

## Parenting in the Promises II

# Great & Precious Promises

Psalm 103:15-18

We want a culture of grace in our homes, full of God's delight and ours, where we bring up our kids to know and love Him. The goal of good parenting is God-honoring, self-sacrificing, loving and productive people. Even saying this can overwhelm us, which is why God gives such great and precious promises. Humble trust in God and His Word is the answer to our doubts that we can disciple our children effectively and our pride in assuming we can do it in our own strength. These gifts are ours, but we have to take and receive them.

### ***God's Generational Mercy***

We are here and gone. Spring flowers bloom and die, just like us, and no one remembers (vv15-16). The end, we can all go home. Well, we can go home when we die, and take comfort that Yahweh's mercy is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him, and His righteousness to children's children to such as keep His covenant and remember His commandments (vv17-18). Parenting in the home is really short—less than two decades. But God's mercy is unending, and His righteousness doesn't have a shelf life. This is His stated intention, and it's not given to super-Christians, but to all believing parents. Keeping covenant means believing these promises, which we know because when God made a covenant with Abraham, he *believed* God's promise about the stars—"So shall your descendants be"—and God account it to him as righteousness (Gen. 15:5-6). Later he was circumcised as a sign and seal of the righteousness of his faith (Rom. 4:11). God told Abraham He would be God to him and his descendants (Gen. 17:7-9). This wasn't new with Abraham; God gave sexual union from the beginning in order to make new people like Him (Mal. 2:15). Godly parenting is hard work, but it helps to know we're cutting with the grain. God stops iniquity at the third and fourth generation of those who hate Him, but blesses to a thousand generations of those who love Him (Dt. 5:8-10, 7:9). Rather than downplay or ignore them, the New Testament takes these promises and runs with them (Rom. 4:13; Acts 2:39; 2 Cor. 1:20; Lk. 1:48-50; Eph. 5:31-6:4; 2 Pet. 1:4; Is. 65:23). The promises are ours to believe.

### ***Children are Holy***

We have all these promises about generations, but we need to look at individual small people. How should we regard them? The Bible teaches that the child of one Christian parent is holy, meaning set apart and dedicated to God (1 Cor. 7:14). How can kids be holy since they would believe in Zeus if we told them to? First, holiness isn't wisdom. But a better question is why would parents lie to their kid? Trust is a design feature and God requires us to be honest about Him and everything else with children *because* they are holy (Matt. 18:6). God loves us before we love Him, and He loves and chooses our children first also. Because we love our kids, we don't tell them gravity is optional, and we shouldn't teach that the God who made gravity is optional. Children born to believers are children of the covenant, which is why we can say like Joshua, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Josh. 24:15). We should teach them to pray, seek God's forgiveness, read their Bible, thank Him for the food, and self-consciously enjoy Him in His world. We honor their position and call them to it.

### ***Children Must Grow in Grace***

Along with these promises about our children, the Bible is not sentimental about their sinfulness. Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward, an unclean thing born from an unclean thing (Ps. 51:5; Job. 5:7, 14:4). Paul says we were all at one time by nature children of wrath (Eph. 2:3). Believing God's promises means trusting Him to sovereignly act both in regeneration and sanctification, giving faith to our kids and growing them in that faith. This is active, loving, constant, enduring biblical trust that is seen by its actions (cf. Jms. 2:18, 25-26). The actions cannot be neglected but can never be sufficient on their own. We want the fruit on the tree, the obedience of faith, to be ever growing (Rom. 1:5; Col. 1:28). We are assured by the promises as we bring kids up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Eph. 6:4). We believe the promises, pray to the Lord, and love our kids for their lifetime (Job 1:5). This is the sacrifice and joy of parenting.

## NOTES FOR LITTLE SAINTS

### Today's Passage: Psalm 103:15-18

*15 As for man, his days are like grass; As a flower of the field, so he flourishes. 16 For the wind passes over it, and it is gone, and its place remembers it no more. 17 But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him, and His righteousness to children's children, 18 to such as keep His covenant, And to those who remember His commandments to do them.*

1. How long does man last in verses 15 and 16, and how is God's mercy different in verse 17?
2. God loves individuals, but He also loves families. To whom is His righteousness given (verse 17)?
3. It's an enormous blessing to have Christian parents, but not if we don't imitate their faith. If we believe God, what do we do in verse 18? What's important for you to remember to do right now in your life?
4. Draw a picture of you when you are a grandpa or grandma doing something fun with your kids and grandkids!

### Memory Verse to Recite Next Week:

*But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting On those who fear Him, And His righteousness to children's children*  
—Psalm 103:17