

# Family Ministry: Parenting in the Promises

**Introduction** – The world is rudderless and our sociologists have no foundation and so we wander in the darkness from one ‘new idea’ to another when it comes to raising kids. The ‘new idea’, though, is the power of the gospel, the promises of God for His people, and His purposes for a godly marriage “*He seeks godly offspring*” (Mal 3:15). The ‘new idea’ is the promise of the New Covenant.

**An Odd Place to Start?** (Isaiah 65:17-25) – If we have established that marriage is God’s design, and that he desires godly offspring as the fruit of that covenantal union, we begin to understand that God has particular, historical intentions for this world He has created.

**New Heavens and A New Earth** (v17) – When is this taking place? People are being born and dying, sinners are still there, but the righteous are reigning and there is peace and prosperity. This is not the final consummation, this is not heaven. This is the result of the cross where “*all things have become new*” (2 Cor 5:17).

**Descendants of the Blessed** (v23) – One of the results of the work of the cross will be that His people will bring forth faithful children. This is the promise of God. This is the work of the Redeemer in God’s covenant (Is 59:20-21).

**The Everlasting Covenant** (Gen 17:1-8) – The terms of this everlasting covenant with Abraham and his people are described. We must remember that we are children of Abraham (Gal 3:7), and that Canaan was only a down payment (Rom 4:13). God always had the world in view, which is why Jesus tells his disciples to go and disciple the nations.

**Promises in the Commandments** (Deut 5:8, 7:9) – The effects of iniquity certainly have their affects on future generations. But because of the merciful promises of God, the flow of blessing is to a thousand generations. Notice carefully that the reason this is so is because of God’s faithfulness to His covenant.

**The Work of God** (John 6:28-29) – But I don’t keep His commandments. No, not in your flesh, not in your works, but by faith. Faith looks at the faithfulness of God and His promises and says “Amen”, yes, it is so.

**The Foundation of Godly Parenting: Covenant Keeping** – As in all of the Christian walk, it is not to be done by works, but by faith. Trusting in works is how you break the covenant. Trusting in God is how you keep covenant (Eph 2:8-10, Rom 1:16-17).

**The Promises are Everywhere** – throughout the Old and New Testament.

**Ezek 37:24-26** – “...*they, their children, and their children’s children, forever...an everlasting covenant...*”

**Psalms 102:25-28, 103:15-18** – The creation and the works of man are both contrasted to the everlasting mercy of God and His covenant to generations.

**Mary quotes this as the work of God in Christ** (Luke 1:48-50).

**Peter applies these covenant promises at Pentecost** (Acts 2:37-39).

**Paul applies these covenant promises to Gentile believers and their children** (Eph 2:11-13, 6:1-3).

**Automatic?** – Of course not. That is the warning all along. Presumption is not faith and is condemned. “*God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones*” (Matt 3:9). But it is important to notice, that while that is true, God intends to make sons of Abraham from sons of Abraham. “*I will be your God and you will be my people*”. He speaks to families, to nations, and not simply to individuals. And He requires you to believe Him.

**Too Late?** – There is a time when it is too late to believe the promises of God. He has warned us that ‘*a man reaps what he sows*’. If your child has grown up in rebellion and is now in rebellion himself, God may still show grace and mercy (many of us are here today simply because of that truth). Praying for His mercy is a good thing for He delights in mercy. But this is not the same as pleading the covenant promises as you train up your children. God loves to receive the prodigal – the prodigal son and the prodigal parent.

**“Why Is This So Important?”** – Covenant-keeping, that is, believing the promises of God for your children is the foundation for true godly parenting. All other foundations, even if they imitate methods well, are fundamentally idolatrous.

**Goal is not well-behaved pagans** – We will be discussing training and discipline, encouragement and rebuke, but not with the goal of behavior modification. We are not social engineers. We are Christians.

**But the salvation of our children cannot be based on our works** – When thinking about parenting, we must not rush to a works-orientation. We must learn to rest in faith. Only then can we rightly apply the principles and ‘works’ of child-rearing.

**Sovereignty and Election** – This doctrine of the covenant does not contradict God’s teaching on election. He has ordained the ends and the means. And one primary means is the faith of covenant-keeping parents.

**“I Need Faith”** – “*Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*” (Rom 10:17). Hear the word of God. And do not trust in your faith, but in the faithfulness of God. In the name of Jesus Christ, in Him, you keep the covenant.