors do because it is hard to understand. When they read to us **they don't skip words (or pages)** or mind if it is the same story again, and again.

Everybody should try to have a grandma, **especially if you don't have television**, because grandmas are the only grown-ups who always have time.

Do you take time, precious time with God's gift of children to you!

As grandparents we can  
Pray for our grandchildren  
Show interest in them  
Listen to them  
Reflect Jesus in their lives

## Adoption

The third perspective of how we influence children is that of adoption. **People adopt for a number of reasons.**

Unable to have biological children. They see the needs of the many orphaned children.  
**Internationally or in the USA**

They feel that they have more love to give.

God leads them to adopt. **An issue of obedience.**

Two of our families who are dedicating children today **fall under this last category of reasons to adopt.** I have had the opportunity to talk with one of the parents from each couple, and it was a heartwarming experience to hear about the process that brought them to the point to adopt.

In both cases, they already had children of their own. But the Lord opened up the door to begin to provide foster care for children. **This was generally for a matter of weeks or months, a relatively short period of time.** One of the couples had over time, 37 foster children. Both couples said that they were not looking to adopt any of their foster children.

Dan & Mechelle Posner  
Dan & Gwen Hovestol

Each couple gave me permission to share these details that I will be telling to you.

Mechelle Posner said that they had Natalya for 1 ½ years. **During that time she just became a part of their family.** They thought that they would like to keep her, but wanted what was best for her. She ended up going back to her parents, **they thought that was over, and they needed to move on.**

Just a short while later they were informed that Natalya was coming back into the system, and **they were asked whether they were interested in adopting her.** Dan and Mechelle believe **it was God's plan for her to become a part of their family.** That process then took 8 months.

Dan and Gwen also were doing foster care, and **had agreed together that they were not looking to adopt any of these children.** Dan told me that he was driving in his car when **the Lord spoke to him**, and said that they should be adopting Carly. **He said that his life was not his own, he had to obey God.** When he called Gwen to ask her about it, he found out that she had been praying that God would open that door.

## **God had a plan.**

God has a plan that is even bigger than those two babies, and these two families.

Adoption is a beautiful picture of our relationship with God. Listen to this description in Romans 8:14-17 “For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, “Abba! Father!” The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him* so that we may also be glorified with *Him*.”

We were created as a part of God’s family, **then we chose to reject that though sin and self-centeredness**. Then we were on the outside looking in. God left the door open for us to return, to rejoin His family. When we make that decision that we want God in our lives, **we have that opportunity**.

Not as temporary foster care, but as being adopted and to again become a permanent, full-fledged part of God’s family. **We are His children, heirs of God and brothers with Christ**. Fully functioning members of God’s family.

I like how Peter describes this in I Peter 2:9, 10 “But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.”

**Today we celebrate family**, we love and support these parents and grandparents. We acknowledge the role of the **church family to influence children to follow Christ**. And we celebrate the new family that comes together through adoption.

As well as how each one of us have the opportunity to be a part of God’s family, **because He loves us, and Jesus died for us**.