

# DEEPER

## Daily Bible Study

Adult Sabbath School Lesson  
Podcast, Study Notes, and Teacher Helps

### Season of Parenting

2019, Quarter 2, Lesson 8

#### Sabbath (May 18): Season of Parenting

The Hebrew word translated as “heritage” in Psalm 127:3 means “something inherited” or “an heirloom.” People go to great lengths to restore, preserve, and protect valuable heirloom furniture—how much more important are the children that God entrusts to our care as parents! Yet it is a sad and ironic fact that many people enter parenthood with little to no preparation. In fact, it is, in some ways, easier to bring a child into the world than it is to buy a car, build a house, or obtain training or a degree for a specific job. Nevertheless, God holds parents responsible for the children that they bring into the world. Certainly, the season of parenting is an important one that, in many ways, never ends once you begin it.

#### Discussion Questions:

- Read Matthew 25:14,15. In what ways may the gift of children be compared to the “talents” that the master entrusts to his servants? (Children are a heritage from the Lord and every parent should remember that it is their duty to protect, preserve, and “multiply” this heritage.)
- Read Matthew 25:16,17. In the comparison of our children with the talents, what might the “multiplication” of the five and two talents point to? (Answers will vary. A good and wise parent will help their children improve upon the abilities and talents that God gives them. When a child marries, the parents also gain another son or daughter.)
- Read Matthew 25:18. What might it mean, symbolically, to bury the “talent” of your child in the earth? (Answers will vary. Failing to train and raise a child to love and serve God could be a way of “burying” that child in the earth.)

#### Sunday (May 19): Childless Parenting

Some people never have children, or have children who have grown up and left home. In today’s lesson we explore the ways in which these people can serve as “parents” to those in younger generations.

#### Discussion Questions:

- Read 1 Timothy 1:15. How did Paul regard Timothy? (As a son in the faith.) In what ways did Paul express His concern and regard for Timothy? (He shared a great deal of wisdom with Timothy regarding how to be a strong spiritual leader, as recorded in 1 and 2 Timothy.) In what ways have you, or someone you know, been benefited in a similar way by a caring “parent”? (Answers will vary.)

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- Read 1 John 2:1. How did John refer to the Christians that read his letter? (As little children.) What was John's great concern for his spiritual children? (That they understand Jesus Christ as a Savior Who can forgive and keep from sin.)
- Read 1 John 3:18. What additional advice did John share as a spiritual father? (To love in deed and in truth.) In what ways can those in positions of influence over younger people help their spiritual children to love "in deed and in truth"? Who in your life has done this for you? (Answers will vary.)

### Monday (May 20): Single Parenting

Without a doubt, one of the most difficult situations any person can find himself or herself in is that of a single parent. For those in this season of life, promises like Psalm 146:9 are a wonderful comfort: "The Lord preserveth the strangers; he relieveth the fatherless and widow..." Of course, God often calls the friends, family, and church members surrounding the single parent to be a conduit through which His blessings can be shared with the single parent.

#### Discussion Questions:

- Read 2 Kings 4:1-7. What does this story tell you about God's care for the single parent? (He will provide for the parent and children who seek His help.)
- Read Luke 7:11-17. What comfort can single parents take from this touching story? (God sees their struggles and wants to come close to them in their time of greatest need, just as Jesus traveled to Nain to raise the widow's son.)
- Read 1 Kings 7:13. What courage can single parents take from Hiram's experience? (God desire to bless their children as He did Hiram.)

### Tuesday (May 21): The Joy and Responsibility of Parenting

Parenting brings with it some of life's most solemn responsibilities. Read the following Bible verses and statements, and discuss in what ways these principles can and should be applied by Christian parents today:

- Deuteronomy 6:7 and Proverbs 31:26. (Parents should be the first teachers of their children, especially in spiritual things.)

Every child brought into the world is the property of Jesus Christ, and should be educated by precept and example to love and obey God; but by far the largest number of parents have neglected their God-given work, by failing to educate and train their children, from the first dawning of reason, to know and love Christ. By painstaking effort parents are to watch the opening, receptive mind and make everything in the home life secondary to the positive duty enjoined upon them by God—to train their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.<sup>7</sup> {AH 183.1}

Satan is marshaling his hosts; and are we individually prepared for the fearful conflict that is just before us? Are we preparing our children for the great crisis? Are we preparing ourselves and our households to understand the position of our adversaries and their modes of warfare? Are our children forming habits of decision, that they may be firm and unyielding in every matter of principle and duty? I pray that we all may understand the signs of the times, and that we may so prepare ourselves and our children that in the time of conflict God may be our refuge and defense.<sup>18</sup> {AH 186.2}

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- Ephesians 6:4. (A self-denying parent will do all in their power to put their children's interests and needs first, and to develop a personal relationship with their children.)

Father and mother, bind your hearts in closest, happiest union. Do not grow apart, but bind yourselves more closely to each other; then you are prepared to bind your children's hearts to you by the silken cord of love.<sup>13</sup> {AH 316.1}

- 1 John 4:9. (Parents should be prepared to sacrifice for their children.)
- Philippians 4:8. (Parents should guard and filter what their children read, watch, and listen to. Parents also have a responsibility to guide their children into positive and healthy friendships.)

Many youth are eager for books. They read anything that they can obtain. I appeal to the parents of such children to control their desire for reading. Do not permit upon your tables the magazines and newspapers in which are found love stories. Supply their place with books that will help the youth to put into their character-building the very best material—the love and fear of God, the knowledge of Christ. Encourage your children to store the mind with valuable knowledge, to let that which is good occupy the soul and control its powers, leaving no place for low, debasing thoughts. Restrict the desire for reading matter that does not furnish good food for the mind.<sup>2</sup> {AH 410.3}

Prayerfully, unitedly, the father and the mother should bear the grave responsibility of guiding their children aright. Whatever else they neglect, they should never leave their children free to wander in paths of sin. Many parents allow children to go and do as they please, amusing themselves and choosing evil associates. In the judgment such parents will learn that their children have lost heaven because they have not been kept under home restraint.<sup>7</sup> {AH 468.2}

### Wednesday (May 22): Parenting as Disciple-Making

A disciple is one who learns from or follows another person. One of the most important aspects of parenting is that of disciplining our children so that they will first learn and follow us, and, ultimately, Jesus Christ. The word *discipline*, of course, comes from the same root word as the word *disciple*, and the process of disciplining our children should always have as its goal the making of a disciple.

#### Discussion Questions:

- Read Revelation 3:19. For what reason does Christ discipline us? (Because He loves us.) What should always be the underlying reason for a parent to discipline a child? (Because they love the child, not because they are irritated, tired, angry, etc.)
- Read Job 5:17. What does loving and appropriate discipline result in for the one disciplined? (Happiness.) Have you seen this principle demonstrated in your children, or do you remember experiencing this yourself when you were younger? (Answers will vary.)
- Read Proverbs 3:11,12. What counsel is found here for fathers and mothers? (True love for a child will lead the parent to discipline them at the correct time and in the correct way. Many parents today mistakenly believe that their children will not love or appreciate them if they are disciplined, and these parents can end up indulging their children and harming their developing characters.)

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- Read Zephaniah 3:2. What additional reason for discipline is found here? (Those that fail to learn obedience as a child are headed down a path that will make it difficult, if not impossible, to learn how to trust and obey God later in life.)

### Thursday (May 23): Fighting for Your Prodigal Child

Many parents experience the agony of watching a son or daughter reject the training of their youth and rebel against their parents and God. God Himself, of course, knows this pain—one third of His angels in heaven rejected His loving authority and rebelled against their Creator. It is the difficult task of parents in such a situation to continue praying for their children as they watch them head down a self-destructive path.

#### Discussion Questions:

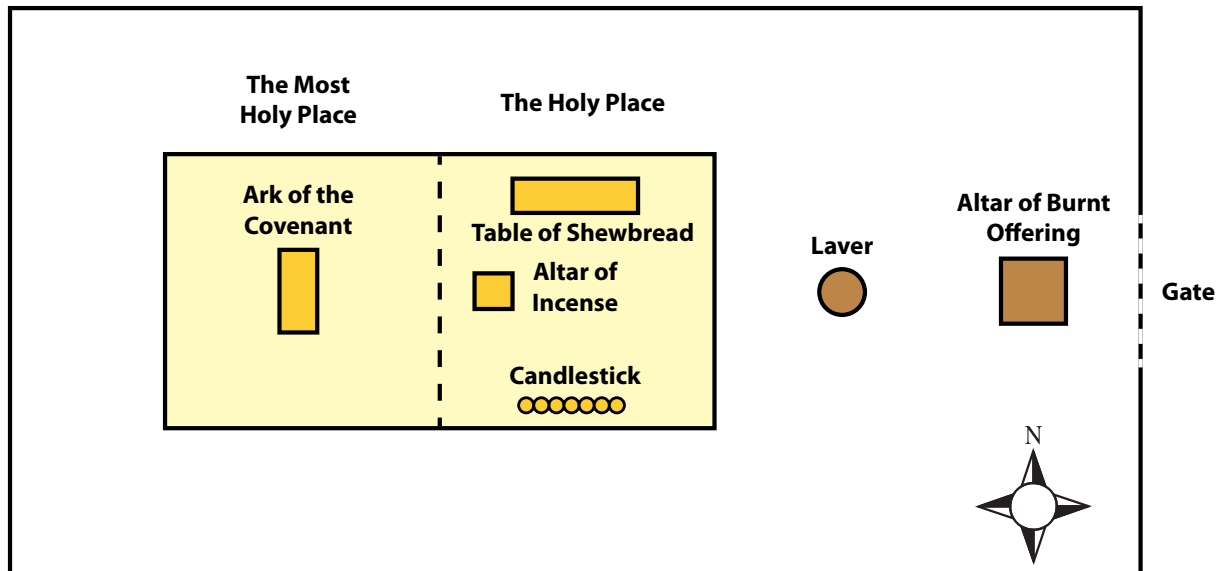
- Read Luke 15:11-24. What lessons can be learned from the father in this story for parents who have a similar prodigal child? (Answers will vary. The father in the story did not follow the child around, nor did he attempt to force him to return home. Rather, he respected his freedom of choice to leave. The father also was prepared at a moment's notice to welcome the son back home, and made no demands upon the son when he did return.)
- Read Malachi 4:4-6. What promise of hope can parents of prodigal children find here? Does this passage guarantee that such children will return? If not, how can we best understand it and claim it? (Answers will vary.)

### Friday (May 24): The Parenting Blueprint

Psalm 77:13 says, “Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary...” The sanctuary, of course, provides an amazing picture, or blueprint, of God’s plan of salvation. It also provides a compelling guide for parents who desire to raise their children in the fear of the Lord. Modern developmental psychology has observed, and commented at great length about, the stages that children pass through as they grow from a baby, to a toddler, to an adolescent, to a teenager, to an adult. The sanctuary blueprint, however, reveals the important stages of spiritual development that children should pass through as they become mature Christian adults. Review the layout of the sanctuary below, and then discuss the questions that follow.

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- Read Exodus 25:21,22. What two things made the Most Holy Place so holy, and how might they relate to the first lessons that a baby or young toddler needs to learn? (The law of God was placed in the Ark of the Covenant in the Most Holy Place, and this represents obedience. Likewise, the mercy seat covered the law and represented forgiveness and grace. Obedience to parents is an extremely important first lesson in the black-and-white world of babies and toddlers. These young children also must know that their parents love them and will forgive their mistakes.)
- Read Matthew 4:4; Matthew 5:16; and Revelation 8:3,4. What can the three items in the Holy Place represent? (The table of showbread points to the Word of God, the candlestick represents personal witness, and the altar of incense represents prayer.) Why is it important for adolescents to understand and participate in these activities? (By the time children reach the early elementary years, they should have learned the lessons of obedience and trust, and now have a solid foundation on which to build a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. That relationship is built through prayer, Bible study, and witnessing activity.)
- Read Romans 6:3,4. What does the water in the washbasin, or laver, point to? (Baptism. Biblical baptism signifies a knowing and loving surrender of one's life to Jesus Christ. It cannot be done as an infant, or even as a very young child. However, as the adolescent matures and grows, he or she reaches an age where the personal relationship with Jesus has blossomed into a readiness for surrender to Him. At this point, baptism is appropriate.)
- Read Romans 12:1 and 1 Corinthians 10:31. What does the altar of burnt offering point to? (The sacrifices offered here represent Christ's sacrifice for us, and also our daily surrender to Him. The Christian's life is lived daily, not just once at the baptismal tank. After baptism, the child—like all of us—must continue learning every day what it means to live the Christian life.)

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- What might the gate represent in this parenting blueprint? (The gate represents that long anticipated and often dreaded day when the child, now an adult, leaves home to begin life on his or her own. If the parenting blueprint has been followed, and if the child has participated in God's plan for his or her life, this day, though sad for the parents, can also be one of joy and expectation to see how God will continue working in and through the life of this child.)