Helping Kids Deal with Anxiety

- 1. Parents are the first and most important influencers in their kids' lives.
- 2. There are no quick fixes. As parents and grandparents, God wants us to be faithful in the ministry of discipling our kids for the long haul.

The late pastor, author, and professor, Eugene Peterson, wrote a book entitled: <u>Long</u>

<u>Obedience in the Same Direction</u>: The Christian journey Peterson describes is one that requires perseverance or "stick-to-it-iveness." Peterson understands the normal rhythms, emotions, struggles, and doubts of life. He encourages believers not to build their own security, but to allow God to be a safe place to hide, ready to help in time of need. Peterson pointed to *Psalm*46:1 God is our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble.

There are no quick fixes. Ed Welch put it this way: "Faith is nurtured over time through feeding on Scripture, praying and asking for prayer, learning from others whose sight is a bit more acute and knowing Jesus. Rarely does faith-sight come all at once, but that is just as well. With quick cures we miss the benefit of day-to-day persistence and the wisdom that accrues from it."

In order for our kids to battle anxiety, fear, or whatever comes their way (Job 5:7; 14:1) they need to have their faith nurtured through feeding on Scripture, learning how to pray and how to ask for prayer. They need to learn from their parents whose sight is more acute by watching how they worship and love Jesus. They need to see from day to day how mom and dad work through difficult situations through trusting Jesus and depending on Him together.

Parenting is a joyful long obedience in the same direction!

• Today:

- We have two weeks to talk about a huge topic. We want to talk about some foundational truths that are important to address.
- Our ultimate source of authority to help our kids is the Bible.
- O What's going on in our kids' hearts as image bearers,
- O What does God give to the fearful and anxious.
- o Practical ideas for helping our kids.

Next week:

- O What the Bible says about the origin of anxiety and God's offer of help.
- o How most of the time it's a matter of our hearts.
- o Physical reasons? thyroid, blood pressure, heart palp. Always crucial to see your doctor first.
- o How the gospel helps in our struggle with anxiety.
- o Practical ideas of how to help our kids.

1. What is our Source of Authority? What do we depend on? Where do we find answers?

a. Science?

- Science is great and helpful, but science is always changing.
- Science is not always right.
- Science does not address the matters of the soul.
 - o What we know about science comes from new research and from old research that is looked at again and again. There are things that we are certain are true; there are things that we are reasonably confident are true; then there are things we expect are likely to be true, while understanding there may be important exceptions. Then there are things that we think may, or may not, be true, depending upon the circumstances. Then there are things we are not really sure of at all but have a vague hunch that something about them might be true. Then there are things where very little is known. We don't know everything and never will. A great many scientific ideas and opinions may be unsubstantiated or simply wrong. Hypotheses either grow up to be theories or discarded and melt into the background of productive thought. Theories are tougher, last longer and are much harder to break, but still do.1

¹Writing Clear Science. If Science was Perfect, it wouldn't be Science. https://www.writingclearscience.com.au/science-is-notperfect/#.

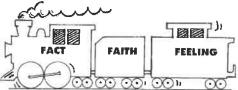
b. Soft science? Secular psychology? Do they have the answers for Christ followers?

- Subjective diagnosis & not in agreement
- Does not acknowledge God or the inner person/soul.
- The Bible Takes Precedence: we should never call anything a disease that the Bible identifies as sin. This is an important divider of diagnoses. So much of what the DSM-5 calls disease is simply inconvenient or disagreeable behavior. And, in a good number of cases, that behavior is defined in the Bible as sin.
- A disease will have a pathology. A change at the cell level.
- Labels can be confused with identity. As believers the Bible tells us we are saints who suffer and/or sin. We are not identified by labels.

c. Do we live life by our feeling? Are our feelings our authority?

- Feelings are given to us by God. They are a gift from Him.
- Feelings were never meant to be our authority or our guide. Authoritative guidance is the role of the Spirit of God as He uses His Word to lead us.
- Many times, our feeling will follow as we follow and trust God's Word but when they don't God still calls us to trust HIM and walk in His Word.

We rely on the promise of God's Word, not on our feelings. The Christian needs to live by faith (trust) in the reliability of God Himself and His Word.



This train diagram illustrates the connection between fact (God and His Word), faith (our trust in God and His Word) and feelings (a result of our faith and obedience). A train is pulled by the engine (fact), not the caboose (feelings). In the same way, put your trust in the facts of God's trustworthiness and His promises. The more fuel of faith (trust) that is put into the facts of God's promises, the more His power and presence will be experienced in our lives. Do not allow your faith to depend on your feelings. The train can make it down the track without the caboose if it needs to. We also can live by faith in God's Word when our feelings aren't cooperating. "For we walk by faith not by sight." 2 Cor 5:7

SO WHERE DO WE TURN FOR AUTHORATATIVE GUIDANCE, HELP, AND HOPE?

d. The Bible gives us Christ the Wonderful Counselor. Is 9:6

• The Bible is Authoritative

• 2 Timothy 3:16. God breathed. God's own Word in His own words. Without error. All Scripture is inspired by God from God. God cannot lie. Hebrews 6:18 & Titus 1:2

• The Bible is Sufficient

- Psalm 19:7. The Law of the Lord is perfect for restoring the soul.
- Completely able to address the problems of our hearts.

• The Bible is Living and active.

- Hebrews 4:12; I Thess 2:13 Gives life, is alive, and performs God's work in His children.
- Psalm 119:25 My soul clings to the dust; give me life according to your word!

• The Bible Transforms and renews our minds.

• Romans 12:2; John 17:17

• The Bible is Truth

Psalm 119:160 The sum of Your word is truth, and every one of Your righteous ordinances is everlasting.

• The Bible draws us close to Jesus, who is the way and the truth and the life.

• John 14:6; 2 Cor 3:18; Psalm 27:4

• The Bible is our Counselor

- Psalm 73:24 & Psalm 119:24
- God is the Psalmist's guide, his help, his counselor through His Word while he lives, and He will take them to His glorious presence when they die.
- The psalmist trusts the LORD's word, for it reveals the truth, sustains all believers, and counsels in the way of life. He finds delight and counsel in God's Word, which he calls his counselors.

² Hodges, Charles. The Christian Counselor's Medical Desk Reference, 2nd Edition (p. 11). New Growth Press. Kindle Edition.

2. The context of ours and our kids' hearts. What's true of our kids' hearts and how they work?

- a. Revelation Receivers. Created to hear from God. To know who He is, who we are in relation to Him, and what we are to do.
- b. Worshippers. Our kids are always worshipping someone or something. What and who they worship will impact how they interpret.
- c. Interpreters = they are meaning makers. Their hearts are seeking to make meaning of their world. Trials and blessings. They need to know how to make meaning through the grid of God's Word.

3. What does God give to the fearful and anxious?

- a. God gives Himself and His promises.
- The Psalmist emphasizes God's promise of presence three times.
 - Psalm 42:5,11;43:5. God wants to make a point!
 - Despair = felt like melting away, he was sinking down.
 - Discouraged = his soul was: cry aloud, mourn, rage, roar, sound; make noise, tumult; be clamorous, disquieted, loud, moved, troubled, in an uproar³ Sounds like anxiety and depression?
 - "HOPE IN GOD" His hope was in God. It is not merely hope against hope, but a solid anticipation of the living God; the hope is anticipation because the power to deliver was not in himself or in others, but in the living God alone. But even a strong faith must at times be accompanied by hope, for faith must wait for God to act.
 - "FOR THE HELP OF HIS PRESENCE" God promised His presence: To wait for God means that the whole tension of life is carried by a faith that does not currently see and yet knows that deliverance will come when God draws near to him⁴
- David's hope was in gazing/beholding God and being in His presence.
 - Psalm 27:1-4; Psalm 63:1-8
- Paul's hope was in God's peaceful presence in Christ our Lord.
 - Phil 4:4-7
- Jesus told His disciples to not be troubled because He would be with them.
 - John 14:1-6
 - b. platitude is a <u>remark</u> or statement, especially one with a moral content, that has been used too often to be interesting or <u>thoughtful</u>.
 - c. These are not platitudes BUT promises from the Person who is able to perform what He has promised! Romans 4:21 and being fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to perform.
 - d. Parenting is a joyful long obedience in the same direction!
 - Teaching our children to look to Jesus by modeling it ourselves and taking them to the Bible and showing them their Savior in action.

4. Practical ideas on how to appropriate some of the truths we've talked about this morning.

• Please write out questions and place them in the box. Our hope is that we will address your questions next week during our teaching time. We would like you to put your name on your question in case the question requires a longer response than what we have time for, we would like to talk to you personally to help if we can.

³ Weber, C. P. (1999). 505 nord. In R. L. Harris, G. L. Archer Jr., & B. K. Waltke (Eds.), Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament (electronic ed., p. 219). Moody Press.

⁴ Ross, A. P. (2011-2013). A Commentary on the Psalms 1-89: Commentary (Vol. 2, p. 27). Kregel Academic.

Anxiety Disorders

Definition: Most psychological diagnoses that have worry as the primary feature are grouped under the category anxiety disorders. They include: acute stress disorder, adjustment disorder, agoraphobia, obsessive-compulsive disorder, panic attack, post-traumatic stress disorder, separation anxiety disorder, social anxiety disorder, social phobia, and specific phobia. Each of the underlined diagnoses has its own entry in this book. The individual who experiences a pervasive, poorly-defined fearfulness is said to have generalized anxiety disorder.

Psychological Description

Emotional Symptoms:

- A feeling of dread, generalized uneasiness
- Worry about an impending event either real or imagined
- Feelings of guilt, brooding over the potential reaction of other people
- Racing thoughts that seem uncontrollable and interfere with other necessary mental activities leading to difficulty concentrating and inhibited involvement in normal activities
- · Irritability and agitation

Physical Symptoms

- Increased heart rate, elevated blood pressure
- Stomach or intestinal disturbances
- Increased muscle tension and/or trembling
- Rapid breathing
- Sweating
- · Difficulty sleeping

Psychology distinguishes between anxiety and fear. Fear is defined as intense anxiety focused on a specific thing. Though the focus of fear may be imaginary, the individual believes that the focus of his fear is real and constitutes a tangible threat. The term anxiety is preferred when the individual's sense of dread is not tied to a specific thing.

Biblical Description

The Bible distinguishes between godly concern and ungodly **anxiety** and **fear.** Godly concern is focused on others and on God's glory. Ungodly fear/anxiety focuses on what *might* happen to you without consideration of the love, wisdom, and **sovereign** power of God. Even when anxiety appears to be due to concern for the welfare of another, the underlying attitude may be selfish ("What will I do if she dies?" "What will happen to my job if he gets elected?").

Two examples of godly fear:

- Fear of God
- Preparedness to face danger

Characteristics of ungodly fear*:

- Fear originates in ungodly thinking.
- Fear is focused on circumstances without regard for God.
- Fear come from self-centered thinking.
- Fear is incompatible with the **fear of God.**The fear of God dispels ungodly fear.
- Fear motivates us to commit other sins such as lying or failing to fulfill responsibilities.
- Worry accomplishes nothing.
- Anxiety often arises from guilt (unconfessed sin): fear of being found out, fear of the consequences, fear of God's wrath.

*Stuart Scott, The Exemplary Husband (Bemidji, Minesota: Focus Publishing, Inc., 2000), 276-278

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Anxiety and Fear Bible References

The following biblical references have been selected because of their helpfulness in understanding the biblical perspective on each topic and because of their usefulness in counseling. These list are intentionally *not* comprehensive.

Anxiety

Sin causes anxiety. Psalm 38:18

Fear of God causes anxiety. Ezekiel 12:17-20

Anxiety can be due to misplaced priorities.

Luke 10: 38-42

Worry will cause spiritual fruitlessness.

Matthew 13:22

We are not be anxious. Philippians 4:6-7

Matthew 6: 25-34

Psalm 139:23-24

Isaiah 35:3-4

We are to cast our anxiety on God. 1 Peter 5:6-7

Anxiety is banished by contemplation of the

character of God. Isaiah 41:10

Psalm 94:19

<u>Fear</u>

General

Believers are freed from fear. Proverbs 1:33

Romans 8:15

God is our helper. Isaiah 41:10

Deuteronomy 31:6

Psalm 27:1

Psalm 56:3, 10-11

Psalm 118:6-7

Matthew 10:29-31

Fear is a characteristic of sinners.

Proverbs 28:1

Believers commanded not to fear. John 14:1, 27

Isaiah 43:1-2

Fear is cast out by love. 1 John 4:18

Godly response to fear Philippians 4:6-9

Proverbs 3:5-8

Psalm 23

Fear of Circumstances Job 15:17-24; 18:11

Fear of God

Commanded by God Psalm 2:11

Isaiah 8:13

1 Peter 1:17; 2:17

For our good Jeremiah 32:38-40

The beginning of knowledge and wisdom

Job 28:28

Psalm 111:10

Proverbs 1:7; 9:10; 15:33

A great treasure Proverbs 14:27; 15:16

Isaiah 33:6

Fear of God comes through the Scriptures

and can be learned Deuteronomy 31:11-13

Psalm 34:11

Reasons to fear God:

His greatness Deuteronomy 10:12-17

His holiness Revelation 15:4

His creation Job 37:14-24 (plus ch 38-41)

His works 1 Samuel 12:24

His forgiveness Psalm 130:1-4

His judgment Psalm 119:120

The proper response of a believer

Hebrews 12:28-29

Accompanied by mercy from God

Psalm 103:11

Fear is the path away from evil Proverbs 16:6

Fear of Man

Fear God rather than man. Matthew 10:28

Exemplified by King Saul 1 Samuel 15:24-26

Fear of man brings a snare. Proverbs 29:25

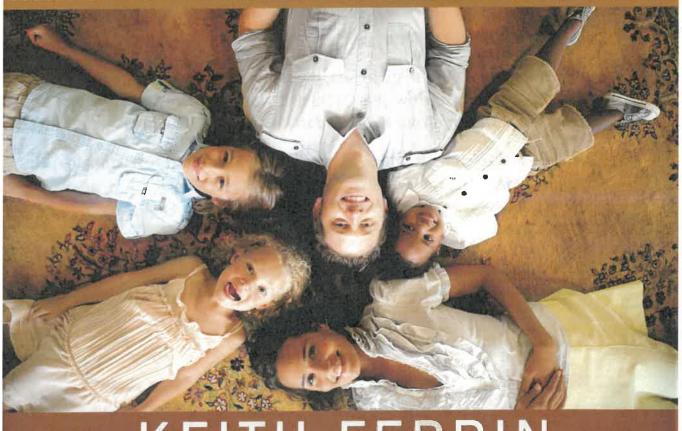
The fear of man is a stumbling block to

faithful obedience John 12:42-43, 19:38

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49 IDENTITY MESSAGES YOUR KIDS NEED TO KNOW

(And Won't Unless You Tell Them)



KEITH FERRIN

Dear Reader,

This book is for you and for your children (or your grandchild...or the neighborhood kid...or your student...or any kid you happen to see walking down the street).

I am not copyrighting this book. I want you to print it, post it, share it, tweet it, pin it and give it away to anyone you know who has a kid (or has ever met a kid).

If you want to tell them where you got it, just point them to www.KeithFerrin.com/identitymessages. If you want to let them know exactly where it came from, you can say "The content of this ebook first appeared on pages 46-47 of Keith Ferrin's book Like Ice Cream: The Scoop on Helping the Next Generation Fall in Love with God's Word.

But you don't have to. Seriously.

Copy and paste it. Add to it. In fact, if you do add to it, send the additions my way. In a few years, I think it would be cool if the title was 372 Identity Message Your Kids Need to Know. Don't you?

If you decide to share it online (Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Google+, etc.), would you do me a favor? Could you use either @KeithFerrin or #IdentityMessages so I can reply, retweet, re-share, and keep the ball rolling? Thanks.

One last note: As you speak, text, write, and share these identity message with your kids, please remember this: They're also for you.

Alongside,

- 1. You are a child of God.
 - See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! (I John 3:1)
- 2. You may participate in the divine nature.
 - Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. (2 Peter 1:4)
- 3. You have a mighty God who is for you...not against you.
 - What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? (Romans 8:31)
- 4. You have been crucified with Christ and you no longer live, but Christ lives in you.
 - I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. (Galatians 2:20)
- 5. You have access to the throne of God where you can receive mercy and find grace.
 - Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. (Hebrews 4:16)
- 6. You have been raised with Christ and seated with Him in the heavenly realm.
 - And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus. (Ephesians 2:6)

7. You are part of God's family.

• Both the one who makes people holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters. (Hebrews 2:11)

8. You have been blessed with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. (Ephesians 1:3)

9. You have everything you need for life and godliness.

 His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. (2 Peter 1:3)

10. You have been bought with a price.

• You were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies. (I Corinthians 6:20)

11. You were called to be free.

You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free.
 (Galatians 5:13)

12. You have been ransomed by the Son of God.

 The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many. (Matthew 20:28)

13. You are not condemned.

• Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. (Romans 8:1)

14. You have been forgiven.

• All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name. (Acts 10:43)

15. You have become the righteousness of God.

• God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. (II Corinthians 5:21)

16. You are God's workmanship...His poem...His masterpiece.

• For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago. (Ephesians 2:10, NLT)

17. You have been set free from the law of sin.

• Through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death. (Romans 8:2)

18. You have been made alive with Christ.

 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. (Ephesians 2:4-5)

19. You have been given the authority of Christ.

• I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. (Luke 10:19)

20. You have been fearfully and wonderfully made.

• I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. (Psalm 139:14)

21. You are dead to sin and alive to God.

• In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. (Romans 6:11)

22. You were chosen by God before the creation of the world.

 Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. (Ephesians 1:4, NLT)

23. You are destined for glorious freedom.

• The creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God. (Romans 8:21)

24. You are a citizen of Heaven.

• But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ. (Philippians 3:20)

25. You are more than a conqueror through Him who loved you.

• No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. (Romans 8:37)

26. You have been baptized with Christ and are now clothed with Christ.

• All of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. Galatians 3:27)

27. You have been brought from death to life.

 Do not offer any part of yourself to sin as an instrument of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness. (Romans 6:13)

28. You have been given the Holy Spirit to guide you into all truth.

 But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. (John 16:13)

29. You have been redeemed and have the full rights of sons.

 But when the right time came, God sent his Son, born of a woman, subject to the law. 5 God sent him to buy freedom for us who were slaves to the law, so that he could adopt us as his very own children. (Galatians 4:4-5, NLT)

30. You are protected by the powerful name of Jesus.

• I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one. (John 17:11)

31. You have the power of the Holy Spirit.

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you.
 And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere

 in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. (Acts 1:8, NLT)

32. You have a High Priest who is able to sympathize with your weaknesses.

• For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. (Hebrews 4:15)

33. You have the Holy Spirit interceding for you right now.

 In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. (Romans 8:26)

34. Your Lord is near.

• Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. (Philippians 4:5)

35. You are known.

• O Lord, you have examined my heart and know everything about m. (Psalm 139:1, NLT)

36. You cannot be separated from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus.

• For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:38-39)

37. You are a work in progress – and you will be completed.

 He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. (Philippians 1:6)

38. You were loved by Jesus before you loved Him.

We love each other because he loved us first. (I John 4:19, NLT)

39. You are not alone.

 Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. (Deuteronomy 31:6)

- 40. You have the full armor of God...
 - ...the belt of truth
 - ...the breastplate of righteousness
 - ...the shoes of the gospel of peace
 - ...the shield of faith
 - ...the helmet of salvation
 - ...the sword of the Spirit the Word of God.
 - Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. (Ephesians 6:13-17)

41. You have God's angels sent to serve you.

- Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation? (Hebrews 1:14)
- 42. Your needs will be met according to God's glorious riches in Christ Jesus.
 - And this same God who takes care of me will supply all your needs from his glorious riches, which have been given to us in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:19, NLT)
- 43. You have a High Priest who always lives to intercede for you.
 - Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them. (Hebrews 7:25)

44. You have a God who has gone before you.

 You are my strength, I watch for you; you, God, are my fortress, my God on whom I can rely. God will go before me and will let me gloat over those who slander me. (Psalm 59:10)

45. You have a God who hears you.

• This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. (I John 5:14)

46. You cannot be snatched from God's hand.

• I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. (John 10:28-29)

47. God is for you.

• Then my enemies will turn back when I call for help. By this I will know that God is for me. (Psalm 56:9)

48. You are Jesus' joy.

 For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. (Hebrews 12:2)

49. You are loved.

 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16)

Thanks for reading.

If you'd like to connect, here are a few places you'll find me:

- Blog: www.keithferrin.com
- Email: keith@keithferrin.com
- Facebook: <u>www.facebook.com/keithferrin</u>
- Twitter: www.twitter.com/keithferrin
- Pinterest: www.pinterest.com/keithferrin
- Google+: https://plus.google.com/+KeithFerrin
- Podcast: <u>www.keithferrin.com/biblepodcast</u> OR search "Keith Ferrin" on iTunes

May your kids – and you! – live fully into who God has made you to be. May your identity be shaped by the One who made you, loves you, died for you, rose for you, redeemed you, and restores you.

Alongside,

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