

Lesson 1 Foundation of Christian Parenting

Passages to Reflect Upon: Deut. 11:19-21; Eph. 6:4; I Cor. 11:3; Eph. 5:22-25; Psalms 139:13-14, 16; Gen 3:16; I Tim 2:11-15; Rom. 8:38-39; Judges 13:8; Gen. 3:6; II Tim 3:14-15; Prov. 22:6; I Cor. 11:3; I Cor. 14:33-34

1. **Making the big decision**

Life begins at conception. Parenting begins at conception. Bonding begins during pregnancy. Children do not come with detailed instructions or guaranteed formulas and life will never be the same again. It's a wonderful, exciting, life-changing and sometimes terrifying adventure. Being a parent is a God-given privilege and an awesome responsibility and God planned it that way (**Deut. 11:19-21; Eph. 6:4**). Before the decision is made to start a family it is important to ensure that the husband and wife relationship is aligned with Christ (**I Cor. 11:3; Eph. 5:22-25**).

2. **A New Life Begins**

God's handiwork is shown in the creation of each baby in a mother's womb (**Psalms 139:13-14, 16**). As with other parenting experiences, the milestone of birth will have different expressions for different people. The labor of childbirth is directed by God (**Gen. 3:16, I Tim. 2:11-15**). But in every case, bearing a child is a breathtaking blessing from God. Parents confront a variety of new feelings when the baby is brought home and everyone is adjusting to having a new member of the family. A new baby will change your life schedule and the family routine will change. There are many new feelings and you find yourself getting a glimpse of what unselfish love is all about—giving unselfishly, without strings attached. God's love is giving, unselfish and always with us (**Rom. 8:38-39**). As a parent, you learn how to pray for your child—your gift from God. You also pray for yourself and your new responsibilities as a parent. It is important to learn to depend on God for your child's well-being and future and for your parenting skills (**Judges 13:8**).

As we rock our newborns to sleep, we wonder what they will be. Each child is special, a unique creation of our loving God and packed with their own blend of talents, gifts, abilities and potential. All good parents want the very best for their children. Parents want their children to:

- Reach their potential
- Have a positive self-image
- Be happy and productive members of society
- Build good marriages
- Have close and growing relationships with God

Babies come into this world with a need to be taught and trained. We are not born with a natural inclination to obey but an inclination to disobey (**Gen. 3:6**). God's nature is pure and holy, ours is not. They are totally dependent on their parents to meet their needs—physical, mental, social, emotional. Pray for yourself and your new responsibilities as a parent, asking God for strength and wisdom.

3. **Being a Good Provider – A Team Effort**

Parenting should be a team effort and not the responsibility of just one parent. Parenting can be intense. Pray to commit your future and your new child to God. It is important to model godly values in your home. Life is truly a gift from God—we should choose life, value life and celebrate life and take our parenting seriously. Children are entrusted by God to our care. It's an awesome task and responsibility. Be sure and keep firmly on track as you train your children (**II Tim 3:14-15**).

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4. **An Awesome and Humbling Responsibility**

When we bring children into the world, we start a soul toward eternity. Every child has a soul that needs to be nourished and a heart that needs to be protected. A child is totally dependent on a parent to thrive emotionally. Children need love and they need discipline. The parents are responsible for building into those early years' experiences that will predispose the child to a desire to serve God and others (**Prov. 22:6**). This is a humbling responsibility.

5. **Autocratic Rule versus Democratic Rule in a Family**

The autocratic home must be properly organized (**I Cor. 11:3**) -- God
Christ
Man
Woman
Children

I Cor. 14:33-34 "God is not the author of confusion, but of peace." Parents are blessed when they bring up their children "in the discipline and instruction of the Lord" (**Eph. 6:4**). "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it" (**Prov. 22:6**). "Train" – the original Hebrew word is "*chanak*" which means to initiate or discipline or dedicate. "Way" – the original Hebrew word is "*derek*" means a course of life or mode or action. The original intent of the passage: "Discipline a child for his course of life and the actions he should take".

Thought Questions:

1. What should a husband and wife ensure about their relationship before starting a family?

2. How should a new parent approach the task that God has given them?

3. Why would it be important to begin teaching children the principles of God at an early age?

4. What is one of the most important responsibilities of a parent in raising a child?

5. List a passage that demonstrates that children are to be in subjection to their parents?