

Children Change Your Life

God always gives good gifts.

In God's sovereign and providential plan every moment, event, and circumstance - regardless of how it makes us feel - is for our good and for His glory. God is never frivolous or nonchalant with His actions. His ways are steadfast and His intentions are clear. He wants you to know Him and treasure Him, so you might worship Him.

The births of John the Baptist and Jesus are extraordinary - miracles that invite an elderly barren woman and a young virgin girl to be part of God's plan. He meets them in their disappointment and innocence, interrupts their lives, and goes so far as to name their boys before they are born (Lk 1:5-2:7). The two "baby blessings" will ultimately make God's glorious name known among the nations. While they bring physical life into the homes of Elizabeth and Mary, they will eventually bring spiritual life to mankind (Lk 1:76-79).

It is breathtaking how much wonder these two boys bring to all who are privileged to witness their births. The text is flooded with expressions of praise and joy! The parents, the neighbors, the shepherds, and many others marvel at God's grace and mercy as they hear and see about God's plan for John and Jesus.

Which brings us back to my opening statement: "God always gives good gifts" and children are one of the greatest of these. You don't need to be a parent to appreciate this and to value them accordingly. Why? Because children come in both physical and spiritual form. The first is obvious to parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and so on, because they were happy participants in the pregnancy announcement, the gender reveal, the snapshots of the newborn, and the celebration of many exciting "firsts". The latter pertains to those who are a part of the family of God - the church. Followers of Jesus are children of God "born not of natural descent, ... but born of God" (Jn 1:12-13). It is a thrill to be involved in the spiritual rebirth, spiritual growth, and spiritual journey of the sons and daughters of God - our brothers and sisters in Christ! Furthermore, it is a tremendous responsibility to be taken seriously (Matt 18:6). You and I have the privilege to love God's children, encourage and edify them patiently, and model Jesus clearly. Just as parents are stewards of the hearts of their own children, so we are shepherds of the souls of children at our church. Regardless of age, they are God's children, bought with a price (1 Cor 6:20)! Your actions and words matter eternally. By God's grace, they have the potential to spur children on to deeper faith, greater love, and more faithful service. It was

Charles H. Spurgeon who quipped about the impact we have on the children in our care:

You may speak but a word to a child, and in that child there may be slumbering a noble heart which shall stir the Christian Church in years to come.

Rejoice in having the remarkable opportunity to participate in God's life changing Gospel plan! Your participation will flood you with great joy... It may even change ***your*** life!

Psalm 127:3-5 (NIV) - "Children are a heritage from the Lord, offspring a reward from him. ***Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are children born in one's youth. Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them. They will not be put to shame when they contend with their opponents in court.***"