

Children and Biblical Worship

Introduction & Review

- ❑ God gives hope after judgment for sin through procreation promised to Eve and believed by Adam (Gen. 3:16, 20).
- ❑ God gives hope after judgment for sin by making clothing for Adam & Eve from a sacrificial animal (Gen. 3:20).
- ❑ God shows mercy inside the garden by preventing Adam & Eve from living eternally in that fallen condition (Gen. 3:22).
- ❑ God shows mercy outside the garden by ensuring that their needs would be met without reentry into the garden (Gen. 3:23-24).

I. Children in Daily Life

A. Conception & birth (Gen. 4:1)

Adam & Eve must now learn to live as husband & wife in a sin infected world outside the garden. Oneness in marriage is found particularly in intimacy – “knew” (Gen. 2:24; Eph. 5:28, 31). Conception in pregnancy is a blessing from God – “she conceived” (Gen. 21:1f). Every child is a gift from God – “...with the help of the Lord” (Ps 127:3).

B. Growth & employment (Gen. 4:2)

Children must be taught the ways of God by instruction, discipline & example from parents (Deu. 6:6-7; 2Tim. 3:15; Eph. 6:4). Children must be taught to work in life & diversity in employment is good – Abel (shepherd) & Cain (farmer).

II. Children in Godly Worship

A. Response to God in worship (Gen. 4:3-5a)

Adam & Eve know that God is worthy of worship before & after they sinned – He has not changed. Adam & Eve apparently taught their children that God is worthy of worship. When Cain & Abel were mature enough, they sacrificially worshiped God – “In the course of time”, “an offering”. God Himself determines if worship is acceptable (4:4b-5a; Amos 5:21-23; Col. 2:23). Abel’s worship was in faith & love for God, Cain’s was not (Heb. 11:4). Worship may look good on the outside & be rotten inside. Christians must live & worship by faith, not feelings (2Co. 5:7; Rom. 10:17; 14:5b).

ILL: Parents expose children to many opportunities growing up – sports, arts, outdoors, animals, gardening, etc. But when children are older & mature enough to make decisions without parents, they may find themselves continuing activities only because of their parents’ influence or because of habits with no real desire.

APPL: The same is true of people who attend church. Everyone needs to honestly know why you attend church or participate in worship activities – God looks at the heart [motives].

B. Response to God after worship (Gen. 4:5b-7)

Unacceptable worship reveals rebellion & sin in the heart (4:5b). Cain did not willingly receive God’s reproof, but was angry with God. Many people do not want this kind of correction. In mercy God still seeks out & reasons with sinners for repentance (4:6-7). Frustration & anger in worship may be self-inflicted (“Why are you angry”). Obedience in worship brings peace & encouragement with God (“will you not be accepted”). Disobedience in worship leads to further sinning in life (“sin is crouching...”).

ILL: King Saul was given clear instructions from God thru Samuel (1Sam. 15:1-3). But Saul disobeyed God & attempted to worship God in His disobedience. God’s response to Saul revealed the serious nature of disobedience & rebellion (1Sam. 15:22-23).

APPL: God is never pleased with disobedience in attempts to worship Him. Therefore He instructs, reasons & exhorts us to worship Him with a clean heart & clear conscience. We can & we must “rule over” sin’s desire to control us in worship – by the power of the Holy Spirit.