

## **Marriage and Families**

### **Lesson 9 – Children are a Blessing**

"Children are a heritage of the Lord. The fruit of the womb is a reward" (**Psalms 127:3**). As brief as it is that is a comprehensive expression of God's view of children.

Children are a wonderful blessing. When children are in the home, the parents learn to give of themselves; they learn to put others before themselves; they learn tenderness; they learn the great depths of love; and they are richly rewarded by the love and adoration which they receive in return from those children – children who are flesh of their flesh, bone of their bone, and blood of their blood. Children are a wonderful comfort for parents in their declining years. Parents will do well to reflect on their attitude relative to their children. When and how often have they offered thanks to God for their children? Or have they merely taken those children for granted?

What was Jesus' attitude toward children?

- **Matthew 18:3**
- **Matthew 19:13-15**

Unfortunately, never before have so many parents turned from their rightful responsibility to children. They fail to understand that the blessing that they hold in their arms, is a blessing from God (**Gen. 2:7**). These parents should ask themselves, "Do I really love my child?" Paul described some people as being "without natural affection" (Romans 1:31) – that is, they did not have, for example, the affection (love) which parents should naturally have for their children. The news reports of today are filled with accounts of parents mistreating their own children.

Consider the following:

- A four-year-old girl died. The coroner's report said she died of internal injuries, shock, and exposure. An investigation into the events surrounding her death resulted in the indictment of her parents for murder. She was forced to march around her house for hours on the day of her death by her drunken father. When she tried to rest, she was beaten with a baseball bat. When she begged for water, she was given hot sauce.
- A woman admitted to smuggling heroin and cocaine in infant formula cans, and diapers worn by the children. She admitted to using the babies as props to ease suspicion. She had gotten one of the babies from her daughter, and rented the other child from its aunt. Eleven people have been charged so far in what federal prosecutors call a drug smuggling ring using babies as props.

- In the U.S., crime statistics are on the decline. Reports and confirmed cases of child abuse and neglect continue to rise. Reports of child abuse and neglect rose by 8 percent and confirmed cases increased 4 percent between 1993 to 1997.
- Of children who were killed during the period 1976 to 1997, 54 percent were killed by parents, 30 percent by an acquaintance or other relative, and 15 percent were killed by strangers or unknown persons.
- In a 1997 survey of all 50 states and the District of Columbia, 47 out of 1,000 children were reported as abused or neglected and 15 children out of 1,000 were confirmed as abused or neglected.
- In 1995, over 3 children died each day as a result of parental maltreatment. That number grew at a rate of 4 percent per year during the period from 1990-1995. The total number of reports rose 49 percent from 1986 to 1995.
- Between 1993 and 1995, 85 percent of child fatalities occurred to children under the age of 5, with 45 percent to children under the age of 1.
- 1998 – 903,000 children were victims of abuse or neglect. 80 percent of those children were victimized by one or both parents.
- 54 percent suffered neglect, while 23 percent suffered physical abuse. 12 percent were sexually abused. Fatalities remained unchanged from the year before, approx. 1,100.
- In Texas, during fiscal year 1999, 135 children died from abuse or negligence. What were the causes?

49 – Shaken, beaten, thrown	5 – Related to maternal drug abuse
13 – Bathtub drowning	5 – Fire, burned
11 – Drowning	4 – Intentional Poisoning
11 – Strangulation, suffocation, smothering	3 – Cut, stabbed
7 – Shot	2 – Poisoned with adult medication
6 – Malnutrition, lack of medical care	1 – Burned, scalded
6 – Motor vehicle crash, run over	7 - Other
5 – Confinement (Vehicle, refrigerator, etc)	

None of these statistics reflect the abortion cases seen each year. In spite of scientific consensus reached in 1981 that life begins with conception, over 40 million abortions have occurred in the United States since 1973, an average of 1.5 million a year. These are just the reported cases. And still, the U.S. Supreme Court will not overturn Roe v. Wade. They have even gone so far as to uphold partial birth abortions, the murder of obviously developed children in the womb.

Now stories are coming forth that abortion has become a business. Baby parts are SOLD for research. Consider this gruesome congressional testimony from Dean Alberty, former tissue procurement technician:

*“Infant twins were aborted alive and brought to him in a pan for dissection. He stated that the twins, who were between 26 and 30 weeks old, were cuddling each other and gasping for breath.”*

This is where humanist values have taken our society.

During 1999, the Planned Parenthood Federation of America reported profits of \$125.8 million on gross income of \$660 million. Of that income, \$211 million came from clinic operations. Of the clinic operations earnings - \$58.8 million – more than 1 of every 4 dollars earned came from killing an unborn child. That’s because the sheer number of unborn children killed in PPFA’s 850 clinics continues to rise, from 139,000 in 1995 to nearly 168,000 last year. **Our government assists with the funding of PPFA.**

How do we stop this vicious cycle? Parents have a mandate to supply the inner spiritual forces, which are sorely needed in family life. There is no substitute for the presence of love, faith, and respect, which are so fully illustrated in Christ and taught in the scriptures. These values are what will end abuse and abortions in this country.

1. Children have a right to be loved and wanted.
  - 1.1. In order to have the capacity to love, one must first be loved (I John 4:19-21). This provides the child with a sense of being wanted, while conflict, quarrellings, and broken homes cause a child to feel insecure and unwanted. These feelings can and do lead to serious antisocial attitudes and negligence. Parents must express their love in both word **and** deed.
2. Children have a right to Divine Truth.
  - 2.1. The basic orientation of each child rests upon his understanding about God, about Christ, and about the word of God.
  - 2.2. Morality and good citizenship are born out of the understanding we are to live for GOD, not man. We are to live by God’s values, not mans.

The world can only be changed when parents understand the great responsibility they have to raise the God given blessing of children in the way God commands.

### **If A Child Lives**

With criticism, they learn to condemn.  
With hostility, they learn to fight.  
With fear, they learn to be apprehensive.  
With pity, they learn to feel sorry for themselves.  
With jealousy, they learn to feel guilty.  
With encouragement, they learn to be confident.  
With tolerance, they learn to be patient.

With praise, they learn to be appreciative.  
With acceptance, they learn to love.  
With approval, they learn to like themselves.  
With recognition, they learn to have a goal.  
With fairness, they learn what justice is.  
With honesty, they learn what truth is.  
With security, they learn to have faith in themselves.  
With love, they know God.