

## Grace to a Thousand Generations – Deut 5:9-10, 7:9

### Parenting in the Promises #2

**Introduction** – The mystery of grace is this: everything you are commanded to do has been given to you in your covenantal union to the new Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ. You are to love God, and love is given to you in Christ. You are to believe, and faith is given to you in Christ. As Paul says, we are to work out in us what God is working in us (Phil 2:12-13). We are the New Humanity and Jesus is our Head. The first Adam fell and he and his offspring fell in him. The second Adam has rescued His people and their children as well. This has always been the plan of God – and this must affect, at the very deepest level, how we view, nurture, and train our children.

**Grace to a Thousand Generations** (Deut 5:9-10, 7:9) – The effects of iniquity fall upon future generations (and we saw this in our study in Rom 3). However, because of the character of God revealed in His merciful promises, the flow of blessing is to a thousand generations. How long is a thousand generations? Ezekiel, using a prophetic synonym, says, “...*they, their children, and their children’s children, forever...an everlasting covenant*” (Ez 37:24-26). While we see that covenantal faithfulness is something we must keep, the foundation of the success of the covenant is God’s faithfulness, established through Abraham, the father of all who believe (Gen 17:7-9, Gal 3:26-29).

**God’s Abilities and Intentions** (Psalm 102:25-28, 103:15-18) – The creation (in 102) and the works of man (103) are both contrasted to the everlasting mercy of God and His covenant to generations. The former fade, crumble, or change; the latter ever remains steadfast. But notice particularly what the intentions of that steadfast covenant are (102:28). Notice God’s character; notice what He *wants* to do.

**Standing on the Promises of Grace** (Acts 2:37-39) – The Psalmist declares that we must keep covenant, and what is that? Peter, explaining the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, preaches the gospel. Men, convicted by that Spirit, cry out in response and Peter replies that they must repent and be baptized. He says this because of the same promise which is again to them and to their children: a transgenerational blessing assumed throughout the Old and New Testament. Notice God’s unchanging character; notice what He is doing.

**Faith** - Like Abraham, our response is to believe the gospel, that is, the promises of God. And we are instructed, like Abraham, to believe them, not simply as individuals, but for our future generations because of what God is doing. As His Word and promises settle in our hearts, we rest in them, stand on them, relying on His faithfulness and completed work. That evangelical rest is what God is working in and will result in godly, trusting, faithful parental work.

**Walking in the Promises of Grace** (Eph 2:8-10, 6:1-4) – If we believe that faith is a gift of God, this can begin to make sense. If we believe that faith is something we must gin up and offer to God, this will seem crazy (“talk sense, man!”). If we see faith as grace, then everything in and around my salvation is all grace and no works.

There is a tension between believing (standing) and obeying (walking). The key is to do both in the Promises. There is a fundamental *being* before *doing*; but there is a *doing* that flows out of *being*. Walk in the *doing* without *being* betrays your view of faith, grace, and God’s character. Sit in the *being* without *doing* betrays that you really don’t have the *being*.

**Faith Working** (Gal 5:6) – “*For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love.*” That’s the phrase – “*faith working through love,*” or simply, “*faith working...*” The faith that Paul is commending is a faith that that is given by the Spirit who then gives men power to lead a holy life. That is the faith that saves, and that is the faith that believes the promises of God – even for the children and grandchildren and generations yet to be born.

**Who is Your God: Some Challenges and Applications** – While God is holy and utterly demanding of perfect righteousness before Him, His perfect righteousness is not miserly when it comes to grace, mercy, forgiveness, tenderheartedness, and longsuffering. Open yourself wide (an act of faith) and find yourself nearly drowning in the ocean of grace that is yours in Jesus Christ. Then start applying...

**Walk ON (not just in) the Promises** – If God has prepared these good works for you, then like a sturdy-built bridge, find yourself not just parenting *in* the promises, but parenting *on* the promises. In other words, that’s always your floor, your foundation, your path.

**Cultivating Grace** – If He’s working these promises into you, cultivate them with the means He has given. His Word and sacraments, the body of Christ, your own devotions – these are not work-based obligations, but the places to receive and cultivate the grace of God.

**Parenting by Faith** – This grace leads us to thankfulness when things are going well, acknowledging the Giver of all things. It keeps us looking first to Him to plead His promises when things are not going well (with me or with my children). God’s mercy, to a thousand generations: that’s where we begin and end.