

## We Promise

1 Thess 2:7-12

Today is a special day for us. At the invitation, we are going to invited ANY family that would like to commit themselves to raising their children in a God honoring way to come forward.

I remember how 23 years ago, I held this beautiful purple lizard in my arms for the first time. I was scared to death. Helene and I didn't have all the answers yet, we were only half way through our stack of books on how to raise a child!

However, Helene and I had something very special going on for us. Since learning that Helene was pregnant, we prayed continuously for God's wisdom. We prayed a commitment that we would raise each of our children to love God. Did we make mistakes along the way? All you have to do is talk to Rhyann and Renee for a while and they can lay out each of our parental failures in a well-detailed manner.

From time to time over the years, Helene and I have renewed our commitment to teach our children to love God. That is what today is all about. Any family of any age who wants to publicly share their desire and commitment to raise their children to love God.

They will have lots of success if we all stay committed to our part of the promise, and will have some failures because we are still weak humans trying to accomplish a divine endeavor.

PRAYER

## I. Biblical Examples

### A. Prelude

1. When you read the Bible, you find several recorded stories of parents who made a special commitment to raise their children in a Godly way.
2. Some of those promises were great successes of Godly children who did great things for God.
3. Some seemed like failures as the child rejected the training of their parents.
4. Some had their good and bad times. Children that loved God and times, and walked away from God at times.
5. The thing is; we don't control what our children do once they leave home and become their own person.
6. All we can do, is keep our promise as best as we can to be Godly parents.

### B. Samuel

1. In 1 Samuel 1, we read about probably the best-known example of parents committing their child to God.
2. Hannah desperately wants a child.
3. Years of mockery by Peninnah offset years of love by her husband Elkanah.
4. She goes to the tabernacle in Shiloh to pray. Begging God for a child.
5. Listen to her heart in vs 11. **1 Samuel 1:11 (ESV) — 11** And she vowed a vow and said, "O LORD of hosts, if you will indeed look on the affliction of your servant and remember me and not forget your

servant, but will give to your servant a son, then I will give him to the LORD all the days of his life, and no razor shall touch his head.”

6. You can feel her pain, but also see her commitment.
7. Did you understand your prayer? If you give me a son, I will give him back to you.
8. Wow!
9. If you know the story of Samuel, that is exactly what Elkanah and Hannah did.
10. They not only raised Samuel to have a heart for God, but then they also gave him up to be raised in God’s service as a priest and judge.
11. God used Samuel in a powerful way.

C. Samson

1. The parents of Samson had a little different experience.
2. They were also barren, but this time, God came to them.
3. He told them He would give them a Son, but that son would have a special role to fulfill.
4. What I love about Manoah and his wife was their response in Judges 13: 8. **Judges 13:8 (ESV) — 8** Then Manoah prayed to the LORD and said, “O Lord, please let the man of God whom you sent

come again to us and teach us what we are to do with the child who will be born.”

5. They knew they didn't have all the answers, they knew they couldn't do it on their own, so they asked God to teach them what they need to do to raise their son.

#### D. Jesus

1. In Lk 2 we see a mixture of the story of Jesus and how he fits into Jewish Law.
2. Vs 22-23 tells us that the Law dictated that the first born male of each family was to be set aside for God. The NLT uses the word “dedicated” to the Lord.
3. Joseph and Mary followed God's will and took Jesus to the temple to have him dedicated to the Lord.

#### E. Others

1. We could spend forever giving a list of Biblical men and women who trained their children in the love and will of God.
2. It was a foundational teaching of the Old Law and of Christianity.

### II. Application

#### A. Setting the stage

1. Last week in the auditorium class, I got on my soap box about how important it was that we don't just look at the Bible as a book of stories and facts.
2. I grew up knowing all kinds of facts about the Bible, but sometimes I wondered how well I knew the savior of the Bible.
3. If we approach our Bible study simply as a class of learning material, we miss so much of what is intended for our faith.
4. God wants us to take the head knowledge into the heart.
5. He wants us to live our faith, not just learn about our faith.

#### B. Why today can be special

1. We all know and understand that what we will do later, can be done by any parent on any Sunday.

2. We welcome that desire with open arms.
3. But, like our Friend Day's it seems easier to do on a special day.
4. We prepare our hearts and minds to stand before the church to make a commitment to God to be the best Christian parents we can be and to raise our children in that setting.
5. As a church, we recognized that awesome responsibility given to us by God and these parents to help them raise their children to love God.

C. What we can learn

1. Parenting at its best is hard. Exhausting, frustrating, heart breaking, and more rewarding than you could ever imagine.
2. For Christians, parenting is much deeper than just giving your kids guidance. It's finding ways to live out Deut 6 in a relevant way for our children.
3. We want to leave them with an eternal inheritance, not just an earthly one.
4. We want to honor God by teaching our children to honor God.
5. That takes intention. Making a commitment to raise them in a godly home.
6. It's not always easy, it's not always convenient, but whatever you give up to raise your child in a godly home will be so worth it in the end.
7. Gina Smith wrote a blog that caught my eye this week. The heading was "You Were Not Called to Raise Godly Children." What? Sacrilege!! Of course we're called to raise Godly children. My neck hairs bristled at that heading. Then I read the article.
8. What she pointed out in her blog is that we cannot raise Godly children, we can only raise them in a sphere of influence in which God works on their hearts. If it is only up to Me to make sure my children are faithful to God, I have set myself up for failure. I can't control their hearts and minds. If they do love God, I run the risk of

being prideful in what I have done. If they fall away from God, I see myself as a failure, that somehow, I did it wrong.

9. We're called to teach children to love and honor God. – Ex 20:12
10. We are called to find the opportunities to teach them – Prov 22:6, Deut 6:7-9
11. We are called to be an example to them of a home that loves and respects God – titus 2:4-5
12. We are called to raise them up with constant connection to fellow believers – heb 10:25
13. We are called to show them that Christianity is more than a list of rules, but we find joy in obey God – 1 tim 4
14. We are called to pray with and for our children – Col 4:2
15. Being a Godly parent is daunting, but that is why God gives us help and strength through him and our fellow brothers and sisters.

D. A gift from God

1. **Psalm 127:3–5 (NLT) — 3** Children are a gift from the LORD; they are a reward from him. **4** Children born to a young man are like arrows in a warrior's hands. **5** How joyful is the man whose quiver is full of them! He will not be put to shame when he confronts his accusers at the city gates.
2. Other passages like this one can be found throughout scripture.
3. Children are a gift from God.
4. Saints are compared to innocent children.
5. We are called the children of God.
6. A gift from God, don't squander it.
7. Be like Hannah and give that child back to God.