**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 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.
   1. 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.
   1. 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.
4. *Discipline* must be motivated by love, not convenience, aggravation, embarrassment, or anger, Rev.3:19.
5. *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.
6. *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.