



### *Week One: Introduction*

There is much in the world today that inspires fear for parents, and even causes some to question the wisdom or desirability of having children at all. In contrast, the biblical view is this: God created our ability to have kids as a good gift and a means to accomplish His plan to save the world. God does not command us to have children, but He does commend it and calls children a blessing. It was through the bearing of children that God provided a Savior for humanity. And, just as the future leadership of government, the arts, and scientific discovery belongs to our children, so does the future leadership of the kingdom of God and the church.

However, the world is not a safe place for children, leading us to adopt fear-based parenting strategies, such as:

- **Protective Parenting:** If I can keep all the bad in the world away from you, then you will grow up to be good. Problem: protective parenting doesn't produce strong children but weak ones who don't know how to confront "the bad" on their own.
- **Permissive Parenting:** If I can give you what you want and let you do what you want, you will fit in and be happy. Problem: this is what produces an entitlement mentality in our children.
- **Achievement Parenting:** If I can involve you in everything and challenge you to reach your potential, you will be successful in life. Problem: this

puts a crushing amount of pressure on our children to achieve and perform, producing anxiety and depression.

What is the alternative?

- **God-centered Parenting:** If I can teach you and show you (by my example) to love and trust God and to follow His ways, you will thrive and be fearless in an evil and difficult world. This approach makes it our goal to enable and encourage our children to connect with God and rely on Him rather than on us.

#### **Discussion Questions:**

1. What do you hope to get out of this sermon series? If you are not currently parenting children, how might this series apply to you?
2. From your experience, what sorts of things create fear in the hearts and minds of parents today? What do you personally fear regarding children?
3. Tim read a list of 9 Trends regarding children and teens in his sermon. Were any of these new to you? How is it helpful for us to be aware of these trends?
4. Of the four models of parenting Tim mentioned, which one best describes the way you were raised? (Protective, Permissive, Achievement-based, or God-centered)
5. As you consider the God-centered parenting approach, what appeals to you? What do you think would be challenging or difficult about it?

Prayer:

- Recall the things your group members mentioned that cause them fear for children.
- Acknowledge that these fears are legitimate and express them to God. (1 Peter 5:7)
- Ask God to show you how to apply Proverbs 3:5-6 in your life and in your parenting.

- Pray that you will all move forward motivated by love for God as well as love for your children.

#### Application

- Return next Sunday for the next installment in the series.
- Who do you know who needs to hear this series? Invite them to join you.

#### Scripture Memory

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding;  
In all your ways submit to Him, and He will make your paths straight.

*Proverbs 3:5-6*