

Series: **Aliens 3.0**
Today's Title: ***"The Blessing of Children"***

May 12, 2024 – *Selected passages*

Objective: To help people know that the Bible clearly teaches that children are a blessing and gift from God.

Today is Mother's Day – a day to celebrate motherhood – and our own moms – the mom of our children.

The message today will focus on **'The Blessing of Children'** – which is only possible – because of moms!

Opening Prayer

There is a quiet, yet devastating problem lurking in our future. The global population is not reproducing at replacement rates.

Plainly: We are not having enough babies.

There are numerous studies which flesh this out and discuss the reasons why this is happening – and whether this is a good or bad thing.

According to the BBC:

"The world is ill-prepared for the global crash in children being born which is set to have a "jaw-dropping" impact on societies, say researchers.

- Falling fertility rates mean nearly every country could have shrinking populations by the end of the century.

- And 23 nations - including Spain and Japan - are expected to see their populations halve by 2100."

(<https://www.bbc.com/news/health-53409521>)

Some believe it's a good thing – because fewer people mean less pollution – and less impact on the environment (supposedly). This group tends to believe the planet is overpopulated – and lowering the population must be good. Some believe that lowering the birth rate will be a negative thing – because of math.

Those in this group are scientists and sociologists who talk about the problems cultures will face all around the globe – when there are 5x or 10x more elderly people than younger people.

Who pays tax in a massively aged world? Who pays for healthcare for the elderly? Who looks after the elderly? Will people still be able to retire from work?

(<https://www.bbc.com/news/health-53409521>)

There are some groups that are overjoyed with this trend. 1 of these groups is: 'Stop Having Kids'

<https://www.stophavingkids.org/>

On their homepage: (show pic)

“We want a future where those who have the desire and means to care for others than themselves decide to prioritize taking care of and supporting deprived humans and other animals who already exist. We want a future where those who choose to live a childfree lifestyle are able to easily do so and are not stigmatized, attacked, or questioned for their morally neutral choice to not create new humans.”

This group (stophavingkids.org) tries to position themselves with an altruistic motive.

Others are more blatantly selfish, which brings us to the **DINKS**.

Double Income No Kids

Or... **DINK-WAD**

Double Income No Kids With A Dog.

We're not talking here about couples who are infertile.

We're talking about *intentional* DINKS who simply don't want to share what they have with kids.

They want to be free to do anything they want – go anywhere they want to go – whenever they want.

According to the U.S. Census data, DINKS are not a large segment of our population, but their numbers are growing. They make up around “...5% of the country's total population was cohabiting couples who do not live with a child under 18, and around 29% of the total population are married couples who do not live with a child under 18, according to 2022 American Community Survey data.”

“Indeed, more millennial women don't think it's worth it to have kids after the economy they've weathered. A Pew survey of 9,676 Americans from October 18 to October 24, 2021 found that 44% of non-parents ages 18 to 49 said they were not likely or not at all likely to have kids someday — up from 37% in 2018.”

(<https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDP1Y2022.DP02?q=dp02>)

But God, in His Word, gives us a very different perspective on children.

In the Bible, God not only shares His heart about children – and having children, but He commands us to have children.

For the rest of our time, I want us to understand what the Bible says about having kids – what the Bible says about **‘The Blessing of Children’**.

God’s design is for us to have children.

We can approach this from the simple biological perspective.

Our bodies are designed to procreate – to reproduce – to have children.

This is natural – how we are created – how our bodies naturally function.

So much of our physical existence revolves around our sexuality and the purpose of our sexed bodies.

But, for our purposes today, I want us to see what the Bible says about having children.

We first see this mentioned in the very 1st chapter of the Bible.

Genesis 1:27-28a

So, God created human beings in His own image. In the image of God He created them; male and female He created them.

Then God blessed them and said, “Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth...”

There are 2 things to note here in **vs. 28**.

1) This is a command from God regarding having children – “Be fruitful” / “multiply” / “Fill the earth”

We see the very same command given in **Genesis 9:1** to Noah and his sons – after the flood.

Genesis 9:1

Then God blessed Noah and his sons and told them, “Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth.”

We clearly see God’s command to husbands and wives to have children.

But, what about those who can’t have children – infertility?

It’s helpful to realize these identical commands are given before and after the Fall.

So, this is not simply a pre-Fall command from God. This is a command for all time – for all of us who are married.

But, what about infertility?

We need to see this as a command where the result is dependent on God – not ourselves.

So, this is more of His desire – the model or template He’s given human society – that children are to be born and raised in the family.

“In the Old Testament, children were seen as a physical sign of God’s blessing. Even so, and even though most people of that time may have felt differently, infertility was not a reliable sign of God’s displeasure.

Many couples in the Bible, such as Elkanah and Hannah (parents of the prophet Samuel), Abraham and Sarah (parents of Isaac), and Zechariah and Elizabeth (parents of John the Baptizer), were godly men and women who for years had been infertile.

Infertility—at any age—is not a sign of God’s displeasure. Couples without children are in no way less valuable or important to the kingdom of God than those with children.”

(<https://www.gotquestions.org/should-i-have-children.html>)

In God’s providence, some couples are infertile and can’t have children.

Being infertile is not disobedience to God’s command.

Being infertile is not a sign of God’s judgment on you.

However, I believe a godly response to infertility is to become a foster or adoptive family.

Another option is to help those who have children – by providing respite care – or simply being available to watch their kids so mom and dad can have a night alone. There are all sorts of ways you can obey the spirit of this command – even if you can’t have kids of your own.

What about IVF – In Vitro Fertilization?

I would caution against this – due to the moral problems of what you do with the extra fertilized eggs.

One of God's blessings in marriage is children.

This is the 2nd thing we see in **Genesis 1:28; 9:1**.

The command to multiply is a direct blessing from God.

1:28 - “Then God blessed them and said...”

9:1 - “Then God blessed Noah and his sons and told them...”

There is no doubt here – that having kids is part of God's blessing in our life.

Having a family is not only God's design for human society, but it is part of how He blesses each marriage – through the children they have.

How many children should we have – as many as possible?

There is not a simple answer to this question.

The answer is whatever you and your spouse believe is God's will and guidance is how many kids you should have.

Kim and I decided 2 kids was all.

We both come from 2 kid families – and Kim had 2 miscarriages – so we were done at 2.

2.1 is replacement rate.

Pastor Scott and Sarah have 5 – they adopted #5 – Wyatt.

Pastor Joseph and Kim have 4.9 – child #5 is due mid-June.

Our son, Brian, and his wife, Gianna, are hoping to have 3, 4 – or more???

Our daughter Jessica, and her husband, Ben are thinking 2 or 3 kids – with their first child due in 17 days!!

There is no right or wrong answer here.

Maybe you want to have 12 or 15 kids – and have your own reality TV show – that’s your call – and good luck with that!

There is no clear, precise # the Bible tells us about how many kids to have.

The point for us to know: Kids are a blessing from God – and the more kids – the more blessing you receive!

Let’s look at some other passages in the Bible which expand on this truth.

Psalm 127:3-5

“Children are a gift from the LORD; they are a reward from Him. Children born to a young man are like arrows in a warrior’s hands. How joyful is the man whose quiver is full of them!”

“gift” “reward”

What an amazing statement in the Bible about children! As a response to the 3 cultural views and beliefs I shared with you at the start of the message, this verse clearly contradicts those beliefs.

The Psalmist uses a metaphor here – that children are “like arrows in a warrior’s hands.”

How precious are the arrows of a warrior?

They are like gold!!!

With arrows, he can attack the enemy – or defend himself and others from the enemy’s attack.

A quiver full of arrows is about having plenty of ammunition – it brings contentment and a feeling of security and confidence to the warrior – knowing he has what he needs to do his work.

A large family – ‘a quiver full of kids’ – is a wonderful “gift” and “reward” from God!

Psalm 128:3-4, 6a

“Your wife will be like a fruitful grapevine, flourishing within your home. Your children will be like vigorous young olive trees as they sit around your table.

That is the LORD ’s blessing for those who fear Him.

May you live to enjoy your grandchildren.”

Once again, we see God’s blessing in regard to children clearly stated here in **vs. 4.**

Once again, wonderful, and rich metaphors are used by the Psalmist.

In ancient Israel grapevines and olive trees provided refreshment, pleasures in life, and the blessing of God.

Genesis 24:60 – Rebekah’s family’s blessing to her

They gave her this blessing as she parted: “Our sister, may you become the mother of many millions! May your descendants be strong...”

Rebekah’s family sends her off – to be married to Abraham and Sarah’s son, Isaac – and as she leaves, they say a blessing over her – that she would have many children!

“Millions”!!! (NLT)

Hebrew lit. – *‘thousands ten thousand’*

1 more passage...

1 Samuel 1:26b-27 – Hannah, speaking to Eli the priest

“I am the very woman who stood here several years ago praying to the LORD.

I asked the LORD to give me this boy, and He has granted my request.”

Hannah was barren for a number of years.

She prayed that God would bless her with a child – God answered her prayer.

I wanted to look at this passage simply to show the desire to have children is a good, God-pleasing desire.

Hannah had been praying this prayer for a number of years!

Finally, God answered her prayer.

He doesn’t always answer this prayer with a baby.

Sometimes, His answer is ‘No’.

This is a mystery – and frustrating from our perspective – but in God’s wisdom and providence – this is His plan.

Hannah dedicated Samuel to the Lord – gave him to the priesthood after he was weaned, which revealed her heart and trust in God, and her devotion to God.

Having children helps you grow in Christ.

We’ve clearly seen from numerous passages in the Bible that children are a blessing from God.

But they are also a blessing to parents in regard to our own faith.

Specifically, when we have kids, it ‘forces’ us to grow spiritually – in ways might never have grown if we didn’t have kids – or it would have taken decades for us to learn the lessons that having kids makes us learn these lessons in hyper-speed – out of absolute necessity and human survival!!!

Here are 4 ways children will help you grow in Christ.

1. Being a parent will attack your selfish heart.

(Show Video throughout this point – no audio)

You cannot be a **good** parent – and be selfish.

If you’re selfish – you will probably be reported to the AZ Department of Child Safety for child neglect.

Having kids – and being a selfish parent are like the opposite poles of a magnet!

Kids will challenge your patience – and how you express your love when they do something which disrupts your day / your plans.

2. Being a parent will bring accountability into your life.

Your kids see and hear everything you do!

‘Why are you doing that, Daddy?’

‘Daddy, what were you doing last night?’

‘Daddy, where are you going?’

3. Being a parent will teach you about pure love.

The love a child has for mom and dad is so pure – so unconditional – so uncluttered!!

As we get older, the love we have for others becomes entangled with all sorts of details about life – history – past hurts and wrongs.

But a child has none of that baggage, so the love a child has for mom and dad is unpolluted and freely given.

This produces in a parent a response to that love.

Here’s the interesting thing.

As parents, one of our roles is to model God’s love for us – to our kids.

God calls us to love our children – as He loves us.

But as new parents, we don't do that so well – because our love has become conditional or hindered because of life's challenges and hurts.

But when you have a baby – and you realize the love this baby has for you – and that love only intensifies and becomes more obvious as the baby becomes a toddler – and a young child – the child's love has a way of purifying our own love.

Then, we are able to model God's love for us – to our child – so they can understand a good, healthy picture of God and His love for them.

4. Being a parent will deepen your *theology*.

This is because of the question kids ask you all the time: 'Why?'

Why – Why – Why?

As your kids grow, they will ask you questions about life – and they will ask you about God.

Your kids will ask the questions we're all too embarrassed or shy to ask when we're in our small group gathering.

'Why do you think God did that?'

'Why does God love me?'

'Why did God make the world?'

'Why did God make babies?'

'Why did God make brothers / sisters?'

‘Why is there a nighttime?’

The secret blessing of children is becoming a grandparent.

A quote that is popular:

“Having grandkids is the reward for not killing your kids when they were teenagers.”

Have I mentioned that Kim and I are grandparents?

I never realized – even though I heard people talk about how great it is to have grandkids.

I never realized how great it is!

I never realized how precious and special it is.

How you look at your kids differently – when they have kids.

The joy you feel when your kid has to deal with a stubborn child!

Justice wins in the end!!!

The Bible has a lot to say about being a grandparent – and it can be divided into 2 categories:

Joy / blessing

Duty / Legacy / Obligation

Proverbs 17:6

“Grandchildren are the crowning glory of the aged...”

Something you have to experience to understand!

Psalm 103:17

“But the love of the LORD remains forever with those who fear Him. His salvation extends to the children’s children”

Legacy – passing faith to your grandkids.

Proverbs 13:22

“Good people leave an inheritance to their grandchildren...”

Not just a reference to money! Treasures in heaven.

Psalm 128:6a

“May you live to enjoy your grandchildren...”

Apply it...

1. God’s design is for us to have children.
He has created our bodies to have children.
He has designed and ordained husbands and wives to have children and raise them in a home with 2 parents.
2. Children are a blessing from God.
Don’t believe the cultural beliefs and lies that having children is not a good thing – that there are too many problems in this world to bring children into it.
3. Sin has impacted God’s design.
Infertility.
Divorce.
Infidelity and out of wedlock births.
Death.

All of these – and more – are the results of sin in our world – the result of living in a fallen world.

So, God’s design is not always realized.

But God still uses sin and the resulting challenges and problems for His purposes and plan.

If you’re unable to have children, then pray and seek God’s leading as to His will for you and if He might be calling you to foster or adoptive care – or to some other ministry to families and children?

4. Celebrate marriage – and families.

Realize kids are a blessing from God.

Celebrate with families that are having babies!

Pray for them – help them in ways you’re able.

Serve in ways that help kids learn about Jesus.

Serve in ways that help parents raise godly kids!

Closing prayer