

Lesson 1: The Mark

Victory Missionary Baptist Church – Friday, August 24, 2017

Psalm 127 - Unless the Lord Build the House. **The theme is dependence upon the Lord in our endeavors.**

- **v3** – heritage – an inheritance; a reward – a gift **What is this inheritance and gift?**
- **v4** – Why an arrow instead of a sword?

An arrow is a distance weapon extending the reach of the warrior beyond the length of his arm.

Children are God's ability for you to impact the world beyond the reach of your life (both place and time).

Using the Archer Analogy: 1) what is the mark we aim for, and 2) how do I draw the bow?

What is the Mark?

Is it finishing school, earning a degree, getting a certain job, being free from debt, success at athletics, looking or acting a certain way, popularity, finding a spouse, being happy... How about being saved, joining the church?

- We can agree that the last two goals are more significant than the rest.
- It is also good to establish and recognize important milestones on the journey of life.

None of these things I have mentioned are the “mark” of biblical parenting (the ultimate goal).

Phil 3:12–15 - “Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.”

- The calling Paul speaks of here is not being the best apostle that he can be.
- The calling he is speaking of is not unique to him; it is a universal calling for all Christians.

If we agree that salvation is a fundamental goal of Biblical parenting, we must also recognize the higher (upward) calling that accompanies salvation.

1 Peter 1:15-16 - “but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”” (ESV) **The calling is complete Christ-likeness in all aspects of our life.**

- The world will not support you in this calling... **it will require faith**
- You will not reach the destination in this life... **it will require hope**
- Pursuing this calling will cost you something... **it will require love**

This is the “mark” we aim for in TRULY Biblical parenting; graduation, marriage, salvation & baptism are not destinations, but necessary milestones on the journey.

3 John 4 - “I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.”

A walk is a pattern of steps moving toward a destination. John's heart was tied to the goal of godly parenting.

Three Benefits of this Perspective:

1. It aligns your heart with God's heart.

Gen 17:1–2 - “And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect [blameless]. And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly.”

This was God's singular desire for Abraham as He established the covenant of circumcision (not some great feat, just a resolute heart to honor Him and grow in righteousness).

I don't expect that what I have said is a surprise, but sometimes we act like life is about so much less.

Illus: “We are staying together for the kids.”

While maintaining a marriage is honorable, this is far short of God's mark, God's calling.

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2. It unlocks the warehouse of God's wisdom on parenting

1 Tim 3:4-5 - "He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?)," **The "mark" of parenting and the commission of the church are perfectly aligned.**

The instruction on & examples of discipleship in the Bible are a warehouse of parenting wisdom.

3. It provides necessary perspective on the task before us.

a. Their Mark is your Mark (Phil 3:14-15)

2 Tim 1:1-2a; 3:10-11a, 14 – Paul taught Timothy by formal instruction, but mostly by his life.

It is the example that brings our instruction to life and shows its relevance.

Illustration: We avoid the extremes of the parent-centered home and the child-centered home

b. Complacency Kills (Phil 3:12-13)

- He knew he had not arrived. **He maintained a spiritual perspective on where he was at.**
- He did not rest on his laurels or dwell on his failures (forgetting what is behind)

He continued to run the race with his eyes on Jesus at the finish line.

Illustration: A Generational Failure

- **Joshua 23:1-7** – A call for the conquering generation to keep moving forward
- **Judges 1** – The majority of the tribes compromised and did not drive out the inhabitants
- **Judges 2:6-11** – A generation arose that did not know the Lord or the work that he had done for Israel

They had heard, but had not seen, and had definitely not experienced the deliverance of the Lord.

They had soaked up the fruit of God's blessing but did not know the Source or His salvation.

They had fought for the Lord; they had witnessed his salvation; they decided they were done; their fruit was the loss of next generation.

Illustration: A Success Story

- **Joshua 15:13-19** – Caleb's continued fight in the Promised Land
 - Recall Caleb's history. He was now 85 years old (**Josh 14:6-15**)
 - Caleb kept fighting the giants (he wasn't complacent in what he had already achieved).
He showed the next generation the salvation of the Lord.
 - Caleb mentored the next generation of fighters.
 - He helped the next generation of leaders to gain experience depending on the Lord.
 - He secured a husband who knew the Lord's power for his daughter.
- **Judges 1:11-15** (repeat); **3:1-11** – Othniel became the first judge of Israel

The wise "parenting" of Caleb bore fruit for him and the whole nation of Israel by God's grace.

What do your children see in your walk with God?

c. Are we there yet?

When is our parental duty complete?

- Out of diapers? In school? Driver's license? HS Graduation? College Graduation? Marriage?

There are many points at which our role evolves as our children grow.

2 Tim 4:1-8 – Paul's final instruction to Timothy

- Paul was still serving as a model and example to Timothy
- Paul was only claiming victory as he was nearing the finish line.

When our life goal and our parental goal are aligned with God's goal, we realize that in some way, we will bear this blessed burden until our last breath.