

Parents and Children 4- Biblical Perspectives

Some of you have spent more time with your children in the last several weeks than at any point in their lives. A few of you have learned that their school teachers have been lying when they said/wrote that your child “is a joy to have in class!”

Problematic Perspectives on (having) “children”

1. If children are an “**accessory**” for you, there are going to be problems- you can’t “take them off” or “give them to Goodwill” when you’re tired of them...and there will be times when you are just that.
 - a. Once you become a parent, your entire focus necessarily changes- or at least it should. Your primary focus (aside from heaven) is no longer all about you. *Fathers*- Luke 1:17; 1Tim.5:8; Eph.6:4; and *Mothers*, 1Tim.2:15; Titus 2:4.
2. If a child is an “**accident**,” remember that how we react to the “unplanned” matters. Mary wasn’t “planning” for a child at time, cf. Luke 1:26-38. Certainly Jesus was no “accident,” but was obviously *unplanned* from Mary and Joseph’s perspective, cf. Matt.1:20-25.
 - a. If you have been *blessed* with a child- even one you weren’t *expecting* or had *planned for*, that doesn’t matter now. What does matter is how you decide to *feel* and *act* from now going forward, cf. Gen.33:5. This isn’t like Amazon- you can’t just send it back, Ps.127:3!
3. If you wait until you can “**afford**” a child, you’ll never have any; or, if the only determining factor for having more is money, you’re storing up treasure in the wrong place, “*blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them*,” Ps.127:4-5; cf. Ezk.34:2; 2Cor.12:14.

Good Perspectives come from God:

1. **Natural affection** (*storge*; used with the negating prefix *a* in Rom.1:31 and 2Tim.3:3) should be present, but isn’t always enough- we need *agape* (love of the unlovable). There are going to be times when your children aren’t very *lovable*- love them then too, remembering your heavenly Father’s example, Rom.8:35-39.
2. **Unconditional love** doesn’t mean unconditional acceptance/tolerance. God *loved* David, cf. 1Sam.13:14; but, *rejected* him when we *sinned*, 2Sam.12:13. Unconditional love doesn’t mean that you must accept/tolerate bad behavior, or enable it through continued support. God give us *boundaries*- children need *physical, emotional, monetary, and spiritual boundaries*.
3. **Love enough to discipline**, Heb.12:5-11. Note the contextual connection to vv.12-13. I have no doubt that Eli loved his sons, but evidently didn’t love them enough, 1Sam.3:13.
 - a. *Discipline* must be motivated by love, not convenience, aggravation, embarrassment, or anger, Rev.3:19.

b. *Discipline is inconvenient* often. But like Felix, if we wait for a *convenient* time to correct or discipline our children, it will likely never come- or if it does, it will be too late, Acts 24:25.

c. *Discipline with purpose*, Col.3:21; Eph.6:4.

Conclusion

- Our *physical* parents- whether good parents or otherwise, are not our example- God is!
- Never lose sight of the goal of “parenting,” Ps.78:5-8.