

Parenting with Purpose

Honoring God the Father
with your child
while
Representing God the Father
to your child

Pastor & Missionary Jeremy Markle



**WALKING IN THE WORD
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while representing God the Father to your child
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**I wish to lovingly dedicate this book
to my wife, Laura,
and our three children,
Jeremiah, Juliana, and Joshua.**

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in the editing of this book.**

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Preface

Some of the most exciting words shared between a husband and wife following “I do” on their wedding day are when the wife lovingly looks at her husband and says, “Honey, you’re going to be a daddy; I’m pregnant!” The joy, anticipation and preparation that begins on that day lasts for nine months as the young couple and their family and friends make purchases, paint rooms and have parties, so that their precious new baby can be brought into the most prepared and protective world possible.

The preparation for a new baby, for a Christian couple, must go beyond the physical to include the spiritual. Their new baby is being given to them by God and is a soul that they must carefully prepare for eternity. Psalms 127:3-5 says, “***Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward. As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate.***” A Christian couple must take the time to prepare their home to protect their precious child from the dangers of temptation from the world, the flesh and the devil, which lead to the destruction of sin (see James 1:13-14).

The spiritual preparations new parents need to make cannot be accomplished through physical purchases or remodeling. But rather, they must look to God, as the Creator of the family to provide them with the resources they need to truly provide and protect their child from the dangers that surround them. Psalm 127:1 is clear, “***Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it.***” God must be the grand architect of the family. It is His Word that must be the blueprints by which parents look to find their counsel and comfort for each of their family’s needs (see II Timothy 3:16-17).

In Judges 13:3, Samson’s mother received the joyous news from God that she would “***conceive and bear a son.***” She then shared her news with her husband Manoah. Immediately after receiving the news that they would be parents, “***Manoah intreated the LORD, and said, O my Lord, let the man of God***

which thou didst send come again unto us, and teach us what we shall do unto the child that shall be born” (Judges 13:8). Manoah took seriously his responsibility to raise his son in accordance to God’s will and wanted to take the time to hear from God’s messenger exactly what was expected from them as parents. *“And God hearkened to the voice of Manoah; and the angel of God came again ...”* and Manoah asked, *“How shall we order the child, and how shall we do unto him?”* (Judges 13:9, 12). The angel then provided Manoah and his wife with the specific instruction they needed to raise their son Samson to fulfill God’s will for his life.

Christian parents must follow Manoah's and his wife’s example of rejoicing in the glad news that they would be parents and ask God for His instruction as to how they should raise their child for God’s glory. They should listen to, learn from, and live out God’s Word, so that they will be likened to *“a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock”* (Matthew 7:24-25). And not *“likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it”* (Matthew 7:26-27). They should allow *“the man of God,”* (their pastor and other spiritual leaders) to *“teach us [them] what we [they] shall do unto the child that shall be born”* (Judges 13:8).

The following six lessons have been written to help young parents to spiritually prepare for the great privilege they have to care for and guide the life of one of God’s precious creations. The first three lessons focus on the parents’ need to honor God with their child, while the final three lessons focus on the parents’ opportunity to represent God the Father to their child. These studies have been written to lay the foundations of truth for Biblical parenting and then to encourage the couple to build their home on God’s Word and follow the Holy Spirit’s guidance to practically apply Biblical truths to each new circumstance they encounter. Within these studies, the Scriptures will be the primary source for all the counsel provided. There will also be

opportunities for the new parents to consider how they can practically apply the lessons learned to their new family, so that they raise their child to glorify his Creator.

God, The Personal Creator of Your Child

God is the Creator of the Perfect Family Design

Genesis 1:26-27, 4:1

God's creative power was put on display as He, by His own will and according to His perfect design, "***created the heaven and the earth***" (Genesis 1:1). What He began on day one of creation, He finished on day six as he completed a perfect environment for man to live and thrive. Then after providing every needed element for man's survival, the Bible says, "***And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them***" (Genesis 1:26-27). God created a perfect world for man to enjoy before He created man. And after He created man, He completed him by providing him with "***an help meet for him, ... a woman, and brought her unto the man***" thereby establishing the first marriage (Genesis 2:18, 21-25).

Following God's perfect creation of a husband and wife, He shared with them His plan for their lives by blessing them and saying, "***Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth ...***" (Genesis 1:28-30). God's design for the family was established. He provided them a perfect world to survive and thrive, He provided a perfect marriage relationship in which man and woman could live in harmony, and He provided the perfect family environment within which children could be raised and receive both spiritual and physical instruction and protection (see Luke 2:51-52).

God's design for the family was presented on the sixth day of creation and fulfilled in Genesis 4:1 as "***... Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten***

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a man from the LORD.” On that day, the special relationship of husband and wife received a new responsibility and role as father and mother by the special provision of a child “***from the Lord.***”

Although man’s sin has greatly affected God’s creation, His design for the family is still perfect and should be followed. When choices have been made or circumstances have developed which hinder God’s perfect design, all hope should not be lost. Rather, there should be a greater dependence on God’s grace and Word for direction in order to provide each child the spiritual and physical care they need. (see Hagar and Ishmael - Genesis 21:9-21; the widow woman and Elijah - I Kings 17:10-24).

- ☞ Do you recognize God’s perfect design for your child’s instruction and protection that is to be found in a biblical family?
- ☞ Will you dedicate yourselves to work as husband/father and wife/mother to provide the biblical family environment your child needs?

God is the Personal Creator of Each Child

Genesis 4:1, Jeremiah 1:4-5

As Adam and Eve became parents, they recognized that their new child, which they held in their arms, was not their creation. Although they had participated in God’s established process, they accepted that their new son was “***from the Lord***” (Genesis 4:1). God had not relinquished His creative power to mankind to do with it as he wished. Rather, He maintains His creative power and authority as He specifically creates each child while allowing mankind the privilege of being part of the process. For “***Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward***” (Psalm 127:3).

While speaking to the prophet Jeremiah, God was very clear about His involvement in the creation of his life and His knowledge of him before he was formed in his mother’s womb.

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Jeremiah 1:4-5 says, ***“Then the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.”*** God’s plan for each child begins before their parents hear the exciting news that they are expecting a baby.

God’s personal involvement in the creative process of a baby does not end after He gives life to the seed. He continues to be specifically involved in every aspect of each babies’ formation and development. King David understood this truth as he said to God, ***“For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother’s womb. I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them. How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee”*** (Psalm 139:13-18).

King David not only believed God personally participated in his creation and development in his mother’s womb, he also believed that He was personally involved in his birth and in protecting his life as he adjusted to the world in which he was born. In Psalm 22:9-10, while considering many dangers and enemies which had surrounded him as a grown man, David remembered how God had cared for him when he was helpless as a newborn baby and says, ***“But thou art he that took me out of the womb: thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother’s breasts. I was cast upon thee from the womb: thou art my God from my mother’s belly.”***

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- ☞ Do you believe that God has personally created your child as a special gift for you?
- ☞ Do you trust God to personally care for your child both before and after his birth?

**God is the Creator
of Each Child's Unique Characteristic**

Genesis 4:1-2, Psalm 139:16

God is very particular in how He creates each child and the specific characteristics they possess. Genesis 4:2 illustrates God's diversity in creation as the first two children born into the world were created with different abilities and responsibilities. Although Abel and Cain were both children of Adam and Eve, "***Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.***"

King David explains the precision of God's planning for each child when he said, "***Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them***" (Psalms 139:16). God's creative planning for each child is so precise that He writes the details in a book and then carefully fulfills his perfect design in the formation and developmental process. He does not create any child to be like another. Each child is specially created to fulfill a special purpose (see John 9:1-3).

When Moses doubted his physical ability to fulfill God's command to speak before Pharaoh, God responded by saying, "***Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the LORD?***" (Exodus 4:11). God's personal design for each child includes their abilities and inabilities (see Proverbs 20:12, Romans 9:20-21). These "abilities" or "inabilities" should never be a cause for doubt about God's personal involvement or love. But rather, they should be recognized as His perfect preparation of that child so

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that he can accomplish his special purpose (see Jeremiah 1:4-10). God is the master designer, therefore He should receive the glory for and from each of His wonderful creations. ***“For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him”*** (Colossians 1:16).

- ☞ Do you accept your child’s abilities and inabilities as being part of God’s perfect, loving plan for his life?
- ☞ Do you accept that God has a specific purpose for your child’s life?
- ☞ Will you dedicate yourselves to raising your child to glorify his Creator and fulfill His purpose for his life?

**God, as Creator,
Deserves Praise and Obedience from His Creation**

Genesis 4:1-4

Adam and Eve praised God for their son Cain by clearly stating that he was ***“from the Lord”*** (Genesis 4:1). And it is apparent that they also taught their sons, Cain and Abel, the importance of worshiping God both by spoken word and physical example, ***“And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof”*** (Genesis 4:3-4). Abel chose to obey God with his sacrifice; whereas, Cain chose to disobey God, even when he was personally warned by God to make the right choice.

God’s personal involvement in each pregnancy should produce an appreciation and praise to God by the parents. Because it is God Who opens and closes the womb (see Genesis 29:31, 30:1-2, 22-23), each parent should accept their baby as ***“an heritage of the LORD”*** (Psalm 127:3). As each parent enjoys

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their new baby, they should say with Sarah, “***God hath made me to laugh***” (Genesis 21:6). And they should offer up thanksgiving with Hannah as she named her son “***Samuel, saying, Because I have asked him of the LORD***” (I Samuel 1:20b).

Each child should know that they were personally and specially created by God, so that they can say with king David, “***I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well.***” (Psalm 139:14). And each child should be taught by their parents to praise and obey God as their Creator, just as King Solomon instructed his son when he said, “***Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth ... Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil***” (Ecclesiastes 12:1a, 13-14, see also Ephesians 6:3-4).

☞ Are you giving thanks and praise to God for the child He has specifically chosen to give you?

☞ Are you committed to teach your child to praise and obey his Creator?

**God, as Creator,
Maintains Authority Over His Creation**

Genesis 7:1-15

Following Abel’s and Cain’s sacrifices, “***... the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering: but unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect***” (Genesis 4:4-5). God, who had given Adam and Eve two sons, retained and displayed His authority over children as He received Abel’s offering, but rejected Cain’s. God’s authority over man’s children continued to be revealed as God confronted Cain about his bad attitude by asking, “***Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance***

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fallen?” (Genesis 4:6). He then warned him by saying, **“If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.”** (Genesis 4:7). God’s authority was once again displayed as He punished Cain for murdering Abel and said, **“And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother’s blood from thy hand; When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth ...”** (Genesis 4:11-12). And finally, God revealed His authority over all of mankind when He promised Cain that, **“... whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold”** (Genesis 4:15). God’s authority did not end with Adam and Eve, but continued with their children and extends to all of their offspring throughout all time (see Revelation 20:11-14).

After King David stated that he was **“fearfully and wonderfully made”** by God, he said, **“Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting”** (Psalm 139:14, 23-24). King David understood that because God was his Creator, He also had the right to investigate his life and guide him in accordance to His will. Obeying one’s Creator should be a natural and obvious choice for each creature. But because sin has entered the world through Adam and Eve, each person must make their personal choice to follow God or follow Adam and Eve’s rebellious example of disobedience. Sadly, the result of choosing sin over obedience to God is death. Romans 6:23 says, **“For the wages of sin is death ...”** Disobedience to God’s authority as Creator is devastating. For this reason, King Solomon, after trying to find purpose in life through man’s ideas and efforts said, **“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into**

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judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil’ (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14).

- ☞ Do you accept God’s authority over your child’s life?
- ☞ Will you teach your child to respect and obey God?

**God, as Creator,
Desires a Personal Relationship with His Creation**
Genesis 3:8, John 1:12-14

God’s purpose for creating mankind was so that they might enjoy a personal relationship as Creator and creature. For this reason, Adam and Eve, “***heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day ...***” (Genesis 3:8). But because Adam and Eve sinned by eating the fruit that God had commanded them not to eat, their relationship was severed and they “***... hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden***” (Genesis 3:8). The beginning of Romans 5:19 explains the continuous affects of Adam and Eve’s sin by saying, “***For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners.***” Because of that first sin, mankind’s relationship with God has been broken. But God, in His love, chose to provide a way for the relationship to be restored. Romans 5:19 ends by saying, “***so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.***” The “One” who was obedient so that He might make many righteous is revealed to be Jesus Christ in verse 21, which says, “***That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.***”

God still desires a personal relationship with each person He creates. His unending love is made available to the entire world through Jesus Christ (see I John 2:1-2). John 3:16 explains God’s love by saying, “***For God so loved the world, that he gave his***

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only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

Although every person is one of God’s precious creations, they must personally chose to restore their relationship with Him by believing in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ as the only payment for their sin (see I Corinthians 15:1-4). Following faith in Jesus Christ, God promises each person that He will restore His relationship with them and that He will be their Heavenly Father. He promises that “... ***as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God***” (John 1:12-13, see also Ephesians 2:12-20, Colossians 1:20).

☞ Will you teach your child to understand that their sin separates him from God?

☞ Will you teach your child that God loves him and sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to prove His love and pay for his sin?

☞ Will you guide your child to understand how they can, by faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ, receive forgiveness for his sins and restore his relationship with God the Father?

Parenting is one of God’s most precious gifts. And with this great privilege, there is great responsibility. Each parent must recognize that their child belongs to God and therefore, they should raise him in accordance to his Creator’s will. They must be willing to seek God’s instruction through is Word for both their personal and parental lives. Then they must dedicate themselves to put into practice what they learn, so that their child will have a godly example of obedience to God and inherit the blessings of obedience.

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Psalms 127:1-5

*Except the LORD build the house,
they labour in vain that build it:
except the LORD keep the city,
the watchman waketh but in vain.
It is vain for you to rise up early,
to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows:
for so he giveth his beloved sleep.
Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD:
and the fruit of the womb is his reward.
As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man;
so are children of the youth.
Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them:
they shall not be ashamed,
but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate.*

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Preparing for a Christian Family

1. Who is the Creator of your child? _____
2. How specific is God about your child's creation and development? _____
3. What are some simple ways you can teach your child about his creator?
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
4. How can you show that you are trusting God for your child's development and characteristics?
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
5. What is your spiritual goal for your child? _____

6. What are some practical ways you can help your child reach your spiritual goal for his life?
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____