

**God's Home Store: Gifts to Children**  
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**Lynn Haven UMC**

**Introduction**

As for parents, don't provoke your children to anger, but raise them with discipline and instruction about the Lord. (Ephesians 6:4 CEB)

As children grow and develop, parents must be prepared to face conflicts that start simply enough in the form of a tear-filled toddler tantrum (who wants to be forced to wear pants all the time!?) and evolve into the more complex, angst driven emotions of those trying teenage years. It is a parent's responsibility to show a child how to conduct themselves when faced with peer pressure, relationship woes and following the rules of society. Those rocky waters are not always the easiest to navigate. Luckily, God provides parenting examples all throughout Scripture that can help steer us in the right direction. Just look at the story of God's first children, Adam and Eve. Their story reminds us that, from the dawn of time, children have been prone to disobedience. No matter how loving and caring a parent might be, children are still able to exercise that pesky free will they were given. But parents are also able to give them the priceless gifts found only in "God's Home Store" that will guide them and, hopefully, one day bear eternal fruit.

**Digging Deeper**

The first gift we can give children is **DISCIPLINE**

- Proverbs 22:15 (MSG) says, "Young people are prone to foolishness and fads; the cure comes through tough-minded discipline." It's painful to watch your child make bad choices or behave in a way that you know to be in conflict with their character. And if nothing is done to correct these behaviors, we are doing a major disservice to their future selves. We must be parents first and pals later. Do you find yourself struggling with discipline out of a fear that your child won't like you anymore? When discipline is administered in love, it's a marvelous gift we can give our children.
- How do you get your children to mind without losing yours? Discipline has become a dirty word in today's society. It conjures up images of harsh reprimands and anger. Biblical discipline however is intended to straighten and correct in a loving, gentle manner. When you read Ephesians 6:4, does it align with your discipline style or are you quick to anger? How can turning to scriptures like this help moms and dads keep their cool in those difficult parenting moments?

Along with discipline, we must also give **DIRECTION**

- God has entrusted parents with the eternally important job of raising their children in accordance with the Scriptures. Read Deuteronomy 6:6-9 (MSG). Do you make it a habit to incorporate God's Word into the everyday lives of your family? What are some things you can do to make sure you are providing a daily example for your children of God's complete integration into the fabric of your lives?

- We can use what we learn from scripture to guide our children in a loving way. Do you have a favorite verse that helps you re-direct your actions in stressful situations to prevent a “parenting fail”?

That leads us to a final gift to give children...**DEVOTION**

- “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.” Deuteronomy 6:5 (NIV). More than anything else, the most important gift we can give our children is our wholehearted devotion to God. Can you think of a time when your child (or a young person in your life) commented on something they witnessed in you that inspired them to draw closer to God?
- What are some practical ways we can model godly devotion for our children?

### **Conclusion**

With your child(ren) (or the young people in your life) in mind, try praying the prayer below this week and remember that while the road may seem long and winding, we have all of God’s great gifts on our side and the journey will be worth it in the end!

When I think of you, \_\_\_\_\_, I fall to my knees and pray to the Father, the Creator of everything in heaven and on earth. I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength through his Spirit. Then Christ will make his home in your heart as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down into God’s love and keep you strong. And may you have the power to understand, as all God’s people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is. May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God. Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think. Glory to him in the church and in Christ Jesus through all generations forever and ever! Amen. (Ephesians 3:14-21 NLT)