

Week of September 29, 2024

Speaker: Mark Delaney

The Target of Parenting



Icebreaker



- If your parents had a slogan for how they raised you, what do you think it would be?
- What's one activity you loved doing as a kid that you'd love to share with future generations?
- If you could be a kid again for one day, what would you do?



Discussion Questions



- Psalm 127:3-5 compares children to arrows in the hands of a warrior. What does this imagery suggest about the responsibility and purpose of parenting or influence?
- How has your upbringing shaped the way you view relationships, both with others and with God?
- The sermon discussed three views of God—God of happiness, God of perfection, and God of relationship. Which one do you think most influenced your upbringing, and how does it shape your current approach to parenting or leadership?
- Why is it important to recognize that each child is unique, as described by the handmade arrows metaphor? How does this impact the way you approach parenting or mentoring?
- How do you find a balance between guiding and letting go as children grow up?
- "God doesn't remove every struggle; He uses them to build character." How does this principle affect your approach to discipline or mentorship in your own life?
- The concept of "parenting toward a transformed heart, not just behavior" is critical. How do we model this kind of relational leadership in our families or communities?



Thought for the Group



In Psalm 127:3–5, children are described as arrows in the hands of a warrior. We, as parents or mentors, are holding the bow. It's our job to guide and aim them toward a target. The key question is—what are we aiming for?

If we think God just wants us to be happy, we might focus on keeping kids and teens comfortable and avoiding challenges. But the truth is, growth happens in the tough moments, and real happiness comes from living a life surrendered to God, not from avoiding hard things.

If we see God as demanding perfection, it's easy to fall into the trap of pushing our kids and teens to perform and meet high standards. But God isn't after perfection, He's after our hearts. He cares about who we are becoming, not just what we achieve. The same should be true in our parenting—shaping hearts, not just chasing achievements.

God wants a relationship with us, and that's the kind of parenting we should aim for—building a real connection with our kids that points them to Jesus. It's not about controlling their behavior, but helping them experience God's love through us.

It's not about raising perfect kids or making them happy all the time. It's about preparing them for life by pointing them to God, showing them grace when they fall short, and helping them navigate life's challenges with faith.



Next Steps



- Focus on one relationship and prioritize connection over achievement. Find time to listen, engage in what they care about, and show them that your love isn't tied to how well they perform, but to who they are.
- The next time you feel tension rising in a difficult situation, take a step back and respond with grace instead of frustration. Parenting and leadership are more about shaping hearts than controlling behavior.