

Parenting with Promise # 1

# Why don't children come with an instruction manual?

## Psalm 121<sup>1-2</sup>



It never ends

**Children grow up** – get married – grandchildren;

- grown children still our children – still parents – sometimes come back;
- privilege / responsibility never end.

I've made lots of mistakes

Hopefully **learnt thing or two** – still much to learn;

- looking forward to discussion – now & ongoing

I believe we are a family

**Church** is family

Do you believe this?

Do you feel this?

Do you act on this?

You probably heard new parents exclaiming ...

## They don't come with an instruction manual

When you buy a **computer** – used to come w huge wad of instruction manuals;

- then used to come w stack of floppy disks – then CDs;
- now all online;
- however it comes ∃ wealth of instructions;
- every program has built in helps / tutorials;
- more than you (I) could ever have time to use;
- but it is all there.

All this for something which will by & large be **obsolete in few years'** time;

- but what do we get w our children who we supposed to look after for 20 yrs or so?
- foundation we lay supposed to put them in good stead to last another 50-60 yrs
- what do they come with?
  - nothing;
  - naked them come from their mother's womb;
  - not even a QR code on forehead to tell us where to look.

## What do we want to know?

- maybe things like:
  - When am I supposed to start training them?
  - When to start discipline?
  - How to discipline baby / toddler / teenager?
  - How to teach children to pray?
  - How to engender faith / repentance – genuine – not copy of real things;
  - How to excite them about worship / fellowship / outreach?

## Why no instruction manual?

- because children are not like computers;
- not a matter of punching right buttons in right sequence.

## Which is it: Formula or Faith?

- child training is **not a Formula** – it is more a matter of **Faith**.

Text – **Ps 121(1) I lift my eyes to the hills – from where does my help come?**

- not from the hills;
- not from an instruction manual;
- children don't come w an instruction manual;
- but ...

## They do come from One who knows everything

**Ps 121(2) My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven & earth.**

This is **exciting**:

- children don't come w instruction manual;
- but they do come as a gift from the One who knows everything
  - and (this is the best part):
    - He is our Father;
    - He reveals Himself!
    - in Himself - thru His Word – He reveals all we need to know..

What we need to bring up our children is not an instruction manual;

- but a **living relationship** of faith / trust w the living God.

Child training = a **living organic thing**;

- all we do is born out of our relationship w God Himself;
- series of sermons will have heavy emphasis on looking at God Himself;
- our relationship w Him.

The **fundamental premise** underlying this whole series:

- He teaches & trains us how to teach & train our children thru our relationship w Him;
- the way God deals w us = the model for how we should deal w our children.
  - = my starting point & finishing point;
  - we going to be exploring that in coming weeks.

**Tonight** I want to concentrate on 1 thing:

- our children do not come w instruction manual
- telling us precisely what to do in any given situation;
- but ...

## They do come with a promise

**Far better** than an instruction manual.

The promise that God will be their God

Gen 17(7) I will establish my covenant

- between Me & you & your offspring after you thru'out their generations,
- for an everlasting covenant,
- to be **God to you & to your offspring** after you.

The promise that God's kingdom belongs to them

Matt 19(14) Jesus said, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not hinder them, for to such **belongs the kingdom** of heaven."

- they may not yet belong to it
- in deepest sense of living relationship of faith & repentance;
- but belongs to them by promise;
- it is their inheritance – laid up for them to take hold of by faith;
- heirs according to promise – Gal 3(29)

The promise that God will be our Guide

John 16(13) When the Spirit of truth comes, He will **guide you into all the truth**.

- He has come;
- He has made His home in your heart – this promise belongs to you.
- He will guide you into all truth!

**What is truth?**

Jesus said, "I am the way and the truth and the life." - John 14(6)

- this is my fundamental premise;
- it is in JC – in our relationship to Him that we find way to train our children;
- **He is the way, truth, life.**

Not saying all will be easy;

- sometimes we feel we in a **barren wilderness** / wasteland / desert
- lost / at wit's end – re our children;
- but what does He say?

Isa 58(11) The LORD will **guide** you continually

- and **satisfy** your desire in scorched places and make your bones strong;
- and you shall be like a watered garden,
- like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail.

- that's the encouragement we need in the spiritual wilderness;
- we may have given up – but God not given up guiding us.

## The promise that God will be our Helper

There are times when we feel : all our efforts seem to fall to ground;

- family **falling to pieces** all around our feet;
- we look around in dismay at what is going on:
- but what does God say?

Isa 41(10) Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God;  
 I will strengthen you,  
 I will help you,  
 I will **uphold you with My righteous right hand.**

What is at right hand of Father?

- no one less than the Son.

Again we see that it is in the **person of the Son** - our relationship to Him:

- that we get our ultimate help;
- not just guidance – but help / strength / upholding power.

## The promise that God will be gracious

Gracious **to us** – gracious to our **children**.

God does **not deal w us according** to our parenting performance;

- He not deal w us according to our sins – but acc to His grace;
- our hope is not in our perfect parenting – but in the grace of our God.

What does He say?

Joel 2(13) Rend your heart and not your garments.

Return to the LORD your God, for he is **gracious and merciful**,  
 abounding in steadfast love.

**How gracious? How merciful?**

- we may feel we sinned it away – too far gone;
- but ...

Isa 30(18) Therefore the LORD waits to be gracious to you,

and therefore He exalts Himself to show mercy to you.

For the LORD is a God of justice; blessed are all those who wait for Him.

(19) For a people shall dwell in Zion, in Jerusalem; you shall weep no more.

He will surely be gracious to you at the sound of your cry.

As soon as He hears it, He answers you.

## The promise that God's grace will be sufficient

He gives us our children – He appointed them for us – He **tailor made** them for us;

- we are inadequate for the task – we are weak;
- but ...

2 Cor 12(9) He said to me, "My **grace is sufficient** for you,

for my power is made perfect in weakness.")

## (Conclusion)

**Thank God** our children don't come with an instruction manual!

- they don't come w detailed demands / commands – **Do this or fail!**

They come w the **promise** of God;

- they come w **person** of JC – revealing God to us;

- revealing : He Himself will be our personal model / guide / help / strength  
in bringing up our children

People out there – not have this;

- **we are richly blessed** + so are our **children!**

## Discussion

### Prayer

**Sing** Tell out, my soul the greatness of the Lord!

**Benediction** 2 Cor 13<sup>14</sup>