

## YOUTH AND PARENTS

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*Exodus 20:12 Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.*

The only one of the Ten Commandments, which comes with a promise attached, is the one about honoring one's father and mother. Consider the sacrifice and dedication of parents. Way before the child is born, parents rejoice and plan. Parents willfully give up much of their freedom in having children. The task of parenting is constant; parents worry about their child/ren throughout their lives. They worry about their safety and their success. For all these reasons and more, the Lord puts a high premium on parenting and gives it divine sanction. It is one of the most noble tasks, and done properly, receives his blessings.

Because parenting is a life-long career, God rewards children who honor their parents with long life. The reward is equivalent to the task. The contrary is also true: a son of Judah was so wicked that God cut him off early. "And Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the sight of the LORD; and the LORD slew him" (Genesis 38:7). In other words, God demands and expects children to recognize the sacrifice and divine seal upon the task of parenting. Parenting is close to the heart of God; obviously, it was God who envisioned and invented the institution of parenting. Angels have not been given access to this special mission and animals do it to varying degrees of imperfection.

Only humans, created in God's image, have been endowed with the sacred duty of parenting.

**Gen 18:17** *And the LORD said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do;*

**Gen 18:18** *Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him*

**Gen 18:19** *For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him*

According to the scriptures above, it was God's foreknowledge and trust in Abraham's parenting abilities that led him to share what was about to happen to Sodom and Gomorrah. Good parenting is rewarded by the Lord. If we dispense of our duties as parents diligently, God will trust as with his secrets. The opposite was true for Eli, the high priest. What a contrast there was between Eli and Hannah. Hannah was so concerned for her son to know the ways of the Lord that she entrusted him in the care of Eli, but, sadly, Eli was not as concerned about his sons' spiritual upbringing. He neglected his duties to his family – his sons in particular. What was the outcome of this neglect? God elected to talk to a child, Samuel. The principle of trust and parenting is reinforced.

**1Samuel 3:1** *And the child Samuel ministered unto the LORD before Eli. And the word of the LORD was precious in those days; there was no open vision.*

**1Samuel 3:17** *And he said, What is the thing that the LORD hath said unto thee? I pray thee hide it not from me: God do so to thee, and more also, if thou hide any thing from me of all the things that he said unto thee.*

What characteristics is God looking for in ideal parenting? Abraham is one of the foremost examples. He waited patiently for twenty-five years before he received Isaac, then he did not hesitate to take him to Mount Moriah to sacrifice him. This demonstrated clearly to Isaac that God is above all. He knew that God could raise him from the dead. This is the first duty of a parent – honor God in the mission of parenting. Abraham was also very meticulous in giving instructions to Eleazer in regard to finding a bride for his son. Again, he honored God in this vital aspect of parenting.

*Gen 24:37 And my master made me swear, saying, Thou shalt not take a wife to my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I dwell*

*Gen 24:38 But thou shalt go unto my father's house, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son.*

As mentioned earlier, God rewards parents who take the job of bringing up spiritual children seriously. A God-fearing and well-behaved child brings honor to God, parents, society and himself. Solomon states: “The father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice: and he that begetteth a wise child shall have joy of him” (Proverbs 23:24). Most importantly, a wise parent will pay special attention to what the Lord says about the kind of upbringing he desires.

*Mal 2:15 And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth.*

May God come to your house and find godly seed!