

Lesson 10: Guarantees, Grace, and Generations

The NT has only two verses on parenting (Eph. 6:4; Col. 3:21), but presupposes the Proverbs and Deuteronomy.

Topic: *What should the parenting of adults look like?*

Specifically, what should be *believed* and what should be *done*?

Credenda – What to Believe

Proverbs 22:6 – “Train up a child in the way he should go, even when he is old he will not depart from it.”

Proverbs – generalizations, not promises

Ambiguous – “according to his way” – as a good thing (vocation) or a bad thing (Pr. 22:15 – foolishness)?

Point: Parenting normally has *lasting effects*, as psychology has often reminded us.

Psalms 112:2 – “His seed will be mighty on earth; the generation of the upright will be blessed.”

Wisdom Psalm (acrostic) – falls under the Job and Ecclesiastes warnings of not being an absolute

Conditional: “...to those who keep His covenant and remember His precepts to do them” (Ps. 103:18).

The Law: Even obedient parents may have “a stubborn and rebellious son” (Dt. 21:18-21).

No guilt trip: Confess real sins, but there is no guarantee to believe nor guaranteed method to do.

Truth: The offspring of the righteous have influence (“mighty”) and often prosper (“blessed”).

Illus. Jonathan Edwards’ family – wealthy, influential, educated people, but also Dwight and Burr!

Covenant Theology – the baptism of infants (cf. Mt. 19:13-15; 1 Cor. 7:14; Acts – household baptisms)

Abrahamic Covenant: “...to be God to you and to your seed after you” (Gen. 17:7).

Romans 9 – a promise not to every biological descendant, but only to those “called” (the elect)

Romans 11 – a promise still applicable to the biological family of Abraham (v. 29 – “irrevocable”)

As a wild olive branch, a Gentile believer is individually grafted in with no promise to his seed.

Conditional – fulfilled in Christ (the Seed of Abraham), so the sign of circumcision is nullified

The OT sign spoke of heart-circumcision, but baptism speaks of personal discipleship.

The OT reckoned “seed” according to kind—Jews needed *faith* (Rom. 4:11-12): *evangelical!*

Colossians 2 – by union with Christ (symbol: baptism), His “circumcision” → Gentile believers

Pattern: God loves someone *for the sake of* another (e.g. Gen. 19 – remembers Abraham, mercy on Lot).

1 Corinthians 7 – our children are special to God (“holy”).

Pattern: God loves *freely* – we do not have *guarantees*, but we do have *grace*. Is that enough for you?

God desires the salvation of *all kinds of men*, especially the children of believers (cf. 1 Tim. 2:3-6).

There is hope! Saved later? Sinned earlier? Did it wrong? Right? Hope in *God*—not a guarantee or method!

Agenda – What to Do

Bring your children to Jesus that He might *freely* bless them (cf. Bonhoeffer quote on speaking to Christ).

Child Dedication – NT precedent vs. infant circumcision/baptism (Mt. 19:13-14 – on family; cf. 18:20; Brantly).

First, by dedicating the child to God, I signify that God is more important than this child.

The child exists to bring glory to God; therefore, I must love God more than this child.

If the child is apostate, I must not cater to irreligion to please him (cf. Dt. 13 – tested, no pity).

If the child is disobedient, I must not interfere with consequences (e.g. Dt. 21 – state punishment).

Second, by dedicating the child to God, I am relinquishing any right to run this child’s life.

Parenting is a stewardship—they have *always* belonged to God, and the dedication just acknowledges it.

Also, the goal of parenting was *always* the fear of the *Lord*, so now it becomes more and more plain.

Goal: Independence from *us*, not the Lord or His church (Kauflin article).

Method: More and more freedom to face the Lord and His discipline for choices—can be “scary.”

Exception: A “door” vs. a “wall” needs a barricade (Song 8:9; e.g. Cassie Burnall), but it cannot last.

Children were always meant to *choose*, because children were always meant to *leave* (Gen. 2:24).

Wrong Goal: Large patriarchal family (cf. Muslims, Catholics)—everyone lives nearby or on my farm.

Jacob’s dysfunctional family is not our norm. *What a mess!* Is this the dominion mandate?

As polygamy disobeys Genesis 2 (cf. Lev. 18:18), not spreading out disobeys Genesis 1 (ch. 11).

As Christians, we have even less reason not to want dispersion (Mt. 28:19-20; cf. Acts 9:1ff).

The same Dominion Mandate blesses us to multiply and to fill the earth (Gen. 1:28; cf. 9:1).

Therefore, the criterion for complete independence “as long as you are in this house” makes sense.

Works both ways – accountable for lifestyle choices before God, but so am I (e.g. visits to my home)

Together, both reasons promote the mission of God—His family is always more important than my family.

Ironically, the Great Commission is the ultimate fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant (Rom. 4:16-17).