

# Parenting Through the Ages

**By Royce & Cindy DeBerry**

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COVER : Photography by Sarah McMurray. Payton Clarckson living the high life. For information or to contact Ms McMurray; email: [Sarah@Spiritbuilding.com](mailto:Sarah@Spiritbuilding.com)

# Parenting Through the Ages

New King James Version - used throughout the book unless otherwise noted

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The Bible tells us in Ecclesiastes 1:9, “there is nothing new under the sun.” This means that whatever we face today, someone has faced it before us. Therefore, as parents we know someone before us has faced whatever we are dealing with. We sometimes forget this and feel like we have new problems no one can help us with. This is not true. We have everything that pertains to life and godliness recorded for us in God’s word, 2 Peter 1:3. We are told the Old Testament was written as a schoolmaster for us. The purpose of these lessons is to help us gain wisdom and knowledge on parenting from God who created us and knows what we need, James 1:5; 3:13-18.

## **DEDICATION**

Our society puts a lot of importance on education and success. We want to get a quality education. We readily realize that usually a person will succeed at a task in direct proportion to the energy applied to the task. A doctor spends years studying to be able to diagnose his patients correctly. A professional athlete will spend years practicing the skills to win the game.

How much energy is spent on education preparing for becoming a parent? Can you think of a part of your life it will not impact? Will the way you parent your child matter? Will you get a second chance to fix things if you mess up? These are very thought provoking questions. We would like to suggest that nothing else you do, accomplish, create, or stockpile will matter as much as your parenting, because these children have souls.

## **ATTITUDE**

It has been said that what happens to us does not matter. What matters is how we react to what happens to us. This principle can be applied to every situation. This is why every person can serve God no matter what, Romans 8. We have examples of people who have everything and commit suicide. We also have examples of people who lost everything and remained faithful. Every situation in-between follows this same principle.

### **BORROWED, NOT OWNED**

The first step in parenting is to realize that God has blessed us if we should become parents, Psalm 127:3-5. The writer here calls children “a gift” in the New American Standard Version. We need to ponder this. Some parents act like their children are a bother or a slave. Others act like their children are gods to be worshipped. They are a gift from God and we should remember this.

### **THROUGH THE YEARS**

We have been parenting for thirty-three years. Our first four children are each one year apart. When the fourth one turned eleven, we started over and adopted two babies, two months apart. When those girls turned eleven, we started over and adopted four more. Our children range in age from 33 years to 5 years old. We have seen a lot of changes in parenting. Our first family of children rode anywhere they wanted in the car. We didn't worry about seat belts, let alone car seats. We had a station wagon and we would put the seats down, unfold a blanket, and put their toys in. They would crawl around and play. Our second family came along and we learned that it was not safe to let them ride unrestrained. The girls were in car seats. One was between us in the front seat. Then we had our third family, and we learned the front seat was unsafe. So, all the car seats were moved to the back. We could write pages on all the differences we have gone through in all of our years of parenting. That being said, parenting is the same today as it was ages ago. The basics that applied to raising Cain and Abel still apply today. Just as God was the authority back then, He is today. The equipment changes, but the values and principles do not.

## **DON'T TRY TO CHANGE GOD' PLAN - TRUST AND OBEDIENCE**

**(Abraham, Sarah, Hagar, Ishmael, and Isaac)**

### **Lesson One**

“For I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the Lord, to do righteousness and justice, that the Lord may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him,” Genesis 18:19.

God has a plan. He is going to make a great nation from Abram's descendants. He makes Abram and Sarai aware of this plan. See the “Fill in the Blanks” verses. Sarai becomes impatient waiting for the Lord to fulfill His plan. She comes up with a scheme that will help the Lord fulfill His plan. Genesis 16:2 states, “So Sarai said to Abram, ‘See now, the Lord has restrained me from bearing children. Please, go in to my maid; perhaps I shall obtain children by her.’ And Abram HEEDED [emphasis cd] the voice of Sarai.” Remember when Adam listened to Eve? Wives, we must make sure we do not talk our husbands into OUR plans if they go against God's word. God does NOT need our help with His plan. He wants our obedience.

The sad thing about this story is, Sarai liked and wanted God's plan. She would have rather had the baby herself. What prompted her changing God's plan? She was impatient. We see impatience in our little children and realize they need practice to develop patience. Adults are the same way. We want what we want when we want it...NOW. Just as we realize that children gain understanding from learning to wait patiently, so do adults. If we, as parents, do not actively work to give our children practice developing patience, we will not be doing our job, James 1:2-4. Sometimes we try to spare our children from having to wait because they don't want to. We cannot skip this step. Practice makes perfect. Give your children active lessons in waiting to help them develop patience.

What are some of the valuable lessons we can learn from developing patience? The first one is OBEDIENCE. Hebrews 5:8 says, “Though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.” Jesus did not want to suffer. No one does. However, suffering through something unpleasant will develop character. If Jesus needed to learn obedience, so

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must we. We don't have to know why. We need to accept God's word and timing because they are God's word and timing. Joseph is another great example of patience. He endured years in prison when he was innocent of the charges. He was patiently waiting on God's timing. He was blessed in God's own time for his patient obedience. On the other side, King Saul is an example of impatience. Saul did not want to wait for Samuel to sacrifice (which was God's word). God deemed Saul unfit to keep his kingdom. (Read 1 Samuel 13:5-14.) We do not want God to deem our children unfit to keep the kingdom. Teaching them the importance of obedience is vital. By teaching them to obey us and other forms of authority, we are paving the road to God.

Secondly, we can learn TRUST. Somehow we forget God created everything and He is in control. We must TRUST Him to give us what we need. When it doesn't happen immediately, that's ok. Maybe He's holding back because we need patience. Maybe He wants to develop our trust in Him. Maybe the timing is not right for God's big plan. Think about your vision from your front yard. Now think about your vision from a helicopter above your house. Let's go higher... now you are in an airplane above your house. The higher you go the more you know. God is in heaven, and He knows everything. He is meeting ALL our needs while keeping our wants in check. We must trust His judgment and timing, Mark 13:31-33. Sarai's impatience caused her son much grief because of the rivalry between Ishmael's descendants and Isaac's descendants.

What do these things have to do with parenting? These traits must be taught to our children before we can hope to accomplish anything else. Unfortunately, we in America are so blessed; some adults have never developed these traits. Americans are free. Sometimes this freedom gets attached to religion. Attend the church of your choice was, and still is, a popular phrase. God has not given us the freedom to ignore His will and do as we please, Ecclesiastes 5:1. Some do not learn to trust in God but in cash. Patience is seen as weakness. We cannot teach what we have not learned. This causes our children a disadvantage. God in His infinite wisdom has placed precious little children in the care of their parents. When we fulfill all their needs and keep their wants in check developing obedience and trust, we are giving our children the foundation they need to be happy, productive adults, Matthew 7:24-27.

Dad holds out his arms to catch his child. Child jumps off the stairs into dad's arms. Why? TRUST! God wants us to jump into His arms TRUSTING Him to catch us safely. Our little children are watching all of our words and



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actions. They will learn to trust God through us. We can't teach what we don't know.

### **TRUST AND OBEY**

Trust and obey, for there's no other way  
To be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.  
When we walk with the Lord In the light of His word,  
What a glory He sheds on our way!  
While we do His good will, He abides with us still,  
And with all who will trust and obey.  
Not a burden we bear, Not a sorrow we share,  
But our toil He doth richly repay;  
Not a grief or a loss, Not a frown or a cross,  
But is blest if we trust and obey.  
But we never can prove, The delights of His love,  
Until all on the altar we lay;  
For the favor He shows, And the joy He bestows,  
Are for those who will trust and obey.  
Then in fellowship sweet We will sit at His feet,  
Or we'll walk by His side in the way;  
What he says, we will do; Where He sends, we will go;  
Never fear, only trust and obey.  
Trust and obey, for there's no other way  
To be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.

This is a powerful song! If we sing it every morning upon rising out of bed, it can help focus us on our mission of the day. If we sing it every morning with our children, think of how it could help your children focus their attitude for the day.

List modern day parenting situations that Abraham and his family's example could help us with.

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Nothing new under the sun

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**FILL IN THE BLANK**

GENESIS 12:1-3 “Now the Lord had said to \_\_\_\_\_, ‘Get out of your \_\_\_\_\_, From your \_\_\_\_\_ And from your father’s house, To a land that I will show you; I will make you a \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_, I will \_\_\_\_\_ you, And make your \_\_\_\_\_ great; And you shall be a \_\_\_\_\_. I will \_\_\_\_\_ those who \_\_\_\_\_ you, And I will \_\_\_\_\_ him who \_\_\_\_\_ you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

GENESIS 13:14-16 “And the Lord said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, ‘Lift your eyes now and look from the place where you are, \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_; for all the land which you see, I give to you and your \_\_\_\_\_ forever. And I will make your \_\_\_\_\_ as the dust of the earth; so that if a man could number the \_\_\_\_\_ of the earth, then your \_\_\_\_\_ could be numbered.”

GENESIS 15:3-6 “Then Abram said, ‘Look, You have given me no \_\_\_\_\_; indeed one born in my house is my \_\_\_\_\_.’ And behold, the \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_ came to him, saying, ‘This one shall not be your \_\_\_\_\_ but one who will come from your own \_\_\_\_\_ shall be your \_\_\_\_\_.’ Then He brought him outside and said, ‘Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them.’ And He said to him, ‘So shall your \_\_\_\_\_ be.’ And He \_\_\_\_\_ in the Lord; and He accounted it to him for \_\_\_\_\_.”

GENESIS 21:1-2 “And the Lord visited \_\_\_\_\_ as He had said, and the Lord did for \_\_\_\_\_ as He had \_\_\_\_\_ For Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the \_\_\_\_\_ time of which \_\_\_\_\_ had \_\_\_\_\_ to him.”

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### **Genesis 16:1-16; 17:1-27; 21:1-2 -- Questions on this text:**

1. Why did Sarai believe she needed to help God with His plan?
2. How did she decide to help God fulfill His plan?
3. What happened next?
4. Was Sarai's plan successful? Explain.
5. What was Hagar's reaction?
6. Tell what message the Lord had for Abram in chapter 17.
7. What did Abram think of God's message? See verse 17:18. What was God's answer?
8. Tell what God's plan was at the beginning. At the end.
9. What consequences were there for attempting to change God's plan?
10. Explain what it means in 21:2 when it says "at the appointed time."

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### **Personal Application:**

1. Does God have a plan for us and our children today?
2. If yes, what? If no, why not?
3. How can we KNOW what God's plan is?
4. What foundation do we need to teach our children?
5. How can we teach this?
6. List our children's needs. List their wants.
7. How do we keep our children's wants in check?
8. List ways we can help our children develop...
  - patience.
  - obedience.
  - trust.