

# Parenting Principles

## Exodus 2

**OPENING JOKE: J-O-H-N D-U-N-N...** I've preached all over the world, I've dined with Presidents, I've walked the streets of Havana, I've even see the sun rise over the city of Jerusalem... but I have never had the honor of speaking at a Florida Baptist Foundation Event.

On one occasion I asked the church to pray for me because I was traveling to NYC. One of the ladies in the church came up to me and said, "If you happen to run into my son, please tell him that I so wish he would call me".

I was like - mam, this is NYC there are over 8 million people in NYC... what are the chances I'm going to run into your boy... but then I thought - well God works in mysterious ways... just in case... what is your boy's name? She said his name is John Dunn - D U N N.

So sure enough, I went to the city... there I was walking in times square and I looked up and saw on the side of this BIG sky scraper - Berkshire and Dunn... and I thought to myself... could it possibly be?

So I went up through big turnstile doors, approached the lady at the desk and said, "man, I know this is a long shot...but do you all happen to have a John?"

She said, "yes we do - it's just down the hall on the left". I was blown away... could it possibly be... I walked down the hall and just as I was about to open the door a fella walked out... I looked at him and I said, "Sir are you Dunn".. He said, "Yes I am", I said, "call your mother".

**INTRODUCTION: There are those moments we will never forget.**

I will never forget being at that little room as Julie and I looked at the sonogram machine discern the shape of a little tiny human, inside of my precious wife, then the muffled sound of a beating heart. Julie was just laying there and the baby's heart was beating over 150 beats a minute. I said, "**Julie we are having a Pentecostal**". It was then that the reality of the moment really hit us.

Then the moment when the nursed helped strap Carly into her carseat and then walked away. I was like, "Is this legal"? You are just going to let us take this little person home?

I can't tell you how unprepared and afraid I felt.

Then those medical emergencies, one night while I was off speaking at an event, Carly had a seizure. Julie was there with her alone, holding our child and praying.

I could go on and on, with those moments... and many of you could as well.

Motherhood is not for sissy's. I think that's part of the reason God makes labor and delivery so painful - if you survive the delivery you may have what it takes.

The Bible is made up of PRECEPTS and PRINCIPLES.

**Precepts are straightforward rules.** You don't have to interpret them, you just read them.

For example - **Ephesians 6:4 (ESV)**

<sup>4</sup> Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

That's a precept. It's an imperative, a command.

**But then there are many principles given.**

They are often woven into stories. They must be mined out, cultivated, then appropriately applied to your unique situation.

I have found that the principles of scripture have really made all of the difference in our Parenting. The principles gave answers to scenarios that precepts didn't address and it was the principles that really gave us confidence that grew year after year.

**Today's text has three such principles that are uniquely applicable to mothers.**

**CONTEXT: Remember last week we saw a culture in chaos as, "a king arose who knew not Jospheh". Life for the Jews was horrific, and they began to call out to God for help. It was just then that a baby cried in the region of Goshen... a child we know as Moses.**

**Today, we are introduced to three very significant women in the life of Moses.**

- **Jochebed**, Moses' biological mother.
- **Miriam**, Moses' sister who was 15 years old when he was born.
- And **Bithiah**, her name isn't mentioned in the text, but 1 Chronicles 4:17 identifies her as the Egyptian foster mother of Moses in our story.

Each of the three ladies reveal a principle we can learn about parenthood.

## **1. Jochebed - *The Principle of Optimism***

**The Principle of Optimism States - *Have BIG VISION for little kids.***

**Exodus 2:1–22 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup> Now a man from the house of Levi went and took as his wife a Levite woman.

<sup>2</sup> The woman conceived and bore a son, and when she saw that he was a fine child, she hid him three months.

Occasionally, you will hear a young person say, “I don’t want to birth a child in the world considering the shape that the world is in”. Jochebed would have laughed. She conceived Moses while there was a **death sentence** against all Hebrew Boys as soon as they were born.

Not only that, there were no prospects for things getting any better. They were an **enslaved** family in Egypt. If they gave birth to a girl and she survived, life would be unbearably difficult.

Yet, conceive and give birth she did. Can you imagine the night in which Moses was born and the midwife said, “It’s a boy”. Oh the fear that swept over his mom and dad.

The decision to let the baby live, was a violation of the law of Egypt. It was a direct violation of an edict by Pharaoh himself. Punishable by death. This decision of Jochebed to let Moses live and hide him was not small thing.

<sup>3</sup> When she could hide him no longer, she took for him a basket made of bulrushes and daubed it with bitumen and pitch. She put the child in it and placed it among the reeds by the river bank.

New born babies are relatively quiet, but that doesn’t last long. Around 3 months, the child is too loud to hide any longer. So they make the decision to form an ARK. A miniature of the Ark God used to save Noah. Then entrusting her child to the Providence of God, she sets him to float along the bank of the Nile.

Casting him into the Nile as the wrath of the law demanded, but providing him salvation, tucking him safely into the ARK.

Every decision that this brave woman made was baptized in OPTIMISM. She had hope that God may get involved. Maybe, just maybe - God had BIG PLANS for this LITTLE BOY.

No one told her that, no prophet predicted it.. she had no idea that her baby was different than any other. But sometimes Mother’s can see what others cannot.

**Can you imagine of Jochebed could sit down and have a cup of coffee with you, mother to mother?**

You tell her about how difficult life has been this year. How a global pandemic caused you to have life or death worries about your children. How suddenly you were expect

to both nurture and educate your child. How politically the world seems to be in turmoil.

I expect Jochebed would listen compassionately, maybe shed a few tears with you, then lean in and say - sister, God must be up to something very big.

You see, Optimism doesn't negate realism. It doesn't make bad things go away. But it does reinterpret them in a life giving way.

*Jochebed reminds us of the **Principle of Optimism...***

## **2. Bithiah - The Principle of Passion**

**The Principle of Passion States** - *You feel what you feel, so you will do what you can do.*

Have you lived long enough to recognize that no everyone feels as you do about any particular situation? I care deeply about things that aren't even on your radar. You may care deeply about things that aren't on my radar. But The Principle of Passion States - You feel what you feel, so you will do what you can do.

God wired you to feel what you feel, so that you will do what you can to change the situation.

<sup>4</sup> And his sister stood at a distance to know what would be done to him.

*Isn't that interesting? Miriam wants to see what God is going to do. All things being equal Optimistic mothers raise optimistic daughters.*

<sup>5</sup> Now the daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river, while her young women walked beside the river. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her servant woman, and she took it. <sup>6</sup> When she opened it, she saw the child, and behold, the baby was crying. She took **pity** on him and said, "This is one of the Hebrews' children."

Bithiah's compassion lined up perfectly with her ability. She was able to save this child. Not everyone would share her feelings - I mean her own father was the man who commanded this child's death.

But she felt what she felt, so she could do what she could do.

There are issues that you feel very strongly about, sometimes because you personally have felt the pain of those issues. Sometimes, it is just because that is how God has wired you. Don't brush those feelings away too quickly. Assume they are there for a reason. Saturate them with scripture - feelings can certainly be wrong and even misleading. But they are also a very real part of being human.

Jesus experience the Gamut of human emotions. Joy, Sorry, Grief, Happiness... you name it He felt it.

Stop and ask yourself “why?” Particularly, when others don’t seem to understand. Why do you feel this way and others do not?

What does God want you to do? Perhaps you are to educate others. Perhaps you can build a coalition of likeminded people. Perhaps you simply need to dig deeper and pray harder. But the feeling is not an accident.

Hebrew tradition tells us that Bithiah ultimately left her Father’s worship of Pagan gods and became a follower of Yahweh.

Daughter of Pharaoh; identified in the Midrash with Moses' foster-mother. The name is explained as follows: **God said to her, "You have called Moses your son, although he was not your son, therefore I will call you my daughter** ["Bithiah" = "bat," daughter; "Yah," God], although you are not my daughter" (Lev. R. i. 3; Meg. 13a; and elsewhere).

Jochebed reminds us of the **Principle of Optimism**...Bithiah reminds us of the **Principle of Passion**...

### **3. Miriam - The Principle of Strategy**

**The Principle of Strategy States** - *There is always a way to leverage circumstances in your family's favor.*

*Miriam was a strategic genius... 15 years old, but look at how she inserts herself into the situation and addresses the Princess of Egypt.*

<sup>7</sup> Then his sister said to Pharaoh’s daughter, “Shall I go and call you a nurse from the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you?”

This made perfect sense. Imagine how many Hebrew women were able to nurse because their baby had been murdered.

<sup>8</sup> And Pharaoh’s daughter said to her, “Go.” So the girl went and called the child’s mother.

Miriam saw a strategic opportunity to reunite Moses and Jochebed, so that at least for a while, she would be able to love her child and influence him for God’s glory.

<sup>9</sup> And Pharaoh’s daughter said to her, “Take this child away and nurse him for me, and I will give you your wages.” So the woman took the child and nursed him.

Isn’t that amazing - Jochebed is getting paid by the government to raise her own son, that the government was trying to murder.

## The Words of the great Hymn by William Cowper come to mind

God moves in a mysterious way  
His wonders to perform;  
He plants His footsteps in the sea  
And rides upon the storm.

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take;  
The clouds ye so much dread  
Are big with mercy and shall break  
In blessings on your head.

Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,  
But trust Him for His grace;  
Behind a frowning providence  
He hides a smiling face.

<sup>10</sup> When the child grew older, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. She named him Moses, "Because," she said, "I drew him out of the water."

Let me show you the ultimate reason why you can have the - **Optimism** of Jochebed, the **Compassion** of Bithiah, and the **Strategic** Genius of Miriam.

### CONCLUSION/INVITATION:

#### Luke 9:28–31 (ESV)

<sup>28</sup> Now about eight days after these sayings he took with him Peter and John and James and went up on the mountain to pray. <sup>29</sup> And as he was praying, the appearance of his face was altered, and his clothing became dazzling white. <sup>30</sup> And behold, two men were talking with him, **Moses** and **Elijah**, <sup>31</sup> who appeared in glory and spoke of his **departure**, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.

So this is thousands of years later. Like a scene out of star wars... we see Jesus, Elijah and Moses having a conversation.

What do you suppose they are talking about? It tells us - His Departure. The Departure of Jesus. But this is one of those cases where the original language is very important. The Greek word for Departure - exodos, or our word Exodus.

Moses is talking to Jesus about the EXODUS of Jesus.

How can a mom be optimistic in this midst of a harsh realism?

How can a mom be compassionate, when it seems she is the one needing compassion?

How can a mom be strategic, when no one knows what tomorrow holds?

By realizing that a greater than Moses has come - His Exodus - the fact that he overcame the grave can turn our realism into optimism. Because He lives - we can show compassion even in the midst of suffering... and we can form a strategy because we know that all things work together for good to those who love the Lord and who are the called according to his Purpose.