

Parents – Deuteronomy 6:4-25

Parenting has never been short of advice. From helicopter parenting to tiger parenting, snowplough, gentle, free-range… there's no shortage of competing opinions about how to raise children—and plenty of pressure that comes with it. But what does God actually ask of us?

The Christian vision for parenting is remarkably simple. The greatest thing we can give our children is not a perfect childhood, every opportunity or an error-free example. It is the gospel of Jesus Christ. We are called to take that gospel to heart, live it out before our children and speak of it in the ordinary moments of everyday life.
As Christchurch Newport celebrate and pray for new parents, Lewis Roderick takes us to Deuteronomy 6: 4 - 25 to hear of God's grace to parents.

For community discussion:

A note for leaders; Parenting is a poignant topic for many. For some it might raise pains from child, for others grief for their own children. As you lead through these questions, be sensitive to various reactions and don't fear interrupting the time to pray for one another.

1. "Realise the gospel, take it to heart, live your life before your children." Is parenting really this simple? Where have you seen this lived out?

2. How did you connect with the comment ‘we cannot assume the gospel’ but be consumed by it? Be honest; are there things in your life you know dull your wonder at what Christ has done (busyness, familiarity, performance, a faith that lives mostly on Sundays), and what would it look like to let the grace of Christ reach the centre of who you are this week?

3. Deuteronomy 6 pictures an apprenticeship, not a seminar: sitting, walking, lying down, rising. If someone filmed your ordinary rhythms for a week, what would they conclude you worship? What is being formed in the people closest to you by your habits, your conversations, and the way you handle conflict, money, time, and rest?

4. Of the three implications Lewis offered, which resonated deepest? Why?

5. Are there parents in our church who could benefit from you coming alongside them? How might you help share the responsibility of passing the gospel on to the next generation—not replacing parents, but strengthening and supporting them?

6. How might you pray for parents in our church? Do it now.

Two further questions for personal reflection. One for mum. One for dad.

Dad; it’s not a cliche, it’s true of all men in Adam; our instinct is to hang back and let others take responsibility for the important things. What could it mean for you to live from your new identity in Christ and proactively seek to shape your children’s hearts and minds?

Mum; similarly, in Adam women will lean towards taking control and living in the anxiety this brings. Where are you most fearful for your children? What practical steps would it take to entrust them to your Father’s care today? (edited)