



13 NOV 2022 | PS ERNIE SONG
PARENTING: THE ARROW MAKERS | PSALM 127:3-5

SPIRITUAL OBJECTIVES

At the end of the sermon discussion, cell members will:

- a. Commit as parents (and spiritual parents) to rise to the challenge to be Godly stewards of the next generation.
- b. Recognise our roles in building Godly character in the next generation, mentoring and training our children in love, and positively influencing the lives of our children so that they know of and are secure in their identity in Christ.
- c. Respond by encouraging our children to discover and invest into their God-given mission and purpose in life.

SERMON SUMMARY

Parenting involves developing and guiding a child towards his/her God-given destiny and purpose. There are four areas of development that children need from their parents:

- a. Build **CHARACTER** through discipline. Just as God disciplines those He loves ([Hebrews 12:6](#)), parents must administer discipline correctly to guide character formation. Christian discipline must always include restoration and prayer, but not shame.
- b. Build **RELATIONSHIPS** with others. God places us in a community so that we relate and support one another ([1 Corinthians 12:27](#)). Parents need to guide children on how relate with themselves, how to relate with the world, and how to related with an older generation. Parents also need to teach children how to love and relate to imperfect people.
- c. Impart **IDENTITY**. God gives us an identity as His child ([John 1:12](#)). As parents, we need to impart this God-given identity into our children. Ps Ernie spoke about three facets of this identity: they are sinners in need of a Saviour, they are loved by God, and they are pumped with potential by the Holy Spirit.
- d. Mobilise for **MISSION**. God gives us a purpose and mission in life ([Matthew 28:19-20](#)). Parents need to build into our children that their goal in life is to be image bearers to the world.

Parenting is a marathon. Godly parenting affects the generations. Ps Ernie challenges parents to step up and be the redemptive and Godly influence in the lives of their children!



SERMON SUMMARY

In the last sermon in this series on Family, Ps Ernie speaks on parenting. Parenting involves developing and guiding a child towards his/her God-given destiny and purpose. Other than parents with young children, this sermon is also important for singles and for parents with adult children.

Using [Psalm 127:3-5](#) as a base and looking at God as the ultimate parent of His children, we have a framework on what goals of Christian parenting are through the example of God. Parents are called to be “arrow-makers.” There are four areas of development that children need from their parents:

- a. **Build CHARACTER through discipline.** Character is important because as a child of God, we are image bearers. We must bear the character of God in our lives. Just as God disciplines those He loves ([Hebrews 12:6](#)), parents must administer discipline correctly to guide character formation. One key aspect of character is a child must learn how to respond correctly to authority, especially to God’s authority in their lives. When properly administered, discipline builds security in the heart of a child.


Ps Ernie draws the distinction between discipline and punishment. Discipline is for restoration, helping the child to grow whereas punishment is for retaliation, getting even with the child. Christian discipline ([Proverbs 23:12-14](#)) must always include restoration and prayer, but not shame.

- b. **Build RELATIONSHIPS with others.** God places us in a community so that we relate and support one another ([1 Corinthians 12:27](#)). Parents need to guide children on:

- *[how to relate with their parents](#)*. For instance, as parents, it may be more important to give children experiences and not just gifts. To be close to someone requires you to spend time with the person. Without time, there will be no deepening of relationship. Another way for a parent to strengthen our relationship with our children is to apologise – showing that we are also in need of a Saviour too.
- *[how to relate with the world](#)*. Children must learn which are the friendships they should cultivate and what are bad influences. They also need to learn what it means to give and receive from others, to be vulnerable and to learn to love and relate to imperfect people.
- *[how to relate with an older generation](#)*. Other than their own parents, children need an older generation above them to run to for sharing and to ask for guidance. This can happen best within the cell.

- c. **Impart IDENTITY.** God gives us an identity as His child ([John 1:12](#)). As parents, we need to impart this God-given identity into our children. That is, there is no need to strive and no need to feel rejected or insecure. Children must know who they are and whose they are – this is identity in Christ. Ps Ernie speaks about three facets of this identity:

- *[they are sinners in need of a Saviour](#)*. As adults and parents, we must model our need for a Saviour. If a parent does not prioritise his relationship with God, the child would learn the lesson that the spiritual



pursuits and the spiritual community is not important. Parents too make mistake in our lives and, in our parenting. When we apologise to our children and to our spouses, we show them that we too need a Saviour.

- they are loved by God. When we help our children build their identity around the love of God, their love tanks will always be full and they do not need to go around looking for unhealthy alternatives. As parents, we should model this at home!
 - they are pumped with potential by the Holy Spirit. The key is to help our children discover who God made them to be and what their purpose in life is. Parents can help to empower our children to explore, fail and encounter pain and hardship. This involves entrusting our children to God!
- d. Mobilise for MISSION. God gives us a purpose and mission in life (Matthew 28:19-20), a vision bigger than themselves. Parents need to build into our children that their goal in life is to be image bearers to the world. The end goal of every child's life is to be able to stand before God and say, "I have fought the good fight, I have run the race, and I have kept the faith."

Parenting is a marathon. Godly parenting affects the generations. Even when we may feel that we did not do a good job in parenting, God is a God who restores – our abilities to ruin our children is not as great as God's power to redeem them. Ps Ernie challenges parents to step up and be the redemptive and Godly influence in the lives of their children!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. **The role of a parent is critical for God's kingdom and the community that we are in. Christian parenting is about being good stewards of our children. What does this mean?**

Leader's Notes

This is a reflect and relate question for members to share on what Christian stewardship can look like in the context of a parent-child relationship. Children do not belong to us as parents. As parents, we must not make children the centre of our lives as that place belongs to God. We do not live for them; we live for God!

As a steward, parents manage and are entrusted with the responsibility to look after our children. Psalm 127:3 tells of children being a gift from the Lord. God gives us young children (within the family relationship or in a community) to look after with utmost care for a season. We should therefore cherish, nourish, and nurture our children. We do this by teaching, training, correcting, admonishing, disciplining, and demonstrating God's love and values in every area of our lives. Within the cell, let us encourage one another to be good stewards of the children that God has placed in our families and community! Note that this is also relevant for singles. The applicable questions for singles are: How can you intentionally connect to someone younger than you in the days ahead? Can you invest your God-given gifts into the lives of the next generation? How can you help parents in your cell and in the church?



Transition

As we commit to be good stewards of the children God puts under our care or influence, we need to consider the impact that we have on their character development.

- 2. What were the patterns of discipline in your home when you were a child? What challenges of disciplining do you see yourself or other parents struggling with today? What is the purpose of discipline?**

Leader's Notes

This is a relate and reflect question for members to share from their personal experience and perspective on discipline. Discipline is evidence of love. When we consistently discipline our children and do it with the right attitude – compassionately, under Godly control, with consistent boundaries and consequences, and focused on the child's best outcome – we are expressing love exactly as God expresses His love. When we discipline our children, it is important to consider the following:

- The necessity of discipline: to deter destruction
- The means of discipline: actions and words
- The motive in discipline: to express love
- The goal of discipline: to teach obedience
- The result of discipline: short-term pain and long-term gain.

Resource: Five Characteristics of Biblical Discipline

We need to draw the distinction between the discipline for restoration and the punishment for retaliation and avoid the latter either out of anger or our own convenience.

Transition


It is critical that we teach our children obedience to God as the authority in their lives. This involves rooting their sense of identity, their sense of purpose and mission in life in Christ.

- 3. What identity do you need to impart the most to the children in your family or community? What are steps you can take to do so?**

Leader's Notes

This is a response question to consider the impact we have on our children's sense of identity and purpose in life. Man was created to be image-bearers of God. If we are going to be image-bearers, the vertical relationship to God, our Creator, must be developed and nurtured. Ps Ernie shared on three specific facets in our identity in Christ which we can impart to our children: we are sinners in need of a Saviour, we are loved by God and we are pumped with potential by the Holy Spirit. Think through the interactions we have as parents (or adults) to the young children in our midst. How can we be positive influencers in their lives?

Leaders can speak of the role of the Spiritual Community to help guide the younger generations within the Cell and within the church. Members can be challenged to make and strengthen connections to one or two younger ones within the church.



“When we speak into the ears of our children, we’re also speaking into the ears of our great-great-grandchildren. We need to be thinking in terms of our lives affecting 10 generations down the road.” – **Stephen Kendrick**

Resource: [Your Identity in Christ - 14 Things God Says of You List](#)

Closing

God is a redemptive God. Godly parenting affects the generations. We need to step up and take hold of what God calls us to do as mentors and role models for our children!

Our Church has curated a helpful personal reflection guide for cell members (married or single) to reflect on questions related to parenting. There are also helpful articles that provide Biblical perspectives. Leaders may also wish to use this resource to guide in their cell facilitation, or to choose an article that is helpful to the members’ life stage.

Resource: rlc.sg/beyondpulpit

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

You can use these additional questions if you would like to process the message further within your cell (subgroups).

1. For Singles

- a. How can you intentionally connect to someone younger / older than you in the days ahead?
- b. With the giftings that you have, how can you invest into the lives of the next generation?
- c. What can you do to help the parents in your cell?
- d. What do you think God’s purpose is for your singleness?

2. For Couples

a. Character

- i. If you have more than one child, describe the differences and similarities in how you train each one.
- ii. What cautions should a parent consider in regard to caning / spanking?
- iii. What character traits would you like to see in your child by the time he/she starts working?
- iv. What is the proper way of executing discipline so that it doesn’t go down the road of punishment?

b. Relationships

- i. What are some of your best strategies for dealing with sibling conflict (or strategies that you have seen other parents use)?
- ii. What relational skills would you like your children to learn?
- iii. Describe how your children relate with other people.
- iv. Discuss what fills your children’s tanks and how you can use that to deepen your relationship with them.

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- v. What kind of people do you think your children need in their lives?

c. *Identity*

- i. In this season of your child's life, what identity do you need to impart the most to him/her?
- ii. In what ways can you help your children strengthen their relationship with God?
- iii. "It is ok for my child to miss church if it's exam season or if there are enrichment programs." Do you agree with this?
- iv. Why is a child's relationship with God so key to building their identity?
- v. What do you think will happen to your children if their identity is not rooted in God?

d. *Mission*

- i. In what ways can you cultivate a sense of mission in your children's life?
- ii. Describe your hopes and dreams for your children's futures.
- iii. What will you do if your child chooses a future without God when he/she starts working?

WORKS

1. Sermon Application

- Pray for parents (and other adults too) to rise to the challenge to be Godly stewards of our children.
- Pray that we help build Godly character in the next generation.
- Pray that we mentor and train our children in love so that they can love and relate to others that God has placed in their lives.
- Pray that we are positive and healthy influencers in the lives of our children so that they know of their identity in Christ and is secure in this identity as a child of God.
- Pray that we encourage our children to discover and invest into their God-given mission and purpose in life.

2. COVID-19 in Singapore

- Praise the Lord for the removal of the vaccinated-differentiated measures.
- Pray for God's protection in the midst of a high number of community cases.
- Pray for protection against reinfection and the ill effects that it may bring.

3. World

- A swift end to the COVID-19 crisis globally, if not a reduction in cases in third world nations, and a stable environment where humans and virus coexist.
- Pray for peace especially in areas of conflict (Ukraine) and potential conflict – China & Taiwan.

4. Opportunities for Outreach

- Ask the Lord to grant you opportunities to reach out to a non-believing loved one, friend, or colleague this week as we seek to mature in Christlikeness.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Digital Bulletin: rlc.sg/bulletin

1. **9M Ministry.** The 9M Ministry provides prayer support for expectant mothers on their 9-month journey of pregnancy. Sisters-in-Christ who are fellow RiverLifers are assigned as Prayer Buddies to walk alongside mums who sign up to receive prayer support.

Receive Prayer Support: rlc.sg/9m

Provide Prayer Support: rlc.sg/serve

2. **SuperLife: Discipleship at Home for Parents.** Sun, 20 Nov. 9am. Registration: rlc.sg/sl20novregform

- Primary Session (Grace Chapel): *Who am I?* by Amy Loh focusing on nurturing a child's spiritual identity
- Pre-School Session (Faith Chapel): *Love* by Rev. Nicholas Choo focusing on practical handles to help pre-schoolers to develop their identities in Christ.

3. **Nov-Dec Church Calendar**

- 20 Nov, 11am – 377A Forum: Future of the Family (Link: rlc.sg/nov-reg)
- 03 Dec, 4.30pm – RL Cares Community Outreach
- 17 Dec, 2.30pm – RL Cares Community Outreach
- 04 – 25 Dec – Christmas Evangelistic Services

4. **Global Hunger Fund.** This fund will go towards RLC's mission partners to help their local churches and communities gain access to food amid soaring costs. Refer to the [Digital Bulletin](#) for more details.


5. **RiverLife Kindergarten.** RLK has vacancies for Chinese Teachers. If you wish to apply, please send your resume to Mrs Tan Oi Leng (oileng@riverlifekindergarten.org.sg).

6. **Call for Musicians and Vocalists.** The Worship & Music ministry is on the lookout for musicians and vocalists – keyboardist, electric guitarist, bassist, drummer and singers. If you are interested, you can sign up at rlc.sg/serve. Do note that an audition will be required before joining the ministry.

7. **Call for SuperLife Volunteers.** If you have a heart for children and a desire to disciple them in their spiritual journey, come be a part of the SuperLife team. Sign up at rlc.sg/serve. Immediate needs:

- *SuperLife Primary Teacher* (Serve twice a month. Facilitate small group discussions after each Bible lesson, connect and pray with the children, be involved in SuperLife Ministry events, etc.)
- *Special Needs Chaperone.* (Serve twice a month. Provided 1-1 support to children with special needs and help facilitate an inclusive environment between children with and without special needs.)

8. **F&B Related Ministries Recruitment.** We're looking for RiverLifers who love connecting with new people and enjoy cooking and serving. Team members will serve once a month. For more details Karen Koh (Welcome Lounge) at karenkoh@riverlife.org.sg and Jonathan Cho (The Café and Volunteers Corner) at jonathancho@riverlife.org.sg.

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9. **Technical & Production (TAP) Ministry Recruitment.** The TAP ministry comprises five teams – audio, graphics, lighting, sound and video – and they all work as one in partnership with the Holy Spirit to support an atmosphere that allows the congregation to encounter God. We are now opening up recruitment for this ministry. If you desire to take the next step in your walk with God through starting to serve, we invite you to sign up to explore serving in one of the five TAP teams. You may sign up online at rlc.sg/serve or refer to our [digital bulletin](#) for more details.
10. **RiverLife Community Services (RCS).** In 2021, RCS focused on providing relief to families who were badly affected by the pandemic. We believe that in this season, God is calling RCS to build loving families and strong communities. Listed below are opportunities where you can serve or give to RCS:
- You can serve as a volunteer in one of our programmes to befriend and build relationships with children, youth, mothers and lower-income families. Find out more here: rlc.sg/rcs2022.
 - You can sow by contributing financially too. Your giving will go into initiatives such as grocery distributions and various programmes that will help our beneficiaries build resilience and break free from the poverty cycle. Find out more by writing to RCS at office@rcs.org.sg.
 - RCS is also looking to partner with organizations (donations of essential items – toiletries, wearables, etc). To find out more, write to us at volunteer@rcs.org.sg.
 - RCS is looking for 20 Food Collection Helper/Driver that is able to help with the loading/unloading of fresh food items at blocks where we are reaching out to. **Commitment:** Minimally once a month for 6 months, Saturdays, 12-4pm. Contact: rlcares@rcs.org.sg.
11. **RiverLife Podcast.** The RiverLife Podcast allows you to listen to RiverLife content anytime, anywhere! The link to go to is rlc.sg/podcast or simply search **'The RiverLife Podcast'** on Spotify.
12. **Spiritual Growth Resources.** We have put together a curated list of recommended resources for the RiverLife family. These resources (books, articles, podcasts and videos) are recommendations for the various spiritual growth stages as you seek to grow deeper in the River of God this year. You can access them at rlc.sg/resource. This list will be continually populated throughout the year.
13. **Cradle Roll.** Our Cradle Roll is open from 9am to 10.30am every Sunday for children 24 months and below. *NO booking of tickets is required.*
14. **Prayer Ministry.** If you require prayer ministry for any issues you face (eg. unforgiveness, demonic oppression, etc), you can sign up for RLC's RTF ministry: <https://bit.ly/rlcrtf>
15. **Bible Reading Plan.** You can access our 2-Year Bible Reading Plan 2021-2022 by visiting: <https://rlc.sg/brp2021>.

16. **Testimony.** If you have a testimony to share, you can write to us at stories@riverlife.org.sg to share with us your testimony as an encouragement to others.

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