

## I. Introduction To Child Training

I want to welcome all of you this morning. As you know, we have been in Proverbs 22. We have been coming through the book of Proverbs. I told you when we got to Proverbs 22:6 that it really deals with the key version in training up your children. We have a young church, as you can see today. There are lots of babies, lots of teenagers, lots of kids that just sang today. Just a host of great kids.

It is our responsibility to give them everything that they need, and it is my responsibility as a pastor to give you, the parents, everything that you need. We have been talking here over the last couple of weeks about child training, and I want to bring you through every aspect of it. I figured while we were here and while we were just on this verse, this is a good time to do it. This will all go into a series that will be available to anybody. I know I laid a plan out. I have people not only throughout this church, but around the country that are doing it with their kids. I talked to a family up in Alaska the other day and spent time with them on the phone, and they are following through with it with their family. It is just a great time for us as a family.

## II. The Evil Day And Parental Responsibility

Last week I showed you the importance of laying a baseline of truth in your child's life. I told you last week that we were going to carry on the same theme this week because I want to cover this very thoroughly. I showed you how you, the parent, need to be the first line of defense in your child's life. The world is going to come after them, and we are going to talk about that today. You will leave here today with a better understanding of what you are up against, what your child is up against, and better understand how to be that first line of defense. You do all of this so that they have a rock-solid foundation against the day that is coming in their life.

We talked about that and began to talk about that last week. We talked about the evil day. I ran you back to Solomon in Ecclesiastes 12 and in the book of Ephesians. We talked about an evil day that comes into every child's life. I talked about the mistakes that most parents make in trying to isolate their kids from the world. That is commendable and admirable, but the problem is it is not practical. You cannot do that. We talked about isolation versus insulation. You never isolate your child from the world, but you can insulate your child from the world. You do that by what we are talking about: laying down the baseline of principles of the Word of God into their minds, where they have in time the ability to bring every thought into captivity under the obedience of Jesus Christ. We talked about that in 2 Corinthians 10:5 many, many times.

It is nothing more than we are in this world. You all have secular jobs for the most part, and you all work in the system. You know as well as I do, the system is corrupt. The system can be detrimental to you. It has been to many of God's people, but a smart Christian, a smart man or a smart woman who really has an understanding of the Word of God, they will not be afraid of the world system. They will not be afraid of going to work. They will not be afraid of the bad

influences that are in every place you go. You learn how to use the system against itself. You learn through the principles in the Word of God to be smarter than the problem. You learn how to go into a negative world every day of your life, see it for what it is, understand what God has given you, and then use the system against itself. That is what we do. That is what your child needs to learn to do.

Many of your kids, most of them, are in public school. Parents today cringe at the idea of a public school. I understand public schools are a terrible situation, so my advice to you is to use it. Use it against itself. Teach your child. Use it as a training ground. Use it as something that is preparing them because, let me tell you something, they may be in a godless school system right now, but there is coming a day they are going to enter into a godless workforce. If you do not prepare them now how to stand for God now, they will never be able to stand a little bit later on. The key is not isolation; the key is insulation. It is the importance of looking ahead and preparing your child for what is coming their way. We have used the term many, many times: long-term versus short-term.

I showed you and I gave you a complete understanding of the age of accountability, how that child grows to a point where now they have to make their own decision for Christ in their life. Paul talks about that day, and we talked about how many parents make a mistake here of getting their child saved before they even get to the age of accountability. That is a terrible thing. You cannot get a kid saved before he understands he is a sinner. It is a terrible thing. Paul says that when you and I got saved, sin has to become exceedingly sinful. A child does not get saved because his brother or sister. He does not get saved because he wants to go to heaven. He does not get saved because he wants to please Mom and Dad or he hears the terminology all the time. A child is ready to be saved when he sees that he has a personal sin debt toward God, and that is going to be eradicated through the death of Christ on the cross. Sin becoming exceedingly sinful, and how important it is to be ready against that day, getting our children ready to take their stand.

I took you back to Ephesians 6. We talked about that chapter. We will be in it a little bit more today. It talked about:

*Ephesians 6:10-13*

*Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.*

*Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.*

*For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.*

*Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.*

We as parents, me as a pastor, we as a church with our children, understanding that they are the heritage of the Lord and that the fruit of the womb is His reward, we need to make sure that we do those things in their lives so that they have everything and we have done all that they might be able to stand. Train them to apply the armor of God and bring every thought, as I said, into the

captivity of the obedience to Christ, teaching them how each piece of the armor works, how valuable it is. Those are the kind of things that parents can do.

I know you are in a program right now that we have started, a plan where every week you are coming through the last lesson, and your family is sitting down, and everybody is getting out of it what they need to get out of it to be a better part of the family. But once that is done, it is things like this: sitting down. You can go on the website and get the outline. I have talked about it many times, or most of you are well-versed in it yourself. Sitting down with your family after you are done with this and then maybe taking one piece of the armor every week, just talking about it, learning how to apply it. We talked about last week building Christian character in our people's lives. You are not born with character. Character is something that has to be developed. It is a learned behavior. It is something that as you lay a baseline in a child's life, you develop it.

### III. The Devil's Plan Of Attack

I told you that today I would take you to probably, in my mind, the greatest place in the Bible to show you as a parent exactly how the devil will come after your child. Do not be mistaken, he will come after your child. I am going to show you why today in just a little bit.

In the military, when any army goes to war, the determining factor between winning and losing will always be the intelligence that they gather. The information they get is based on what they are going to do and how they are going to attack. They will pull all their resources to get all the intelligence that they can. They call it "intel" and get everything into their life so they understand what they are up against. They want to know what the enemy's strength is. They want to know what the enemy's position is. They want to, to the best of their ability, see and understand their plan of attack. The intel that they develop is an incredible thing that many times winning or losing is based on. Through the intelligence of the Word of God, you will develop a plan against his plan to stop that army.

The Bible is our ultimate resource for intelligence material. It gives us, we gather intelligence against the attack of the evil day. We get everything that we need of what is coming. I want to give you an understanding of that day, exactly what is going to happen and transpire. I want to show you the plan of attack that is coming, and in some cases, that is already here. I want to show you the plan of attack when that evil day is going to show up in your child's life. Remember last week what I said about that evil day.

The evil day is the day that your child steps out of your bubble of protection. They hit the age of accountability. They come to that point now where they have already been introduced to some things, and now they have to begin to make their own choices when you are not around. Some of your children have already entered into this. Public school is a great example of this. When your child starts school, now they are completely, most of the day, out of your parental control. Once they start school, even in basic elementary, it only gets worse as they get older. They go to grade school, and grade school in my day, back in the 1950s and 60s, was a piece of cake. Today it is horrendous. They go to middle school, they go to high school, and now they hear things where you cannot protect what they hear anymore. Now they hear things that are good, and now they

hear things that are very, very bad. They see things, examples right in front of them. They get it from their friends, usually the older kids, and now they get an introduction to the world, and most of them are not prepared for it.

They develop their social skills. Up to now, it was limited to family or brothers and sisters and friends, maybe at church. Now there are new influences in their life; some good, most of it is bad. Now they are up against what we call peer pressure, where they are in with a group of kids, and they want to belong, they want to feel a part. Most of the kids are in the world, and they are going the way of the world, and they put pressure on your child to conform to that. That is a hard thing for a child, especially when they are coming up in the junior high age, when all of their emotions are all over the place, and they are struggling with all of those different emotions. Now it is a whole new world. Some of those friends whom they meet will be very bad for them.

The evil day is when your child steps outside the protection of you, the parent, and now they have to make their own choices on their own. Where you could protect them at four, five, six, seven, and maybe even eight or nine, now they are stepping out into it. Now they have to choose who their friends are going to be, where they are going to go, and what they are going to do. Now they will have the opportunity to do things behind your back without you knowing what they are going to do. They will build wrong relationships. They will make bad choices, and they will try to hide them from you. Sometimes you catch them, sometimes you do not. Most parents are oblivious to it and do not find out until it is way too late.

I do not know how many times you have read or seen stories on TV where a young girl was on the internet with her computer. She found some guy and talked to the guy, and the guy was some kind of serial rapist or some kind of serial killer, and she meets him behind Mom and Dad's back and they never see her again. You hear stories like that, and everybody asks, especially about a precious little teenage girl, "How does that happen?" I will tell you how it happens: "Where are the parents? Why are they not watching and understanding?" Why was not that little girl prepared against the first cuss words they got to hear, the first smoking of cigarettes they are introduced to, the first taking of drugs or the drinking of alcohol? There has to be a first line of defense. In truth, those early choices will either make you or break you. How you deal with them will determine how you come out in life.

Kids start out loving their parents, but then at 16, 17, and 18, they wind up hating their parents. What happened? I will tell you what happened: a transformation was going to take place the day that evil day came into their life. They began to transform from that sweet little child into—and I am going to show you the process in just a moment—they began the transformation from that sweet little child that loved Mom and Dad, did not want to leave their side, to somebody now who hates Mom and Dad, argues with them, does not want to be with them. There are two transformations in the Bible, by the way. One of them is in Romans 12, that we are transformed on a daily basis into the image of Christ. That is the one you want. But I am going to show you a transformation into the world of your child when the evil day comes.

For you and me as Christians, for your children, life is not very complicated. We like to make it complicated. We like to teach our kids the psychiatrist or therapist and get all these things. All

they do is make it more complicated. They do it for a living. When they cannot find any problem with your child, they will develop some and make up some so you will keep coming to see them. Let me tell you something, life is real simple. It is real simple. You and your child, you as an adult Christian, and you as your child, are going to do one of two things: you are either going to stand for God or you are going to stand for the devil. It is just that simple. There is no middle ground in it. There is no middle ground, and the parent has to face and deal with this evil day, and it will determine which path they follow.

As I gave you in Psalm 127:

*Psalms 127:4*

*As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth.*

Just as a guy takes a bow and arrow and hits a target, you take your child in life and you launch them one way or the other.

#### IV. Daniel: A Case Study In Facing The Evil Day

It just so happens that there is a great story in the Old Testament that illustrates this New Testament principle that I want to talk about today. It is an incredible thing. When I am at camp, and I have been preaching camps now here with our kids for the last three years, I do not care how many times I repeat it, I preach this message every year. They need to hear this every year. They forget, and we always have new kids, but it is a message that I take the time and really build my week of preaching around this message. It is a story about a young man not much older than most of our kids today, and he had to face the evil day in his life just like all of our children will too. He came away with a great walk with God. He took a great stand for God, and he lived for God and walked with God for over 80 years of his life. He is one of the greatest examples in the Bible of staying away from the world, and of course, I am talking about the man Daniel.

When you go to school, I always tell your kids they have what they call a DARE program. The DARE program is a good thing. It probably does not work very well, but if it just saves one kid from getting into drugs, it is worth it as far as I am concerned. The DARE program is a program that talks about a DARE: D-A-R-E stands for Drug Abuse Resistance and Education. I think that is a good thing. When I preach to your kids in camp, and I am going to talk to you this morning, this church has its own DARE program, and our DARE program will work more than just drugs and alcohol. Our DARE program will work everything in their life. When you go to school, they have their little acronym. I do not have an acronym for mine. My DARE program is just "Dare to be a Daniel." Dare to be a Daniel, because Daniel is the only example that you need, and it is the greatest example anywhere in the Bible on what is coming your child's way.

We talked about a high tower built on the principles of the Word of God, David's tower, where you get up in a tower, you can look and see what is coming. This is what a parent does. When you get things like this in your life, you get on that high tower. You see what is coming in your child's life long before it gets there. The life of Daniel is an incredible story.

I want you to turn to Daniel 1 with me. If you do not have your Bible, that is fine, just listen. I am going to read it for you.

*Daniel 1:1-8*

*In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon unto Jerusalem, and besieged it.*

*And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with part of the vessels of the house of God: which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god; and he brought the vessels into the treasure house of his god.*

*And the king spake unto Ashpenaz the master of his eunuchs, that he should bring certain of the children of Israel, and of the king's seed, and of the princes;*

*Children in whom was no blemish, but well favoured, and skilful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and such as had ability in them to stand in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans.*

*And the king appointed them a daily provision of the king's meat, and of the wine which he drank: so nourishing them three years, that at the end thereof they might stand before the king.*

*Now among these were of the children of Judah, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah:*

*Unto whom the prince of the eunuchs gave names: for he gave unto Daniel the name of Belteshazzar; and to Hananiah, of Shadrach; and to Mishael, of Meshach; and to Azariah, of Abednego.*

*But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.*

This story is without a doubt the single greatest example in the Bible of the evil day coming in your child's life, or in some cases, already here. First of all, I want you to see how this thing kind of plays out.

- Babylon: A type of the world system, everything that is wrong with the world.
- Nebuchadnezzar: Represents the devil who is over Babylon, the world system.
- The Hebrew Children: A type and picture of your kids today.

What you have in this story is a picture of the world and the devil trying to get your children to stand for him instead of standing for God. I want to simply today, in the time that we have here, show you fundamentally four things that they had to face. These four things are exactly what your child is going to have to face. These four things are exactly what you as a parent need to understand and be looking for, and realize that when that evil day comes, it comes in four installments.

## V. Four Ways The World Attacks Your Child

1. Targeting the King's Seed (Your Child's Identity) Look at Daniel 1:3-4. It says "children of the king's seed." Every one of these children here are in the line of Christ. If you would go back into the genealogies listed for you in the Bible, you would find that these kids are within the line of Christ. Obviously, what the devil is trying to do through his servant Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon is to destroy that line. He wants to stop Christ from ultimately coming, so he thinks that if he can corrupt the line of Christ, he will stop that. That is what you have historically, but let us talk about this thing. It says "children of the king's seed." Each one of these kids were in the line of Christ physically, and I want to tell you something: if your child is saved this morning, spiritually they are in the line of Christ. They are God's child. They are God's heritage. They are in the line of Christ in a spiritual way, just like these four Hebrew children were in a physical way. The devil wants to stop your child from ever being what God wants them to be, just like he wanted to stop these people. These four kids are the key. Daniel, you will see it here a little bit, Daniel is the absolute key to the first coming of Christ. If Nebuchadnezzar could have stopped these four kids from ever being what God wanted them to be, he would have disrupted the whole concept of the first coming of Christ. By me saying that, let me say this: your children today are the key to the second coming of Christ. Where they were the key to the physical return of Christ, your children are the key to the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Where those four kids ushered in the Messiah to the nation of Israel, you are ushering in the rapture of the church and the second coming of Christ, Christ coming to this world. They had a job to do. Your children have a job to do. That is why the Bible says they are God's heritage. That is why the Bible says that the fruit of your womb is His reward. God has a plan, and the devil wants to stop them. Daniel 1:4 says "children in whom there was no blemish, but well favoured, and skilful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science." These kids were just like our kids. They had been raised obviously in a good home. They had been protected by their parents, protected by that very good, wholesome Jewish family back in the Old Testament that was impeccable and incredible. They were protected by their parents. They were protected by their religion, just like your kids are protected by their church. Now they have been ripped from their parents. They have been taken from the very protection that they knew, and now they are faced with some terrible circumstances. The Bible says they were children in whom there was no blemish, well favored. The devil will always go after the best. He really will. I look at some of you guys and some of you gals in here, and in my way of thinking, being in my church and knowing you and working together, you are the best there is. You are really good. But I look at that thing, and I know where some of you have come from. I want to say very honestly that in many of your lives, you young men and young ladies are standing by my side doing the ministry in this church, touching people's lives, raising your families right, or will in time. I want you to know you are a miracle of God. The deck was stacked against you so desperately, but God saw something in you, and I thank God every day that God protected you. When you face that evil day, and I will be honest, you want to talk about the grace of God and God's goodness and God seeing something in you. That is why I tell so many of you when you screw up, and we all screw up, but I tell so many of you, "Come on, man, come on, I see something in you that is special." If I can see it, how much more must God see it? If God can see it, how much more can the devil see it? He wants to stop you dead

in your tracks. These kids were just like many of us, and our kids are the best. I look at those little kids coming up here, and I talk to them and watch them, and the teenagers we have here, and the young ones singing, oh my goodness. These kids here, who were raised and protected and learned the Bible and learned the Old Testament and loved God and honored God, honored their Mom and their Dad, and did everything they were supposed to do just right, suddenly were ripped from all of that and put into the most godless, perverted society that the world has ever recorded in the annals of history, carried off to Babylon.

2. Daily Provision of the World (Influence and Indoctrination) Our second thing we want to look at is Daniel 1:5: "And the king appointed them a daily provision of the king's meat, and of the wine which he drank: so nourishing them three years, that at the end thereof they might stand before the king." I have always looked at that, and I have always seen a great parallel. The Lord obviously wants them to stand before Nebuchadnezzar, the world, the devil. But have you ever noticed the time frame here is three years? He wants to give them a daily provision of the wine and the meat that he ate. I have to tell you something, that meat and all those provisions were dedicated to all the pagan gods that Babylon worshiped. He wants to give them a daily provision. That is a picture of the devil serving up a daily portion to your child every day. Once they hit that day, once they are past the age of accountability, once they are out of your control and they have to face the world, the flesh, and the devil, he is going to give them a devil's helping of it. It is only what you have laid in their life, as you will see, that is going to keep them from going. Three years. Have you ever noticed in the first coming of Christ, when in Matthew 10 He called out the twelve apostles, He ministered with them for three years before He went back to heaven? It took Him three years to get them ready to take over the work that He was now turning over to them that would bring about all of Christianity. Three years to train His apostles. I would simply say that if you give me your life and give me a dedicated, good run at it, in three years' time, I could have you grounded enough in the Word of God that you probably would never want to go back to the world again. Three years is a key here. What I am saying is this: it took the Lord three years, and once His apostles hit that point, they were never going back to the world. It takes three years for the devil. He gives your child three years, and they will probably never go back to the Lord. That is the model. That is the picture, and it is a scary picture. The whole goal was at the end of that three-year period that they might stand before the king, Nebuchadnezzar. It tells us that the reason he does that is he wants to teach them the way of the Chaldean. The Chaldean is Babylonian. It is the world's system. For our children every day when they go to school or are out with their friends, the devil will have a daily proportion for them. He is going to make sure that they get it laid out right in front of them. You have to make sure they walk by it. That portion that the devil has will be put into your child's life to take the things of God out of their life and put the things of the world in their life. I want you to notice in Daniel 1:4 there are two things. First of all, learning the way of the Babylonians. We already saw in Proverbs 22:6 the way that God wants your child to go. God wants your child to go one way; the devil wants him to go another way. When they took these kids, the king's seed, and ripped them out of their families, took them down into those godless situations the world has ever seen, his whole goal was to teach them the way of the world. Then he says, "the tongue of the Chaldeans." He wants to get them to talk like the world. This is why your kid's

language changes. This is why when they are growing up, they are sweet and kind and tender, and then when they get to that age, now they are rebellious. Now, where they showed you reverence and honor at one point, now they will argue with you. They will say terrible things to you. Learning the way of the Babylonians and talking like the people in Babylon, that is what this provision does, and your child is faced with it every day. He is ripped from your family. He goes to a school system. He goes out with his friends. Those friends, the devil will make sure, will talk about everything your child does not need to hear.

3. Changing Their Name (Redefining Identity)The third thing he does is in Daniel 1:6-8. The king appointed them a daily provision of the king's meat and of the wine which he drank, so nourishing them three years that at the end they might stand before the king. That is the whole purpose of this. He wants to nourish them with the things of the world so that they will forget about the things of God. Remember Ecclesiastes 12:1:Ecclesiastes 12:1

Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them;There is coming an end to that time, and these boys are faced with it here. Among these were the children of Judah: Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. Unto whom the prince of the eunuchs gave names: for he gave unto Daniel the name of Belteshazzar; and to Hananiah, of Shadrach; and to Mishael, of Meshach; and to Azariah, of Abednego.The next thing he does, and I want you to see this, is what is going to happen in your child's life: he redefined who they were by changing their name. That is what the world wants to do with your child. They are sweet when they are six, seven, eight, maybe nine, but when they get to be in their teens, something changes about them. How many times have I heard, "I do not know what happened to my child. He is not what he used to be. She is not the way she used to be. Now we fight about everything. I used to be their best friend. Now they do not want to be around me." What happened? Somebody changed their name.Daniel, that is the name that God gave him. Daniel means "God my judge." Hananiah, that is the name that God gave them, their parents gave them. It means "God is gracious." Mishael, that is the name the parents gave them. It means "God is without equal." Azariah, that is the name that the parents gave him. It means "God is my helper." But when the world got him, the world took Daniel and changed it to Belteshazzar, and Belteshazzar means "Baal's prince." He took Hananiah, which means "God is gracious," and changed it to Shadrach, which means "the illumination of the sun god." He took Mishael, which means "God without equal," and changed it into Meshach, which means "who was like Venus." He took Azariah and changed it into Abednego, which means "servant of Nego."See what the devil does? This is why your child changes. When they get a daily proportion, and you do not have a first line of defense, and you have not laid the foundation of truth in their life, when that evil day hits, the first thing he is going to do is try to get your child to be somebody they are not. Look at God's names again:Daniel: God is my judge.Hananiah: God is gracious.Mishael: God is without equal.Azariah: God is my helper.Those are four great concepts that every child had to understand and know. Have you ever looked at how the first two go together and the second two go together? Daniel, "God is my judge." The first thing your child needs to understand is that there is a judgment of God coming. Your child needs to understand that God is a righteous God, and He is not going to let them get away with sin anymore. So Daniel understood that God was judge. But along

with that, we just do not want to talk about the judgment of God. Hananiah means "God is gracious." That child not only needs to know the judgment of God, he needs to know the grace of God. Surely that works. What an incredible concept. The devil just ripped it from him. Your child needs to know that God is a righteous judge that is going to hold him accountable, but He is a gracious God who is going to be there for them. Mishael means "God without equal." Your children need to know how great God is: the omnipotence of God, the omnipresence of God. God is the greatest being in the universe, the greatest power in the universe that sustains everything in our universal system. God is great. He is without equal. But Azariah means "God is my helper." The kid needs to understand how great God is, but he needs to understand that as great as God is, God still right there by his side wants to be his helper. Is not that a great four concepts? Is not that a great four concepts that God is judged but God is gracious? God is great but He is my friend. He created all the universe, the planets, the galaxies. He is the supreme architect of the universe. He did everything. And then when He was done work, He said, "I am going down to Bob's house and hang out with him." The devil took that from them. He does not want Daniel to think about God being judged. He wants Daniel to be Baal's prince and think that he can do whatever he wants to do without any accountability. He does not want Hananiah to think about God's grace. He wants Hananiah to worship the sun god and all of the beauty of it. He does not want Mishael to think about God being without equal and saying, "How great Thou art." He wants him to focus on Venus in blue jeans. He does not want Azariah to know that he can always turn to God for help in a time of trouble. He wants him to be a servant of Nego, the great pagan god of the Babylonians. The devil, through his daily provision, wants to get your child to be somebody other than who they are. Parents stand right there and watch the transformation take place. They actually watch it, and they actually scratch their head and say, "What happened?" The devil transformed them. The devil transformed them because the parent did not transform them. I want to say to you, somebody is going to transform them because at the end of the day, we are either going to stand for God or we are going to stand for the devil. We will not stand anywhere in between. He changed their names. It is real simple. God has something He wants them to be, and He wants them to take a stand for. He wants them to enter into His DARE program. He wants them to dare to be a Daniel. The devil wants to change them. He wants to get them to think like the world, talk like the world, be somebody they are not, and take their stand for him instead of God. Yet the Bible says that the transformation that God wants to transform your child comes by the transformation of the renewing of your mind on a daily basis. There is the first line of defense. There is the baseline of Bible truth. That is the evil day coming in your child's way: that day when they leave your protection and your home and you, the parents, and now have to be faced with all the things the world will throw at them. I want to tell you kids something. I tell it to your parents all the time. I do not always get to talk to you or preach to you. I know you are here on the third Sunday, which is today, but I want to tell you all something. It is a simple thing. It is nothing profound, but you have to remember it the rest of your life. It is simply this: life is about choices. There are some choices you can make in life that you can skate by, and because you can do that, we get in our mind a delusion that we are above the law, so to speak. But there are some choices that when you make them, you cannot go back on them.

When a young girl gives away her virginity to some boy in the back seat of a car, let me tell you something, God will forgive her. She can ask God to forgive her. God will forgive her. God will restore her. Everything can be just right with God, but He will not make her a virgin again. Some choices have serious consequences. We here teach you the Bible. We show you what the Bible says. We give you God's principles in all of your life for one reason, and that is so this is why we have camp and what we do. This is why we have the leadership training after camp to bring you on to keep going. We do it for one reason: we understand what you are up against. I want to help Mom and Dad. I cannot take their place. I cannot be a stand-in for your Mom and Dad. I cannot. But when I help Mom and Dad doing what is right, and we work together, we can do everything that we do for one reason: that is so you will make good choices. But good choices start in your heart with the Word of God. Psalms 119:11

Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.

4. Daniel's Purpose: Character and Courage Now the fourth thing, look at Daniel 1:8: "But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself." The Bible says Daniel purposed in his heart, "Dare to be a Daniel." Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the king's meat. We talked last week about character, but I told you that I was going to show you one of the greatest examples of character in the Bible, and it is Daniel doing right when nobody sees, doing right when nobody not only sees but nobody will ever find out. Daniel is 100 miles away from home. He probably, from the narrative in the Bible, never saw his parents again. Maybe they were killed in the captivity. I do not know when Nebuchadnezzar came down, a lot of them were. He is in a situation where he is not in this situation because of any bad choice that he made. He is here because I guess God wanted to give us a good example. So God allowed him to go down into Babylon. God allowed him to go through all of this so you and I could see, as a young kid not much older than most of you. He could have rationalized his situation. We all do. He could have said, "Well, you know what? That mean old God, He put me down here. I was doing right, and I was doing everything that I was supposed to do, and now He ripped me out of my family. I am mad at Him. I hate Him because He killed my Mom and Dad, or I am not going to see them. My brothers and sisters were all split up. I do not know how God could do such a thing after all we did." He could have rationalized and said, "You know what? I am just going to make the best of my situation simply because I did not ask to be here. God put me here. I will show Him." How many times have I heard that from God's people today? My next question is an old Dr. Phil comment: "And how is that working for you?" Daniel understood something that you kids need to understand, and you parents need to understand: God has a plan for your life, kids. He has something He wants you to do. You are in right now as a training ground. Your Mom and Dad are the DIs. They are telling you through the basic training. They are laying the first line of defense and the foundation in your life so you can stand. I am telling you, you are going to go through your own Babylonian captivity at some point in life. The devil is going to come after you. He is going to bring your friends. He is going to bring this. He is going to bring that. He is going to try to change your name. He is going to try to do everything he can so you will stop being what God wants you to be, and stop being what the world wants you to be. Not very

complicated. You see, that is what we call character. He was a long way. Nobody would have found out. Who would have blamed him? Sometimes you are in a situation where nobody sees but God, and that really defines what your character is, whether you are more worried about Mom and Dad finding out or worried about God seeing it. That speaks volumes about Daniel's character. That makes sense to me why, even though he could have done whatever he wanted to do and justified it, and most of the people on planet Earth would have said, "I get it," he said, "It is not about me. It is about what God has for me." Daniel, I do not know, he probably did not understand it. Probably no more than we understand it today. I do not think Daniel understood how important his relevance was to the first coming of Christ, and if Daniel would have gone down, we would not have had the greatest book that bridges the gap between 606 BC up to the first coming of Christ. We would have lost that great piece of the puzzle, Daniel's 70th week, that shows us exactly the time Christ was coming. I do not think he saw it, but God saw it. God did not need to show it to him because God knew he had character, and when you and I have character with God, God does not have to give us all the answers all the time. He knows we are going to stick with Him based on our character. Nobody would have known, yet he would not do anything against God. He had been trained at home by his parents, just like many of you have been, and this is why many of you kids will not do what is wrong when you are outside your parents. You will work with them. You are so close to them. You are in touch with them. Somebody tried to get you to do something, your parents are the first ones you tell about, and now when that evil day comes, he is able to make the right choices. He is able to take a stand. The rest of this great chapter shows how he has two ingredients that we all need to have in our life to take our stand: one is outward, the other is inward. Daniel had courage, and courage is always an outward expression. Courage is what we do when we are faced with something, how we respond to it. So the first ingredient that he had that we all need to have, and your kids need to have built into them, is courage: courage to look outward at the world and say, "No, thank you." But courage outwardly is only based on character inwardly. Without any inward character, there will be no outward courage. Where courage is the ability to choose to take a stand for God, character is the ability to live for God no matter what the choices are that are in front of you because you are going to do what is right. He is pressured by Nebuchadnezzar to conform. He is threatened by Nebuchadnezzar with punishment. But in his life, the power of God was more important than the power of a king. You have to get your kids to the place, to that first line of defense, in that time you have with them, that the power of God in their life is more powerful than the power of the world in their life. God stands by him through it all, and he becomes one of the greatest men in the Bible. Dare to be a Daniel.

## VI. The Power Of Biblical Training

All he went through and his ability to stand, and our study as we apply it to your kids, will go back to one simple thing that the Bible tells you with children to do, and I am still talking to the kids here. Going back to Ephesians 6, that great chapter on the armor of God that you take your stand against the evil day, it all starts out with one great truth: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right." God gave you parents for a reason. Those parents are there to be your first

line of defense. I am sorry if they are not. Hopefully, out of this, many of them will begin to be. If it goes the way it is looking, there is going to be a transformation in this church of parents who want to do what they need to do. It all starts with that one single great truth: you kids have to obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Obedience to God starts with your obedience to your parents. Parents, your child's success all starts with your obedience to God. What are you going to do? God has given you parents to form the early authority in your life so when you get older, you can make that transition to God in His Word, and I am going to show you how that actually happens in the next couple of weeks. I am going to walk you through the process.

I have always marveled at Daniel 1:4: "children in whom there were no blemish but were favored, well favoured and skillful in all wisdom and cunning in knowledge and understanding science and such that had the ability in them to stand before the king." It says in Daniel 1:20 that they had the ability in them. They did not get this ability at this time in their life from their parents. They did not have a cell phone to call their preacher or get their youth pastor. They already had the ability in them, and what a parent has to do is you have to train them and lay down the first line of offense so that they have the ability to stand in them. The world wanted to destroy them. It wanted to teach them the learning and the tongue of the Chaldean.

There are three great things here that they were taught that paid off in that evil day:

5. Skillful in Wisdom: That would tell me that there are five wisdom books in the Bible. That would tell me that these kids were skilled in the greatest books of the Bible to deal with the wisdom of God versus the wisdom of men. That would be the writings of Solomon.
6. Cunning in Knowledge: That would be the prophets. Cunning in knowledge. Knowledge is the facts. These kids understood from the prophets, and all of the prophets were written by this time. These kids knew exactly who they were. They knew who Israel was. They knew who they were as God's chosen people. They knew everything about it that they needed to know. They understood the facts because they were cunning in knowledge. They knew it. I like the word "cunning." It suggests to me that they were so skillful in wisdom and cunning in knowledge that they had the ability, and you see it in Daniel 1. Here is a great example, kids, of a young man not much older than you, having the cunning knowledge and having the understanding of skill and wisdom that he comes before the greatest king of the time, the greatest kingdom of the time, who has just about conquered the known world, and yet this little guy named Daniel uses the system against itself for the honor and glory of the Lord. That says something. That tells me that you can do it too. That tells me you get the right things in your life even though you are faced with the world, and you are out there with the world, the flesh, and the devil, and they have a daily proportion for you every day of your life. If you want to, you can be smarter than the problem, and you too can use the system against itself. This gave them the ability for them to stand. Somebody laid a baseline of truth in their life. Somebody saw this coming and was their first line of defense.
7. Understanding Science: That would be Genesis and Job. Babylon had a system of evolution back in their day, and they had their own science, but these boys knew the biblical science laid out in the Bible. They are quite incredible.

Daniel is the key to the first coming of Christ. The book of Daniel and the book of Revelation go hand in hand. That is why the critics of the Bible have always criticized Daniel. They have always criticized the book of Revelation. They will try to get rid of it. They overlap each other. They supplement each other. Daniel fills the gap from 606 BC up to the first coming of Christ. Revelation fills the gap from the New Testament church up to the second coming of Christ. So they go hand in hand, and your child, your family, faces its own form of Babylonian captivity today. We are in a world that is just as vile and rotten as Babylonian captivity ever thought about being, and that wants to capture your child. Many parents were already caught and captured by it. Other kids are born into a family that is already in captivity of Babylon. In both cases, the devil wants to stop them standing for Christ and start them to stand for him.

*Daniel 1:20*

*And in all matters of wisdom and understanding, that the king enquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm.*

I look at my high school kids, my junior high kids, your kids, our kids, the ones that are dialed in, the ones who understand, and the ones who go to school every day with a Bible under their arm, the ones who witness to their friends, the ones that take their stand against their own Babylonian world that they are in. I want to tell you something, they are ten times better than anything the world has to offer. They really are. He says, "They are up against the magicians and the astrologers." That is a perfect example of the world system.

Everybody knows who David Copperfield is, the great magician? He is quite incredible. He made a 747 disappear once right on the runway. He made a big old elephant disappear. He has done things that defy the laws of gravity, and people just go "ooh, ah" and wonder. At the end of the day, it is all a trick. If he could make a 747 disappear, the United States government would pay him \$60 million to fly over Russia and make all the airplanes disappear. You know what a magician is? I would love to be a magician. I think it is neat. I used to play a game with my kids where I would have a quarter, and I would put it in this hand. When they were little, they were pretty good at buying into it. But as they got older, they said, "Oh, Grandpa, you dropped it and put it under your leg. You do not really have it." But I would take that coin, and I would say, "Okay, watch this." And they would watch me, and I would look up and I would distract them for a minute, and I would say, "Izzy, stop that!" And they would look over, and I would put it under my leg. And I would say, "Watch, which hand do you think it is in?" Remember this, Maddie? Maddie tapped that hand. Maddie is thinking. I said, "What hand, Maddie? It has got to be there." Their eyes are getting big. It was an illusion. It was a very bad illusion. If I did not have a dog as my counterpart, there would have been no illusion to it. I want to pick a card, any card. I think it is incredible, and it looks like magic, but there is no magic. David Copperfield, I do not know how he did it, but if you would have walked out there, you would have run into that 747 and busted your head. It was still there. That elephant would have stepped on you and squashed you. It was still there. The magicians of this world only give an illusion that it is real. I want to tell you something, the things of this world, kids, Mom and Dad, he had magicians come in. You know why? Because everything in Babylon, up against God and the Word of God, was just an illusion. What you think in the world is real, what you think in the world is fun, what you think

in the world is worth standing for and investing your life in, I am here to tell you, it is an illusion. Your kids need to understand that. Your kids need to understand that. It is not real. It is an illusion.

All this gave them the ability to stand. In both cases, the devil, Nebuchadnezzar, wants to stop them from standing for God and then stand for him. That is exactly what the world does. They are going to do those four things:

8. They are going to take the very best that you have in your family, which is your kid, and try to destroy them.
9. They are going to come after them with a daily proportion of the king's meat, the world.
10. They are going to try to change their name and transform them from what God wants them to be to what the world wants them to be.
11. The only thing that is going to give them the courage and the character, the purpose in their heart, is what you build into them right now by taking the responsibility and doing what God wants them to do to make them ten times better.

I am proud of the kids in our church. I am, every one of them. I know that we have something that could be better. I know, I get it. We will get there. I understand. The good thing about the good kids in this church is I have good parents in this church, and they will do what they need to do because they do not want to see their kids go the way of Babylon either.

## VII. Conclusion: The Greatest Gift

I was asked the other Thursday night, I got a phone call from somebody that was thinking about coming to church here. I did not know them. They asked me about our Christmas service this morning. I said, "Well, I am in the book of Proverbs right now, and we are dealing with training up your children, so we are going to stick with that. In fact, this Sunday is going to be the key message for all of it for the parents." Oblivious to them, they simply said, "So what you are saying is you are not having a Christmas service?" I said, "Well, probably not in the way you are thinking of it. We will not have the Mormon Tabernacle Choir here. We will not have Christmas tinsel hanging for the fans when the fans go around it, it just clogs them up. We will not have a tree. We will not have this and that. We will have a fun spirit. We will have a good time, but we will not have your traditional thing." "Okay, thank you." Click. That is fine. I understand that is what people want, but as I thought about it, I have to be honest with you, I almost said, "You know what? I almost called Bob, Greg, and Bubba, and some of the guys, John and Danny, and said, 'Go find me a big tree. Deck the halls. Just make this thing.' And I will just preach a nice Christmasy message today. We will have Penny Hansinger dress up as a wise man, and baby Bubba can be the baby Jesus. The guys can sing, 'Away in a Manger,' 'Who is He? He is a stranger,' or something like that."

Then I thought about it. I said to myself, "What is wrong with you, Bob?" By the way, there are lots of things wrong with me. But I said to myself, "What are you doing?" And the Lord said, "Do not you know you just do what you are planning on doing because I know it is Christmas, and I know everybody is in the spirit of giving, but I will tell you something: the greatest gift you

can ever give these parents is their families back and their children. So just preach what you have." I repented, got right with God for a moment. I thought, "You know, I know I just, and that is stupid to me because I will tell you something, the greatest gift that God ever gave any of us is our children." The greatest gift I can give to you as parents today are the tools to make sure when the evil day comes, the devil does not get them. Let us commit to ourselves today at Christmas that we will not lose one more of our kids out of our church to the world. Moms and Dads, it is on your shoulders. It is your responsibility. Just work together. I am working with four or five parents right now, just helping them. I worked with this couple up in Alaska, another couple of other places this week on the phone, long distance. They are excited. They are watching this morning. They are doing everything that they need to do, and it will change everything.

Next week we are going to get in, and I am going to, we are going to go up to the next level now that we have this. I am going to show you some things next week about the next level about parenting and helping you put all this stuff together. I want you to have a great Christmas the rest of the day. I want you to have a great time. Enjoy your families. Enjoy the time you have.