

Sermon Notes



# Reflections

Helping Our Young  
Ones Swim Against  
the  
Tide!



**RIVER ROAD  
BAPTIST CHURCH  
7-5-09**



# Reflections

## RELIGIOUS?

When God created the Earth with all its life forms, He gave us a beautiful example of tenacity when He created the Salmon. To watch these magnificent fish traverse hundreds of miles of roaring rivers, falls and rapids, even predators and other hazards, in their return to spawn, is to truly appreciate their wonderful tenacity. God has programmed them to swim upstream to the very waters of their beginnings only to then sacrifice themselves for the benefit of their offspring. A life lived with a singleness of purpose in propagating the next generation. It makes one wonder how we might cope with such a life requirement of trial and difficulty.

In reality our call as disciples, given in God's Word, is not that different from the life program of the Salmon in that we are called to rejoice in tribulations (*James 1:2-4*) and to raise our children according to God's plan. We are called to raise them up in the fear and admonition of the Lord. *fathers, do not provoke your children to anger; but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. (Ephesians 6:4 NAS)* and in another place... *Train up a child in the way he should go, even when he is old he will not depart from it. (Proverbs 22:6 NAS)* In a manner of speaking then, are we not called on to teach our children to, in essence, swim upstream against the tide?

In today's wild society the currents are strong and are definitely arrayed against our young ones. The goal of our enemy, Satan, is to capture the minds and hearts of our children and turn them away from God and His plan of salvation. His strategy has not changed since the Garden of Eden when he captured the imagination of God's first children. The consequence, of course, was that God's children, the Serpent, and even the creation itself, were made subject to the curse that came as a result of Adam's sin. Satan, the enemy, continues his deceptions to this day and it is imperative for us to teach, train and lead our children into accepting a saving relationship with Jesus Christ in order to protect their eternal future. In so doing we can assist them in accepting God's grace and His ongoing assurance of their inheritance of eternal life in Christ Jesus.

It has been made clear in God's Word that we cannot save our children in and of ourselves, it is only in their own personal acceptance of Jesus and His death, burial, and resurrection on

their behalf, that they can be saved. Our role as parents and the church, is to teach them the Word, live the Word in front of them, and to lead them to listen to the Holy Spirit as He calls each of us and them to salvation in Christ. We are told in Moses' words to the children of Israel... *"Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!"<sup>5</sup> "And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might."<sup>6</sup> "And these words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart;<sup>7</sup> and you shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up.*

*(Deuteronomy 6:4-7 NAS)* This is a very clear mandate that we need to take seriously because the lives of our children are at stake.

Jesus addressed His disciples concerning greatness in the Kingdom by calling forth a child. He then proceeded to tell them *...At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"<sup>2</sup> Then Jesus called a little child to Him, set him in the midst of them,<sup>3</sup> and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven."<sup>4</sup> "Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven."<sup>5</sup> "Whoever receives one little child like this in My name receives Me."<sup>6</sup> "But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea."<sup>7</sup> (Matthew 18:1-6 NKJ)*

From this and other verses it is very clear that Jesus holds us as parents and disciples accountable for the spiritual well being of our children.

When we consider that a very large percentage of our youth do not continue being part of our churches when they leave our homes into adulthood, we also must consider that we have made contributions to their choices, perhaps by not having been faithful in teaching, training, and modeling the powerful realities of living for Jesus. Perhaps we offered only a form of religion instead of life. Rather than simply blaming the world's system, wringing our hands in defeat, and giving up, we must take up the Sword of the Spirit and begin to pray for our children without ceasing. For those whose children are still at home, we must take seriously the Scriptural mandates for us as parents and grandparents to do the teaching, training, and modeling necessary to instill a spiritual hunger in our children for the Word of God, for His Son Jesus, and for the righteousness that only comes through His salvation. Let's help them swim against the tides and currents that have already captured so many. **Pastor Doug**