

# The promise of eternal life

The apostle Peter declared that God has given us ‘all that pertains to life and godliness’. He said that it was *through* this provision that God ‘has granted to us His precious and magnificent *promises*’. The promise which God has made to us is eternal life. It is evident that we have received and are continuing in the promise of God because the life of God is in us and we are being delivered from the corruption of living by the desires of our flesh.

The promise of God, spoken of by the New Testament writers, was made to Abraham and his Seed, Jesus Christ. When God made this promise to Abraham, He said that in Abraham ‘all the *families* of the earth would be blessed’. The promise of God was made available to everyone when Christ came in the flesh and offered Himself for us on the cross. Jesus said that His offering was establishing a New Covenant, and that believers were now able to partake of, and participate in, the substance of this covenant. We note that when Peter proclaimed the gospel of Christ to the crowd at the portico of Solomon, he reminded them of the covenant that God had made with Abraham. Peter specifically declared that the promised blessing was now available to *all the families of the earth*.

The apostle Paul, who said that he only preached Christ and Him crucified, wrote some notable instructions to families concerning their culture and conduct. This is because, like Peter, he understood that the promises of eternal life are available to every family within the New Covenant. He explained that in order for a household to remain blessed, they were to live together in a specific manner. If families are restored to the order and culture of God’s Covenant, the promises of eternal life are available to every member of that household.

## References:

2Pe 1:3-4

Gen 12:3

1Jn 2:25

Luk 22:19-20

Gal 3:16

Act 2:39

**Further Study:** 1 Corinthians 7**Daily Proverb:** Proverbs 30

# The divine nature in the family

As we consider the implications of godly order and culture in our houses, much of our traditional thinking regarding the salvation of children will be challenged. Past theological traditions have asserted that the pathway of salvation for children born into Christian homes is the same as it is for every other person who has been born into this fallen world. However, in light of our growing understanding of the mystery of God's Covenant and its practical implications for life as a Christian household, it is readily apparent that this is not so. While it is true that the elements of salvation are the same for everyone, it is not true that the pathway of salvation for children born into Christian homes is the same as those who are born in the world. The New Testament writers understood that children born into Christian homes are recipients of the divine nature *from the womb*.

It is apparent that the divine nature in every family was always God's intention. We recall that the Lord, through the prophet Malachi, rebuked the covenant people of Israel for their treachery against the covenant of marriage. The Lord explained that marriage is supposed to be a part of God's Covenant and to serve His purpose of bringing forth many sons. Malachi recorded, 'Did He not make them one, having a remnant of the Spirit? And why one? He seeks *godly offspring* [seed].' We know that God was not seeking 'law abiding' offspring. He was seeking a people who were His. From these passages, we conclude that God is concerned with the state of our marriages and the culture of our houses. The nature of these relationships will have an impact on the blessing of His life in our families.

## References:

Mal 3:17      Isa 49:1  
Act 3:25      Jer 1:5  
Psa 22:9-10      Joh 4:53

## Further Study:

Malachi 2

## Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 1

# Born into a fallen world

At the point of conception in a mother's womb, every person becomes a physical being, and their identity, or spirit, is formed within them. This is what makes them a person. Although children of unsaved parents have identity, they do not know the name that God planned for them. This is because, like their parents, they are separated from God and the word of His Covenant. When they are born, they are 'of the world'. The apostle Paul described them as *unclean*. What does this mean? It means that they are of a particular spirit; that is, the spirit of the world.

Paul explained that those who are born in the world are 'by *nature* children of *wrath*'. This means that they are conceived as children of wrath, and that their resultant behaviours are not merely on account of the environment in which they are raised. It is their nature from conception. As they grow and mature, they walk 'according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience'. Because they are ignorant of God's covenant purposes, they are even unaware that they are lost and condemned.

Condemnation is the just consequence of sin. However, we recall from the writings of Paul that, while we were enemies, Christ died for the ungodly and has reconciled us all to God. Every person has the opportunity to hear the word of the covenant and to avail themselves of this marvellous provision for salvation. Moreover, God has appointed the times and boundaries of every person's habitation so that 'they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us'. This is because God desires that all men are saved and come to repentance and the knowledge of the truth.

## References:

1Co 7:14      Deu 32:7-8  
Eph 2:2-3    1Ti 2:4  
Rom 5:10     2Pe 3:9

## Further Study:

Acts 17

## Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 2

# The promise to Abraham

We can only understand how the blessing of God comes to every family from the perspective of God's Everlasting Covenant. The Everlasting Covenant is God's desire and plan to bring a multitude of sons to glory. All the elements of God's Covenant unfold, or come to pass, *by His word*. We first read of the Everlasting Covenant in the account when the Lord said to Abraham, 'I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you'.

Following the faithfulness of Abraham on Mt Moriah, the Lord reaffirmed the covenant to Abraham, and swore by Himself that in Abraham's seed all the nations or families of the earth would be blessed. By doing this, God gave Abraham and his descendants, including the Israelites under the leadership of Moses, the *promise* of sonship according to His covenant purpose. The promise of sonship, for those who received it, was the hope of becoming a son of God in the resurrection. Paul said that this was the promise of the adoption.

Abraham, and those who walked in the same faith, received the promise of the adoption, but did not have the adoption itself. The adoption was only available when Abraham's Seed, Jesus Christ, died on the cross. In the book of Romans, Paul tells us that the Old Testament saints *believed in the hope of sonship*. Although they did not yet have the adoption, they were motivated by 'a spirit of adoption' to receive what God had promised. When Paul spoke of a 'spirit' of adoption, he was not referring to spiritual identity. Rather, he was speaking of an attitude of faith that a person receives through the word of God.

## References:

Gen 17:7      Gal 4:4-5  
 Gen 22:18    Rom 4:18  
 Rom 8:23     Rom 9:4

## Further Study:

1 John 3

## Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 3

# The Old Testament believers

The Old Testament saints who walked in the faith of Abraham, kept the covenant that God made with them. We are not referring here to the Law Covenant. Rather, their motivation was to keep the covenant that God had made with Abraham and his descendants. We recall that God was not interested, in the first instance, in their observance of the rituals and ordinances of the law. David, a man who, on the basis of faith, found forgiveness apart from the law, understood this. His testimony, which was prophetic of the testimony of Christ, was, 'Behold, I come; in the scroll of the book it is written of me. I delight to do Your will, O my God; Your law is within my heart'.

The men and women of faith kept the law because their desire was to be a son of God, and for Him to be their God. They did not view the covenant as a contract, but understood that it defined the nature of their *relationship* with God. We remember the words of Jesus, who said, "Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is one Lord; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength". The second is this, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself". There is no other commandment greater than these.' This defines the fellowship upon which the law and prophets hang.

The belief of the Old Testament saints in the word of the covenant, affected what they did and how they lived. In this regard, their works revealed the nature of their faith. Paul explained that their faith was the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. This meant that they were doing the works that God had prepared for them according to their name, even though they were not yet able take hold of the substance of their sonship.

## References:

Rom 4:6-8      Mat 22:40  
Psa 51:16      Heb 11:1  
Mar 12:29-32    Eph 2:10

## Further Study:

Psalm 40

## Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 4

# Sanctified from the womb

Israelite parents circumcised their children on the eighth day, in faith for receiving and keeping the Everlasting Covenant that God made with Abraham. Although it was enshrined in the law of Moses, circumcision was first given to Abraham as the sign of the Everlasting Covenant. Circumcision was supposed to identify the child with God's Covenant and demonstrate their parents' commitment to raise the child in the faith of Abraham. By this means, the child was connected to the word of their name which is recorded in the book of life.

The apostle Paul's testimony was that God the Father 'had *set me apart* even from my mother's womb and *called me* through His grace'. When we consider that a person is called by their name, we realise that Paul was connected to the word of his name from his mother's womb. We note many examples of other Old Covenant children who, like Paul, understood that they had been known and called from the womb. King David testified that 'in Your book were all written the days that were ordained for me, when as yet there was not one of them'. The Lord Himself said to the prophet Jeremiah, 'Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations'. John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Spirit while in his mother's womb.

As a child of the covenant, Paul was called from the womb. However, his upbringing put the law of Moses ahead of knowing God and keeping His Covenant. As a consequence, the law did not lead him to Christ but, rather, caused him to become hard of heart, blind, and full of wrath toward Christians. When Jesus did reveal Himself to Paul, he received illumination regarding who the Lord was, and was reconnected with the name and works to which he had been separated from the womb.

## References:

Gen 17:11-12

Jer 1:5

Gal 1:15

Luk 1:15

Psa 139:16

Php 3:5

**Further Study:** 2 Thessalonians 2

**Daily Proverb:**

Proverbs 7

# A new covenant

Before the beginning of creation, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit discussed and recorded in the book of life, the names of all the identities that would ever be created. Each name was a *word* that defined the identity of a person. This word also specified the works which God wanted them to do as His son, and the context in which these works were to be fulfilled. The word of their sonship was part of God's Everlasting Covenant that He was making with His creation. For this word to be fulfilled, a person needs to be joined to His Covenant. When mankind fell through disobedience, they rejected God's covenant word for their lives. They were now dead to God and unable to know and fulfil the name He had written for them. They chose, instead, to make a name for themselves.

When Jesus came and died on the cross, a new covenant was made available. His offering 'once for all' was full and complete. Now, everyone who receives and believes the word of the cross, and exercises their right to become a son of God, receives an *amazing provision*. They are redeemed from their slavery to sin, receive forgiveness for their sins, are justified before God, are given access to grace and life, receive the adoption, and also receive the seed of the divine nature and the Holy Spirit as the essence of the New Covenant. They are free to partake of the bread and wine of the New Covenant. Through baptism, they are joined to the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ and are able to live in the substance of the elements of the New Covenant; that is, they are joined to the fellowship of Christ's sufferings and receive the power of His resurrection. They are equipped to present themselves as living sacrifices within the fellowship of the body of Christ.

## References:

Rev 13:8      Eph 2:10  
Gen 11:4      Jer 31:31  
Rom 6:10      Heb 9:15

**Further Study:** 2 Corinthians 3

**Daily Proverb:** Proverbs 8

# Children born holy

The blessing of the New Covenant is the realisation of the promise that was made to Abraham. This promised blessing is now available to *all the families of the earth*. This means that everyone in a believing household is a recipient of this blessing. It means that children born into New Covenant homes have this blessing from the womb.

Paul's teaching on the salvation of Christian children was clear. He wrote, 'For the unbelieving husband is sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified through her believing husband; for otherwise your children are unclean, *but now they are holy*'. From Paul's teaching, we see that the foundational qualification for the sanctification of a household is that one parent 'believes'. Of course, this faith will be demonstrated in the conduct of their lives. On account of believing and walking in the faith of the New Covenant, Paul said that the children are holy. It is important to note that he was not saying that they would be 'made' holy, or that they had a 'better opportunity' for salvation than those who are born into the world. Paul said that they *are* holy.

Our children are not born holy because of anything they have believed or said. Instead, they are the recipients of a blessing that has come to a covenant household. At the point of conception, our children are born into the adoption and with the seed of the divine nature. They are born from above and have the Spirit of the Father, the Spirit of the Son and the Holy Spirit in them. They are identities who are born in possession of their name, and they are not slaves to sin. This is what it means to be holy; *they are born of God*. Just as they had no say over their natural birth, they do not have a say in their spiritual birth.

## References:

Act 3:25  
1Co 7:14  
Jas 2:18

Gen 12:3  
Gen 28:14  
Rom 4:13

## Further Study:

## Daily Proverb:

Titus 2

Proverbs 9

# Understanding headship

Writing to the Corinthian church, Paul said, 'I want you to *understand* that Christ is the Head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the Head of Christ'. Why did Paul want us to understand this? From our consideration of the Godhead model, we remember that God the Son *emptied* Himself so that new creation life could be multiplied to us. He committed His own glory to the Father and humbled Himself to an order of headship. This was the means by which the covenant will of God could be accomplished.

When Paul identified God the Father as the Head of Christ, he was *not* drawing our attention to a hierarchy. Instead, he was pointing to a mode of *offering* through which the grace of life flows to every member of the church. The Everlasting Covenant desire of God was for the blessing of this life to be in every family. We avail ourselves of God's life as we offer ourselves in the order of headship in the same way that Christ did.

The outcome of the Son's *emptying* was that He was *redefined* as the Son of God and *revealed* the glory of the Father. As He was obedient to the Father, the life from the Father was made available to us. Likewise, Christ's life and glory is revealed in a house through the submission of a man to Christ. A husband demonstrates headship by submitting to Christ, and then, through his obedience to Christ, offering himself in sanctification as a husband and father to his wife and his children. His mode toward his family is the same as Christ's is to the church. The divine nature that comes from God the Father is established by him in his house because of his submission to Christ as Head. This action of faith establishes his home within the body of Christ, subjecting every member of his household to the headship of Christ in the church.

## References:

1Co 11:3

Joh 13:31-32

Eph 5:25-26

Col 3:18-21

Joh 17:4-8

Joh 10:15-18

## Further Study:

Ephesians 5

## Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 10

# Heirs together of the grace of life

The order of headship has nothing to do with a hierarchy. Nor is it the prerogative for a man to determine how all the practicalities of life in a household should be executed. It is the means by which Yahweh is able to give His life to us. Husbands and wives are *'heirs together'* of this grace of life. It is through this order of grace and life that children have the privilege of being conceived, born and trained as sons and daughters of God.

As a husband offers toward his wife and family, he does not demand their submission or obedience. This is given by a wife through offering. A wife's submission to her husband reveals the glory of her husband. His wife is his helper in the work of establishing the divine nature in the house. For example, we can make the obvious observation that a man is unable to bring sons of God to birth on his own. Paul wrote, 'Wives, be subject to your own husbands, *as to the Lord*'. At the same time, husbands are to honour their wives because they are fellow heirs of the grace of life. This means that he encourages and supports her to the expression of her name and works, in the family and in the body of Christ.

As a woman sanctifies herself to be a wife and mother through submission to her husband, she is able to express and multiply the divine nature to the children. Christian mothers even receive wisdom from God for the nurture of 'godly seed' that is in their womb. In this regard, we note that many godly women give time and attention to intercessory prayer for the son or daughter of God who is growing and developing within them. And God gives Christian women the capacity to bring forth that child according to His predestination for it.

## References:

1Pe 3:7  
Mal 2:14-16  
Eph 5:22-24, 33

1Co 7:3  
Col 3:19

## Further Study:

Proverbs 31:10-31

## Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 11

# Dedication of children

When Christian parents dedicate their babies, they are introducing a new son of God to the congregation of the church. Parents are testifying of their own commitment to live in the order of headship within the body of Christ. Also, they are testifying that they have found the life of God in their house, and that this has been given to this child in the mother's womb. In this regard, parents are committing to their ongoing sanctification as a head and a helper within their covenant family. They understand that this has implications for their relationship with the child, and as a family within the body of Christ.

Headship is an order of life through offering. Committed to this order of life, and recognising that their little one is already 'of God', parents are offering their child *back to God* when they dedicate them. This can only be done within the context of the body of Christ, for Christ is the Head of His body, and the Father is the Head of Christ. Parents dedicate their children in the same faith as King David, who confessed to the Lord that 'all things come from You and from Your hand we have given You'.

Christian parents commit themselves to raise their children as part of a firstfruits household. A firstfruits household is a family in which each person has been set apart to their name, role and work within the family and the church. When each person is living in this order of life, they will understand the priorities of their work and receive grace for every circumstance of life. Notably, houses that are living in this order of life are able to share the life of God with others. These houses can be centres of evangelism, because the life of God is abounding to them and is overflowing in expression from their houses to the community.

## References:

1Ch 29:14

Pro 22:6

Luk 2:22-24

Luk 1:67-80

2Ti 3:14-15

## Further Study:

1 Samuel 1

## Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 14

# The faith of Christian parents

The faith of Christian parents is that their children possess eternal life from the womb because of the life of God that is in their household. When they dedicate each child, they are making a commitment before the congregation of the church to 'disciple' that child in the way of the Lord. This means that parents commit to nourish and train both the identity *and* divine nature within the newly born child of God, by the capacity of grace and life that they are receiving through headship. This nourishing and training of the child will be through the nurture and admonition *of the Lord*. Although the child is already a son of God, parents will bring the child up so that they grow to *know* Christ themselves. It is for this purpose that they are bringing their little ones to Jesus. As parents dedicate their child in His body, Christ takes the little one in His arms and blesses them to the name and identity that was predestined for them.

Christian parents believe that the child will continue to grow and mature as a son of God. Like the prophet Samuel, they will come to know the voice of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit in their childhood. They will grow to know God in a personal and deep way. In time, having received the blessing of Christ and continuing to grow in the Lord, Christ will impart the Holy Spirit to them, giving them gifts of power to live and function as members of the body of Christ. As their awareness of the things of the Spirit emerges, children will themselves respond to the initiatives of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit toward them. This means that they will desire to be baptised as a personal participation in Christ's death, burial and resurrection and all that this means for their apprehension of the promises of God.

**References:**

Mar 10:14-16

1Sa 3:10

Deu 29:10-12

Act 2:39

**Further Study:**

2 Timothy 1

**Daily Proverb:**

Proverbs 15

# Growing as sons of God

As our children physically mature, the seed of God's life should be growing within them. Their awareness and understanding of the things of the Spirit, and the expression of the divine nature, should be commensurate with their natural maturity. As Paul testified regarding his own life, they will not be perfect, but should attain to a level of sonship maturity that is 'perfect' for their age and stage of life. The culture of our households will, no doubt, have an impact on the vitality of the divine seed that is growing within them.

Christ described His life as 'the Light of life'. As His life grows within our children, the light of illumination concerning their sonship will also be growing within them. For this reason, as well as the fact that they were born into the New Covenant, our children are unlikely to experience a 'conversion moment'. Instead, they should be increasing in the *assurance* of their salvation. As their sonship is nurtured, they will grow in their knowledge of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This is not a conceptual knowledge about God but, rather, a deeper relationship with each Person of the Godhead.

Many of the theological ideas that we have harboured, regarding the salvation of children and the necessity for a conversion, have been law-based impositions upon them. In effect, these expectations have been no different from the expectations of the disciples who sent the children away from Christ. Jesus was greatly displeased with the disciples because of this. He said to them, 'Permit the children to come to Me; do not hinder them; *for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these*. Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it at all.'

## References:

Php 3:12-15  
 Joh 8:12  
 Mar 10:14-15

1Ti 6:12  
 Isa 51:1

## Further Study:

Daily Proverb:

1 Peter 1

Proverbs 16

# Stony ground

Christian parents would be the first to recognise that their little ones are by no means perfect. Why is it that our children sin, even though they have been born free from its slavery? A slave to sin is someone who has no ability to do anything other than sin. Every action and thought is motivated by their own desires and is disconnected from what was written about them in the book of life. However, children born into the covenant are not disconnected from the word of their name. Instead, they are born with the choice and faculties to set their minds on either the things that are above or the things of the earth. Yet, just like Paul, they have in themselves 'another law'. This law in their members is the propensity within them for sin. Paul said that if this law is not addressed in a person's life, it wars against the law of their mind, and makes them a prisoner of the law of sin.

The parable of the sower and the seed is helpful to our understanding. The other law in our members can be likened to a stony heart. Our children are born with the germinated seed of the divine nature. However, they are born like stony ground; that is, they still have in their members this 'other law'. Unless these stones of law are removed from their lives, the germinated seed of God's life can die. Similarly, other seeds can be planted in the ground of their lives and choke the seed of the divine nature. Jesus called these other seeds 'the cares of the world' and 'the deceitfulness of wealth'. In this regard, we recognise that the operation of law within our houses and the fostering of alternative worldly cultures, will have a significant impact on the growth and fruitfulness of our children's sonship.

## References:

Rom 7:23

Mat 13:20-22

Col 3:2

Pro 22:6

Gal 5:17

1Ti 6:11-12

## Further Study:

Romans 7

## Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 17

# Learning obedience

The apostle Paul wrote specifically to Christian children, instructing them to obey their parents 'in the Lord'. He explained that as they are obedient to their parents and honour them, they continue to grow as sons of God. The reverse is also true. If a child persists in disobedience then it will have a negative impact on their sonship. We know that our children are born with the choice to set their minds on the things of the Spirit or on the things of the flesh. Left to their own devices, our children will be motivated by the other law in their members. They will choose to pursue the desires of their flesh. Instead of growing strong as spiritual sons of God, they will grow to be carnal. For this reason, it is important that we teach our children to be obedient from the youngest years. As our children learn obedience, they are beginning to learn what it means to obey their heavenly Father and follow Jesus Christ on the pathway of sonship.

At various times across the course of their lives, our children will have specific encounters with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. These will be notable experiences that, no doubt, are marked by great joy and enthusiasm. Our children will grow to recognise the voices of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and the specific initiatives of each One toward them as children of God. Moreover, the Holy Spirit will be bearing witness with their spirit that they have been born of God. As parents, we can teach our children about God and encourage them to desire this relationship. In this regard, we remember the testimony of Paul who said that he counted all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of *knowing* Christ Jesus his Lord.

## References:

Eph 6:1-3

Rom 8:5, 16-17

Php 3:8

Joh 4:34

Act 20:24

## Further Study:

Daily Proverb:

Romans 6

Proverbs 18

# Not provoking to wrath

The apostle Paul exhorted children to obey their parents in the Lord and honour their father and mother. His next instruction was for parents to raise their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Paul addressed heads of houses by saying, 'And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training [nurture] and admonition of the Lord'. In this passage, Paul was contrasting two approaches to raising children. One approach will provoke them to wrath, while the other is 'of the Lord'.

Provoking our children to wrath is not primarily referring to specific instances of parental engagement that result in children reacting to parents or becoming frustrated. Rather, it is speaking of approaches to raising children that result in them growing to be no different from those who, by nature, are children of wrath. The implication is that children who are not born 'of wrath' can become like the children of wrath as a consequence of particular parenting approaches. There are many different examples of these parenting modes that can provoke children to wrath.

One example of this kind of parenting mode is withholding discipline from children through fear of worldly expectations and repercussions. Some people may even choose to adopt worldly approaches to the raising of children, which essentially avoid teaching the 'no' and 'yes' of the cross. Another example is reacting to the behaviours of our children when they offend our own laws. This will not deliver our children from law as a basis for life. Rather, law will be established as the basis of life in our houses. A further example is an inordinate and fear-driven investment in the cultural and future wealth of children. Likewise, ambivalence to the worldly cultures that gain traction in our houses through various forms of media and household activities, can also lead to this same result. We can see how important it is for parents to be aware of all these potential issues.

## References:

Eph 6:4  
Eph 2:3  
Pro 22:15

Pro 29:15  
Heb 12:10-11

## Further Study:

1 Kings 1

## Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 21

# Grace to bring up children

Paul instructed all Christian parents to bring up their children in the training and admonition of the Lord. Parents receive grace and capacity from God to do this when they are properly connected to the order of headship. Other Bible translations describe this mode of parenting as 'the discipline and instruction of the Lord'. The first thing to note about nurture and admonition is that it is 'of the Lord'. It is the initiative of God Himself toward 'godly seed', to bring them to their full predestination as sons of God. God has given parents the privilege and responsibility of this work. However, it is only by the grace and capacity that comes from Him that they are able to bring their children up this way.

The word that Paul used for 'bring up' in this passage can equally be translated 'nourish'. To nourish our children is to feed and cultivate the growth of their sonship through nurture and admonition. We will be feeding them with the word of the covenant that we are receiving. However, we will also be allowing the word of God to define the culture of our houses so that the conditions in which our children are living and growing are consistent with what we are teaching them and feeding them.

Parents will be teaching their children about the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and how they are to live as sons of God. Their children should grow to recognise, as Jesus did, the house of God the Father, and that He has some business for them to attend to as His sons or daughters. Regarding the nurture of children, King Solomon wrote, 'Train up a child in the way he should go, even when he is old he will not depart from it'. This is the faith of Christian parents.

## References:

Eph 6:4

Luk 2:49

Pro 22:6

Col 3:21

Deu 6:7

2Ti 1:5

## Further Study:

Exodus 13

## Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 22

# Nurture and admonition

What does it mean for parents to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord? The Greek word for 'nurture' communicates the notion of 'the whole life training' of a child. Parents should recognise that their child has an identity and a name, and has received the seed of the divine nature. With this understanding, the parents' training is an investment in the full realisation of a child's sonship. 'Admonition' also has a broad application. The word that Paul used for 'admonition' carries the sense of 'placing the mind correctly'. Our children's perspective should be on the things of the Spirit, rather than on the things of the flesh. This requires training.

This dimension of nourishing our children includes the application of discipline in their lives so that they are directed away from disobedience that is motivated by the other law within them. Discipline is the application of the 'no' and 'yes' of the cross of Christ in the life of a child, by the capacity of grace that comes from God the Father. This discipline is a child's first interface with a 'circumcision made without hands'. We know that the circumcision of Christ is the process through which the propensity to sin is removed from our lives.

In his letter to the Romans, Paul wrote, 'If you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live'. This principle is applicable to the cultures of our families and the lives of our children. If we live carnally as a Christian family, our children will die spiritually. However, if we will stand as heirs together of the grace of life, and bring our children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, they will not depart from it when they are old.

## References:

Col 2:11      Pro 29:17  
 Rom 8:13     Pro 4:1-4  
 Isa 38:19    Psa 71:17

**Further Study:**      Hebrews 12

**Daily Proverb:**      Proverbs 23

# Receiving a spirit of adoption

What should be the impact of nurture and admonition upon our children? Because the capacity for this nourishment comes from God, they should be receiving grace for their life from God. This grace is from the Father, and it will have a similar impact upon our children as grace and supplication have upon a new believer. Our children will begin to demonstrate a 'spirit of adoption'. This is the attitude and motivation that grows within them to turn from their own way and possess the whole of their predestination. A spirit of adoption is motivating them toward the progressive attainment of their sonship, leading to the possession of an immortal body for the new heavens and earth.

The spirit of adoption comes to a child from the Father. By it, they begin to cry out to God to know Him in a deeper and more personal way. They have already received the seed of the divine nature and will be expressing their love and devotion to the Father in an age appropriate manner. This is the cry of 'Abba! Father!' that is motivated by the Spirit of the Son within them. The cry, 'Abba! Father!' that is motivated by a spirit of adoption is the desire to *continue* to grow and walk in the pathway of sonship that He has for them.

In response to our children's desire to grow in their sonship, the Father and the Son will send the Holy Spirit to them. Our children, even as young as four and five years of age, can receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit and speak in tongues. They are being equipped with power and gifts to function as members of the body of Christ. We should encourage our children to seek baptism in the Holy Spirit. And as they grow in the Spirit, we can teach them and encourage them to participate in the ministry of the Spirit at our communion gatherings.

## References:

Rom 8:15, 23

1Co 15:53-58

Eze 36:27

2Co 1:20-22

## Further Study:

Luke 11:1-26

## Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 24

# Baptism of children

As Christian children grow in their knowledge of the Lord and continue to be motivated by a spirit of adoption, they will desire to be baptised into Christ. This will certainly be the case for children who have been filled with the Holy Spirit. This is because He is guiding them into the fullness of their sonship, which can only be expressed as they are members in particular of the body of Christ.

Even though our children are born in possession of the divine nature, it is important to recognise that they were born mortal and fleshly. We have already acknowledged that they have the propensity to sin. Baptism is necessary because it is the means by which every person is joined to the death of Jesus Christ. It is only as we are joined to the death and sufferings of the cross of Christ that we are able to be delivered from the other law and our propensity to sin. We are raised to walk in the power of resurrection life in the midst of sufferings and to clothe ourselves with Christ's priesthood as a living sacrifice.

Our children should understand, and will recognise, their propensity to sin and their need to learn obedience. Of course, Christian parents will be teaching them obedience through the nurture and admonition of the Lord. But a child's desire to be baptised will demonstrate their own faith for participation in the death of Christ and their growing awareness and apprehension of its implications for their lives. Parents will need to continue to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, but they can call their children to the faith of their baptism in response to this discipline and instruction, and the sufferings they will experience day to day.

**References:**

1Co 12:13, 27      Col 2:12-13  
Rom 6:3-6        Rom 8:11  
Gal 3:27

**Further Study:**

1 Peter 3

**Daily Proverb:**

Proverbs 25