

Family Study: Principles of Parenting - Responsibilities of Parenting

for the College and Career Class at Gulf Coast Baptist Church

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Introduction

Throughout time, God has given children to parents and then given those parents a charge concerning the gift. The children ultimately belong to God and for a time, He asks that the parent manages His property well. Both to Israel and to believers today, God has done this. Deuteronomy 6:1-9 and Psalm 127 give the perspective that children belong to the Lord and are with the parents for a time. Ephesians 6 and Colossians 3:20 give the proper structure for Christian households - including husbands, wives, children, servants, and masters. God grants the structure, and then God gives instructions on how those relationships are supposed to work. There are definite distinctions on how believers are to approach God for a rule of life, and these can be studied in the context of parenting. There seems to be similarities in God's expectations for parents through each type of administration. Provision, protection, teaching, and discipline seem to be principles that carry over through all the dispensations.

Children are a gift from God

God's exhortation to Israel after giving them the law was clear. Pass on to the next generation what you have learned. Moses gives clear instruction after giving Israel the Great Commandment. The word translated "teach" in Hebrew means to point or to pierce. God is telling the parent to instill the truth in their children. From verses 7 to 9 Moses gives several ways for the parents to pass on truth to their children. Talking of the words of God when they lie down, when they rise up, when they walk by the way. Binding them on their hands and placing them often before their eyes was also mentioned, as well as writing them on the posts of their houses and on the gates. The gates signifies a public meeting place, meaning that this information needs to be a part of the discussion from day to day. Paul gives this principle of multiplying ministry in 2 Timothy 2:2. The message is so important that it should be passed on to faithful men who can teach others.

The Psalmist talks of the need for God to build a home. Solomon in Psalm 127 says that children are a "heritage" of the Lord. This word means *possession* or *property*. He also says that the fruit of the womb is his "reward" literally *wages*. The child is given to the parent, but God retains ownership of them. The Lord must build the house, and keep the city. God's power is necessary for a household to function properly. These principles are reflected in both Ephesians 5-6 and Colossians 3.

Paul directs heads of households to provide for their own. 1 Tim 5:8 is tucked in with directives for providing for the widow and orphan. If someone has family, they should be provided for. This is for the church, for the believer. The responsibility clearly falls to family to provide for their own.

Family Directives in Colossians

Paul gives similar directives to the Colossians as he does to the Ephesians. At the end of chapter 3 he is more concise, focusing on what each family member's greatest struggle will be.

To the wife, he mentions submission, to the husband, he speaks of bitterness. To the child, Paul speaks of obedience, to the Father, provoking the child to discouragement. Each of these directives is preceded by the call to put off the old man (position in Adam) and put on the new man (position in Christ). He tells the Colossians to be spiritual if they are going to be Christ-like members of the family. Without the power of Christ, they will be in danger of being people pleasers who will reap what they sow.

Paul says for each member to what they do “heartily” as to the Lord and not to men. This word means out from the soul. This is attached to the work of a servant to a master. When the servant serves he should do it with an intentional energy, not half-heartedly. The same could be said of each member of the family. For children it is the edge between honor and obedience. The one is an action while the other is an attitude. The Father training and rearing, yet without provoking, the husband serving and loving without bitterness. The Wife submitting as it would be proper to serve the Lord, is the directive from Paul.

Conclusion

God retains ownership of those He places in the family. However, he gives responsibilities to those who He gives authority. God gives important information and then He holds those accountable who do not pass this information on to the next generation. Parents throughout each dispensation are given this charge.