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For Grandparents, Parents and Seniors

By Rick Shrader

Our Children's Children

Our eleventh, and last, grandchild came to Christ last month. This completes that specific prayer I have always had for each grandchild. But my prayers have only just begun, of course, as now there are eleven lives ahead that will take many twists and turns. In thinking of these eleven lives brought into the world by the four children my wife and I brought into the world, I want to remind young parents of five important truths about children.

Children are born with parents. "Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us" (Heb 12:9). It is a sad day in which grown people with brains think that children can come from two men or two women. Genesis says, "He created him; male and female He created them. Then God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply'" (Gen 1:27-28). Children are offspring of a man and woman and are the specific responsibility of a husband and wife.

Children are born with God's image. "So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created them; male and female He created them" (Gen 1:27). Human beings are the only part of God's creation that are made in His image and after His likeness. We are not animals nor are we angels. That little one in the crib is an image bearer in this sinful world of a holy God, the *imago dei* in an untoward generation.

Children are born with gender. Even Jesus was saddened by the ignorance regarding gender and said, "Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning made them male and female?" (Matt 19:4). I believe that the worst blasphemy toward God today is the self-denial of one's gender, as if God made a mistake, or as if we know better than God, or as if our will matters more than God's will for us. We still identify

so-called transgender people as "biological males" or "biological females." That is because neither their DNA nor their chromosomes, XY or XX, can change or be changed by mutilation. Gender is a gift from God specially designed for a purposeful life.

Children are born with sin. David admitted, "I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me" (Psa 51:5). We may laugh when we look at a new-born baby and say, "He's a cute little sinner," but that is more serious than we think. As Christians, we are realizing that this human being has an eternal soul that is lost. Without salvation from God this little one will spend eternity in hell. There cannot be a more serious prayer for a soul than a parent's prayer. Not only that, but this little cherub can become a little demon if that sinful nature is not taken seriously. Children must be taught to "abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul" (1 Pet 2:11).

Children are born with responsibility. A child cannot be left to himself and be expected to grow into a proper adult. He needs discipline and love and instruction in God's Word. I believe there are two areas in which a child must grow if he or she will be a godly adult. One is love and respect for parents. "Disobedience to parents" is mentioned among the worst of sins in the Bible (see Rom 1:30; 2 Tim 3:2). It is given in the 5th commandment as the key to long and healthy life. The second area is the love for God's church. How can a person love God but not His family? Or how can a person love a Savior but not His bride? John said, "We know we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren" (1 Jn 3:14).

These and more make those little ones we bring into the world our joy and crown.

Book Review

God, Marriage, and Family. By Andreas Köstenberger with David Jones.

This rather large book is done almost entirely by Köstenberger with Jones contributing. Köstenberger is a Southern Baptist author and has been writing on the family for many years (In another volume, *Equipping for Life*, 2019, he co-authors with his wife Margaret). This large volume (2010) is a great help in areas of life such as God's image, abortion, marriage as a covenant, divorce, adoption as an alternative, the biblical view of sex in marriage, singleness as a calling, and many related subjects for parents, old and new. He writes concerning God's creation of male and female, "Thus equality and distinctness, complementarity and submission/authority must be held in fine balance. The man and the woman are jointly charged with ruling the earth representatively for God, yet they are not to do so androgynously or as 'unisex' creatures, but each as fulfilling their God-ordained gender-specific roles" (p. 26). This is a message badly needed in our mixed up generation.

"Conscious Co-Parents?"

Broadcast journalist Van Jones recently announced the birth of his third child by his recent girlfriend. He said that he wanted a child and so did she, so they "decided to join forces and become conscious co-parents." This is a growing trend among celebrities as the article reports (WHAS11, ABC). Jones used a term ("co-parents") that is usually reserved for divorced couples and applied it to any two people or group of people who want to have or raise children together. Ken Ham, in commenting on this arrangement, wrote, "Our culture says the makeup of a family doesn't matter. Children can be raised by one parent, two parents (two moms, two dads, or a mom and a dad), three or more parents—it doesn't matter as long as the parents love (however they decide what *love* means) the kids. Science confirms that God's design is what is best for kids! Children don't thrive under just any family structure, as long as they are 'loved.' Study after study confirms that there's nothing better for children than living in the home of their biological father and mother, who are married to each other. That's the very best family design." (AiG, 2/28/22)

Statistics

The Barna Group posted a 2019 survey of Christian teenagers, asking them who influenced them the most during their teenage years. Of those who influenced them (mother, father, sibling, grandparent, friend, other relative, non-relative), when asked about going to church, setting an example, God's forgiveness, and the Bible, in every category the most influential person was the mother and the next was a grandparent followed closely by the father. In only one category was the grandparent not second, teaching them about important Christian traditions. In that the grandparents were first. Barna Group: "What will it take to disciple the next generation?" Accessed 3/28/22.

Lessons on Prayer

"Likewise you husbands, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered" (1 Pet 3:7). It is a sobering thought to realize that our prayers can be hindered! My wife and I are heirs together of the grace of life. We have a posterity of grace given to us and a progeny to whom grace must be given. As one writer put it, "We have a rich composted family history." Rather than looking at one another critically, we must see how God has brought us together through generations of faith that we might serve Him together in our own time. We pray as *husband*, head, protector, provider, and *wife*, a "helper comparable to him," that our prayers are not hindered.

The last Paper Towel

From an entry on Facebook: The last paper towel on the roll. The one nobody wants. Some say it serves no purpose with all that glue on it. It was the foundation for all the other paper towels on that roll and now it has no purpose. Now think of a family member. A grandparent perhaps. For some they're like the last paper towel on the roll. We think they have no purpose yet they have been the glue that's held the family together for many years. They were the foundation for who we are. Hold on to those grandparents and make sure they know their importance. Without the last paper towel of glue.....we'd all be napkins.