



Connecting With Your Child's Heart

A devotional summary from Pastor Mike Fields in the Family Life series

Bible Text(s) Used

Luke 2:41–52; Proverbs 4:23; Proverbs 22:6; Matthew 3:17; Philippians 4:13

Affirm your child's God-given identity

Pastor Mike opened with the account of twelve-year-old Jesus in the temple. Mary and Joseph found Him after days of anxious searching, and Mary addressed Him as her son. Jesus answered by pointing to His Father's house, revealing a growing awareness of His relationship with God the Father. The message reminded us that children need to know both who they are and whose they are. Their deepest value is not found in grades, trophies, talents, appearance, or performance, but in the truth that they were created by God and belong to Him.

To affirm a child's identity is not empty praise; it is spiritual formation. Formation means shaping the heart over time. When parents and grandparents consistently speak words like, "God made you," "God has a plan for you," and "You are loved by Him," those words help anchor a young heart against the counterfeit identities the world offers.

Reflection / Discussion: How can I speak more clearly and consistently to the God-given identity of the children or young people in my life?

Learn to listen to the heart beneath the words

Mary did not fully understand everything Jesus said, but Luke tells us she treasured these things in her heart. She kept listening. Listening is one of the ways parents discover what is happening beneath the surface. A child's words may reveal fears, hopes, burdens, confusion, dreams, or questions they do not yet know how to explain clearly.

In the rush of schedules, homework, discipline, sports, and daily responsibilities, it is easy to focus only on behavior. Yet the deeper calling is to slow down long enough to hear the heart. Listening does not always produce immediate answers. Sometimes it takes repeated conversations, patience, and a home atmosphere where a child knows they are safe to speak.

Reflection / Discussion: Where do I need to slow down and listen more patiently instead of rushing to correct, lecture, or fix?



Recognize uniqueness and cultivate purpose

Jesus was not acting like the other boys in Jerusalem. He was sitting among the teachers, listening and asking questions. Mary and Joseph had to recognize that something unique was being revealed in Him. Our children are not Jesus, but every child bears the fingerprint of God. Each one has a temperament, interests, gifts, strengths, and a God-given “bent” that parents are called to notice and nurture.

Proverbs 22:6 was explained as more than forcing a child onto a good path. It includes the idea of raising a child according to the way God has shaped them. Parents are not called to relive their own dreams through their children or force every child into the same mold. Like gardeners, they plant, water, protect, and provide the right environment, but only God makes the growth happen.

Reflection / Discussion: What unique gifts, interests, or spiritual sensitivities do I see in my child, grandchild, or young person that I can encourage rather than control?

Guard the heart, because the heart shapes the future

The sermon returned to Proverbs 4:23: “Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.” The heart, in Scripture, refers to the inner life: the place of desire, trust, thought, affection, and decision. Parents often guard schedules, grades, friendships, activities, and opportunities. Those things matter, but the heart matters most. Whatever captures a child’s heart will shape the direction of that child’s life.

This word also came with grace. Many parents and grandparents may look back and think, “I wish I had known this years ago.” But regret does not have to become an excuse. God’s grace gives strength we cannot provide for ourselves. Even with grown children, God can still use humility, prayer, listening, and renewed love to write a different tomorrow.

Reflection / Discussion: What is one practical way I can help guard and nurture the heart of someone God has placed under my influence?

Closing Thought

Parenting and spiritual influence are holy work. The goal is not merely well-behaved children, but sons and daughters who know they are loved by God, learn to hear His voice, and grow into His purpose. We cannot force the heart to grow, but we can cultivate a home and church family where grace, truth, listening, and faith make room for God to do what only He can do.



References

- i. Luke 2:41–52 — Jesus, at twelve years old, is found in the temple listening, asking questions, and speaking of His Father’s house.
- ii. Proverbs 4:23 — “Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.”
- iii. Proverbs 22:6 — Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.
- iv. Matthew 3:17 — The Father affirms Jesus as His beloved Son, with whom He is well pleased.
- v. Philippians 4:13 — “I can do all things through him who strengthens me.”