

Biblical Parenting



There is so much parenting advice floating around these days. From pregnancy onwards, well-meaning friends and family feel the need to load you with all their opinions, advice and parenting hacks. From whether or not to vaccinate, to schooling options, what to wear, what to feed children, breastfeeding or formula, and the list just goes on and on!

As parents, we all have to decide what advice we are going to follow when it comes to raising our children. And as believers we need to first and foremost look to Biblical instruction – how does the Most High want us to raise our children?

We should raise them with healthy, nutritious whole foods, keeping in mind the food laws in Leviticus 11. We should love them, and care for them. We should allow them plenty of free time and “boredom”, and we should teach them the Word. We should not only concern ourselves with their physical health, but with the health of their souls and the strength of their spirits as well!

It’s time to take a look at what the Word of YAHUAH tells us about parenting, what we should teach our children, how we should teach them, and how we should treat them and discipline them. In summary, how we are to raise them up to walk in the Ways of their Heavenly Father.

And Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said in his heart, "Is a child born to a man who is a hundred years old? Or is Sarah, who is ninety years old, to bear a child?" And Abraham said to Elohim, "Oh, let Yishma'el live before You!" And Elohim said, "No, Sarah your wife is truly bearing a son to you, and you shall call his name Yitshaq. And I shall establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him. Genesis 17:18

"For I have known him, so that he commands his children and his household after him, to guard the way of YAHUAH, to do righteousness and right-ruling, so that YAHUAH brings to Abraham what He has spoken to him." Genesis 18:17-19

An early example of parenting is that of Abraham and Sarah. They both struggled to believe that they would ever have a child, considering their advanced age. But this story is an example showing that nothing is impossible for YAHUAH, and His will always prevails in our lives and the lives of our children. YAHUAH knew that Abraham would teach his children the Torah and how to walk out their faith in their works.

And he blessed Yosēph, and said, "The Elohim before whom my fathers Abraham and Yitshaq walked, the Elohim who has fed me all my life long to this day, the Messenger who has redeemed me from all evil – bless the youths! And let my name be called upon them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Yitshaq. And let them increase to a multitude in the midst of the earth." Genesis 48:15

As Jacob blessed Joseph and his sons, so we should bless our children! Starting in the womb, we can bless our little ones using Scripture like the above passage, and also praying for them daily.

And in all the land were found no women so beautiful as the daughters of Iyob. And their father gave them an inheritance among their brothers. Job 42:15

As parents we should think of the inheritance we will leave for our sons and daughters. And I don't just mean the worldly goods we will leave for them one day, but also our spiritual legacy! Are we instilling YAHUAH's Word and our faith into our children, so that they will still have it to comfort them and guide them when we are gone one day?

And YAHUAH said to Mosheh, "Go in to Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart and the hearts of his servants, so that I show these signs of Mine before him, and that you relate in the hearing of your son and your son's son what I have done in Mitsrayim, and My signs which I have done among them. And you shall know that I am YAHUAH." Exodus 10:1-2

We are to always pass down to the next generations the goodness, love and faithfulness of the Father! Passing down the stories in the Bible does not only

teach our children the history of the world, but it will also give them the good (and bad) examples of the people in Scripture. Hebrews 11 points out so well how history can teach us how to have faith! The stories, once in our hearts, will help us and our children to love others and the Most High how to persevere through trials, and how to always trust YAHUAH in all circumstances.

“You do not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of that which is in the heavens above, or which is in the earth beneath, or which is in the waters under the earth, you do not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, YAHUAH your Elohim am a jealous Ēl, visiting the crookedness of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing loving-commitment to thousands, to those who love Me and guard My commands.” Exodus 20:4-6

We have a stern warning here, but also a wonderful reward. If we disobey YAHUAH and hate His ways, we are basically cursing the generations that come after us. But if we willingly follow Him, love Him and keep His law, we are choosing blessings for all the generations that come after us.

This can give us hope for ourselves as well. So often we focus on the generational curses in our lives, and forget the blessings that have come down from all our ancestors that have loved the Father and followed His ways! Let us choose to add to the blessings that our children will receive!

“Respect your father and your mother, so that your days are prolonged upon the soil which YAHUAH your Elohim is giving you.” Exodus 20:12

“And he who strikes his father or his mother shall certainly be put to death.”
Exodus 21:15

“Each one of you should fear his mother and his father, and guard My Sabbaths. I am YAHUAH your Elohim.” Leviticus 19:3

We are to respect, honour and obey our earthly parents, be they our birth parents or perhaps parents by adoption or guardianship.

This concept can really get us into murky waters. What if our parents abandoned us, gave us up for adoption for whatever reason? What if they abused us?

My opinion on the matter is that we should give them credit and honour where it is due, YAHUAH used them to bring us onto this earth, to raise us. And if they misused us and abused the role He gave to them as our parents, He will judge them on our behalf.

So we should teach our children to honour and obey us, as is their responsibility – they are commanded by their heavenly Father. But we should

also keep in mind that we will be judged in our role as their parents, and love them just as YAHUAH Himself would!

“Only, guard yourself, and guard your life diligently, lest you forget the Words your eyes have seen, and lest they turn aside from your heart all the days of your life. And you shall make them known to your children and your grandchildren. The day when you stood before YAHUAH your Elohim in Horeb, YAHUAH said to me, ‘Assemble the people to Me and I make them hear My Words, so that they learn to fear Me all the days they live on the earth and teach them to their children.’ ” Deuteronomy 4:9-10

Respect your father and your mother, as YAHUAH your Elohim has commanded you, so that your days are prolonged, and so that it is well with you on the soil which YAHUAH your Elohim is giving you. Deuteronomy 5:16

“And this is the command, the laws and right-rulings which YAHUAH your Elohim has commanded, to teach you to do in the land which you are passing over to possess, so that you fear YAHUAH your Elohim, to guard all His laws and His commands which I command you, you and your son and your grandson, all the days of your life, and that your days be prolonged. And you shall hear, O Yisra’el, and shall guard to do, that it might be well with you, and that you increase greatly as YAHUAH Elohim of your fathers has spoken to you, in a land flowing with milk and honey. Hear, O Yisra’el: YAHUAH our Elohim, YAHUAH is one! And you shall love YAHUAH your Elohim with all your heart, and with all your being, and with all your might. And these Words which I am commanding you today shall be in your heart, and you shall impress them upon your children, and shall speak of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise up, and shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”

Deuteronomy 6:1-9

The scriptures make it clear how important it is to live the Word as we go about our daily lives, and how important it is to teach the Word to our children!

When a man has a wayward and rebellious son who is not listening to the voice of his father or the voice of his mother, and who, when they have disciplined him, does not listen to them,” then his father and his mother shall take hold of him and bring him out to the elders of his city, to the gate of his city, and shall say to the elders of his city, ‘This son of ours is wayward and rebellious. He is not listening to our voice, he is a glutton and a drunkard.’ Then all the men of his city shall stone him to death with stones. Thus you shall purge the evil from your midst. And let all Yisra’el hear, and fear. Deuteronomy 21:18-21

This seems pretty harsh. Are we to punish our adult children so harshly? Stone them? This is indeed the law of the Most High! It is a law that the Prophet Samuel's predecessor, Eli, did not obey when it came to his own sons, and they were all punished by YAHUAH.

It is unfortunate when we see disobedient and sinful adult children these days, and so sad when we see their parents either turning a blind eye to their sins or even enabling them!

And those twelve stones which they took out of the Yardēn, Yehoshua set up in Gilgal. And he said to the children of Yisra'ēl, saying, "When your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, 'What are these stones?' then you shall let your children know, saying, 'Yisra'ēl passed over this Yardēn on dry land,' for YAHUAH your Elohim dried up the waters of the Yardēn before you until you had passed over, as YAHUAH your Elohim did to the Sea of Reeds, which He dried up before us until we had passed over, so that all the peoples of the earth shall know the hand of YAHUAH, that it is strong, so that you shall fear YAHUAH your Elohim forever." Joshua 4:20-24

The stories in Scripture serve as reminders of who YAHUAH is and what He has done for His people. We and our children, need these examples to build our faith and trust in our Father.

YAHUAH is my shepherd; I do not lack. He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside still waters. He turns back my being; He leads me in paths of righteousness For His Name's sake. When I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil. For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. You spread before me a table in the face of my enemies; You have anointed my head with oil; My cup runs over. Only goodness and loving-commitment follow me all the days of my life; and I shall dwell in the House of YAHUAH, to the length of days! Psalm 23:1-6

My people, give ear to my Torah, incline your ears to the words of my mouth. I open my mouth in a parable; I utter riddles of old, which we have heard and known, for our fathers have related them to us. We do not hide them from their children, relating to the generation to come the praises of YAHUAH, And His strength and His wonders which He has done. Psalm 78:1-4

These are some more reminders for us and our children of the goodness of our Father, and these verses are also examples of how to follow Him and praise Him!

As a father has compassion for his children, so YAHUAH has compassion for those who fear Him. Psalm 103:13

YAHUAH is our heavenly Father, and he cares for us and has compassion for us the way a good earthly father would!

Blessed are the perfect in the way, who walk in the Torah of YAHUAH! Psalm 119:1

Look, children are an inheritance from YAHUAH, the fruit of the womb is the reward. As arrows in the hand of a mighty man, so are the children of one's youth. Blessed is the man who has filled his quiver with them. They are not ashamed, when they speak with their enemies in the gate. Psalm 127:3-5

Children are always a blessing, granted to us for a time straight from YAHUAH's hands! So often today we hear about how expensive it is to raise children, or how we shouldn't even have children because of the state of the world.

But just look at this verse! Our children are a reward for us, and they are our arrows to teach up and then send into the world when they are older for YAHUAH to use for His kingdom. We are truly blessed through our children, and the more children, the more blessings!

There is a big movement now among liberals to remain childless, they give many reasons for this – their resources, “climate change”, “over population”, et cetera, but it all comes down to selfishness or deception really.

Parenting truly has to be selfless, giving up ourselves, our resources, our time and sometimes even our sanity haha. But the rewards of our selflessness are beautiful and truly awesome! Watching our littles grow and learn is amazing and priceless, and I wouldn't trade it for anything.

My son, heed the discipline of your father, and do not forsake the Torah of your mother; for they are a fair wreath on your head, and chains about your neck. Proverbs 1:8-9

This proverb gives children the instruction to obey their parents once again, keeping the Torah and instruction and discipline of their parents on as treasures or jewelry. Just like spiritually putting on the Armour of YAHUAH (Ephesians 6), we should also put on His discipline and Torah – and of course teach our children to do the same! They learn from our example after all.

Trust in YAHUAH with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; know Him in all your ways, and He makes all your paths straight. Proverbs 3:5-6

This is a good example for all of us to learn, and teach to our children once again through our own example! Pretty much every time I try to lean on my understanding, my ideas, that are contradictory to Yah's will, I inevitably fail at

whatever I'm trying to do! But if I lean on His wisdom I succeed more often than not. His wisdom is tried and true and will not lead us astray, unlike our own fickle minds and hearts.

My son, do not despise the discipline of YAHUAH, And do not loathe His reproof; for whom YAHUAH loves He reproofs, as a father the son whom he delights in.
Proverbs 3:11-12

A wise son makes a father rejoice, but a foolish son is his mother's sorrow.
Proverbs 10:1

He who spares his rod hates his son, but he who loves him, seeks him with discipline. Proverbs 13:24

Discipline your son because there is expectation, and do not set your being on his destruction. One of great wrath bears punishment; for if you rescue him, You only have to do it again. Proverbs 19:18-19

Train up a child in the way he should go, even when he is old he turns not away from it. Proverbs 22:6

Folly is bound up in the heart of a child; the rod of discipline drives it far from him. Proverbs 22:15

Do not withhold discipline from a child; if you strike him with a rod, he does not die. Strike him with a rod and deliver his being from She'ol. Proverbs 23:13-14

Listen to your father who brought you forth, and do not despise your mother when she is old. Proverbs 23:22

A rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child unrestrained brings shame to his mother. Proverbs 29:15

Discipline your son, and he brings you rest and delight to your life. Proverbs 29:17

An eye that mocks his father, and scorns to obey his mother – Ravens of the wadi dig it out, and young eagles eat it! Proverbs 30:17

Here are a whole lot of instructions on obedience and discipline. If we, as parents, fail to discipline our children their very souls are at stake! We are to guide them and teach them the way they should go – to walk according to YAHUAH's will. Disciplining our children according to Torah will save them from foolishness and destruction. But we should be careful to discipline them correctly, in love not in anger, and not without reason.

There are many opinions out there on how we should discipline. I very much believe in natural consequences to disobedience, but I'm not here to tell you

how to discipline your children. That is something you should seek out personally with YAHUAH. What I do want to impress upon you is the importance of discipline for children. We should walk alongside them as a shepherd would his flock, guiding them lest they stumble or fall, keeping them safe from danger but allowing them to take risks that they are capable of trying. The shepherd's rod is used to direct his flock and keep them safe, to protect them from predators and cliffs or holes they might not see. So should we steer our children away from harm through correction and discipline.

"The living, the living – he is praising You, as I do this day. A father makes known Your truth to his children. Isaiah 38:19

Once again a reminder to teach the truth about YAHUAH to our children!

"I prayed for this youth, and YAHUAH has granted me what I asked of Him. So I have also loaned him to YAHUAH. All the days that he lives he shall be loaned to YAHUAH." And she worshipped there before YAHUAH. 1 Samuel 1:27-28

Hannah's prayers for a child of her own were answered and so as difficult as it must have been for her, she gave up her only child to YAHUAH as she had promised! He went on to bless her with more children for her obedience. Just as we are to teach our children, we also need to model our own obedience to them!

Relate it to your children, and your children to their children, and their children to the generation after them. Joel 1:3

The loving-commitments of YAHUAH! For we have not been consumed, for His compassions have not ended. They are new every morning, great is Your trustworthiness. Lamentations 3:22-23

YAHUAH is worthy of all our trust, faith and love! We need to teach His truth to our children so that they will also come to trust and love Him!

Now that we've scanned the Old Testament for parenting advice it's time to have a look at what Messiah and His followers have to say to explore the topic a little more:

"See that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that in the heavens their messengers always see the face of My Father who is in the heavens." Matthew 18:10

Yahusha always showed his love for little children and how they think! We are to treat our children with this beautiful love Messiah showed them, unconditional love, no matter what!

Then young children were brought to Him to lay His hands on them and pray, and the taught ones rebuked them. But Yahusha said, "Allow the young children and do not stop them from coming to Me, for of such is the reign of the heavens." Matthew 19:13-14

Yahusha loved having the children around Him, and blessing them. While the disciples thought the little ones would bother the Messiah, He encouraged the children to come to Him. He saw, and still sees, the innocents and potential inside our little ones!

Therefore we should always encourage our children to get to know their Messiah, and draw closer to Him. We can do this by modelling Him in our own actions, and teaching our children about Him.

And see, one of the rulers of the congregation came, Ya'ir by name. And when he saw Him, he fell at His feet, and begged Him strongly, saying, "My little daughter lies at the point of death. Come, lay Your hands on her to heal her, and she shall live." Mark 5:22-23

Many people entrusted their children's lives and wellbeing into Yahusha's hands, we should do the same! After all, He loves them even better than we ever could.

And whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it is better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea. Mark 9:42

I believe there is swift and awful punishment awaiting those who purposefully harm children! We all know about the traffickers and abusers out there. Many of us were abused in some form or another when we were little.

Yahusha's words here are harsh and rightly so.

"And he shall go before Him in the spirit and power of Ēliyahu, 'to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,' and the disobedient to the insight of the righteous, to make ready a people prepared for YAHUAH." Luke 1:17

The Ruach is here to turn our hearts towards our children and towards righteousness. Ruach will always lead us to the way of love, so we can trust Ruach to lead us in how to best love, lead and discipline our children!

And He said, "A certain man had two sons, and the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the portion of goods falling to me.' And he divided his livelihood between them. And not many days after, the younger son, having gathered all together, went away to a distant country, and there wasted his goods with loose living. And when he had spent all, there arose a severe scarcity of food throughout that land, and he began to be in need. And he went and

joined himself to one of the citizens of that country, and he sent him to his fields to feed pigs. And he was longing to fill his stomach with the pods which the pigs were eating, and no one gave to him. But having come to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I am perishing with hunger!' Having risen, I shall go to my father and say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against the heaven, and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants.' ' And having risen, he went to his father. And while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was moved with compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against the heaven, and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' But the father said to his servants, 'Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. And bring the fattened calf here and slaughter it, and let us eat and rejoice, because this son of mine was dead and is alive again, and he was lost and is found.' And they began to rejoice. And his older son was in the field, and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. And having called one of the servants he asked what this meant. And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and your father has slaughtered the fattened calf because he received him back in health.' And he was wroth and would not go in. So his father came out and pleaded with him. And answering, he said to his father, 'See, these many years I have been serving you, and I have never transgressed a command of yours, but to me you have never given a young goat, so I could rejoice with my friends. But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your livelihood with whores, you slaughtered the fattened calf for him.' Then he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all I have is yours. And we had to rejoice and be glad, for your brother was dead and is alive, and was lost and is found.' " Luke 15:11-32

I can talk about the "Story of the Prodigal Son" for hours! On both sides of the story. You see, we always focus on the mistakes of the younger son and the father's unconditional love in welcoming him back with a joyous celebration. That is truly important. The Father will always welcome us, His wayward and sinful children, back with open arms once we see the error of our ways and repent. As we should do with our own children. We should always love them, and we should not allow their sins to affect our love for them, but we should expect them to repent and try to do better.

But I also see the other son in the story. The son modelled after the religious folk in Messiah's day – the Pharisees and Sadducees. The eldest son remained with his father, but never truly sought after his father's heart. The father never stopped loving him, but perhaps he never understood his father's love for him and therefore didn't understand why his father could celebrate the wayward brother as he did.

I don't believe the father was at fault in the story, after all he was modelled after our heavenly Father. But the second son was focused on position and worldly possessions, his inheritance as the eldest son. And he knew, when his father celebrated his brother's return, that he would inherit less now, and he was angry about that rather than being happy his brother was back.

This saddened the father!

The father loved both his sons equally. That is the beauty of the story! He was so glad to regain his lost son, and saddened that the son who had remained had put "stuff" before relationships as he had done!

"For Elohim so loved the world that He gave His only brought-forth Son, so that everyone who believes in Him should not perish but possess everlasting life. For Elohim did not send His Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." John 3:16-17

YAHUAH and Yahusha both made the ultimate sacrifice for us, Their people! The Father sacrificed His only Son, and the Son gave His own life willingly for those of us who love Him.

As parents we should be willing to lay down our own lives for our precious little ones.

Sometimes all that looks like is getting up every day to clean spills and cook food and do laundry and wash dishes ad nauseum; it could look like driving to work each day to provide for them; it could look like wiping tears and giving hugs and cuddle and sitting up all night with sick babes. It could look like sleepless nights, exhaustion, or hearing "why" until it feels like we can't take it anymore.

YAHUAH sees our everyday sacrifices and He loves us for it!

And Kēpha said to them, "Repent, and let each one of you be immersed in the Name of Yahusha Messiah for the forgiveness of sins. And you shall receive the gift of the Set-apart Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are far off, as many as YAHUAH our Elohim shall call." Acts 2:38-39

Yahusha's promise is for us, His people, and our children too. His promise of eternal life in His presence! His promise for our blessings, His provision and the gift of the Ruach in our lives.

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no change, nor shadow of turning. James 1:17

Our children are the good and perfect gifts that the Father sends to us!

And above all have fervent love for one another, because love covers a great number of sins. 1 Peter 4:8

This is great advice from Peter! We should love each other unconditionally! If we put love for each other and our children first, we can put their sins behind us. This doesn't mean we should allow everything, every naughty or disrespectful or sinful thing they do. It just means that we can forgive more easily and not be ruled by anger, rather ruled by love.

Shepherd the flock of Elohim which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but voluntarily, not out of greed for filthy gain, but eagerly, neither as being masters over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. 1 Peter 5:2-3

Our flock is our children. We should be eager to love them, to serve them and sacrifice for them. This is not easy, believe me, I'm preaching to myself here! It goes against our sinful human nature to be selfless. But we are called by YAHUAH to be better than our sinful human natures, to rather live by our spirits and be guided by the Ruach, to move voluntarily towards selflessness each day.

We may fail. Scratch that, we WILL fail, but we can try again, over and over, laying down selfless moments wherever we can!

In the same way, you younger ones, be subject to elders. And gird yourselves with humility toward one another, for Elohim resists the proud, but gives favour to the humble. Humble yourselves, then, under the mighty hand of Elohim, so that He exalts you in due time, casting all your worry upon Him, for He is concerned about you. 1 Peter 5:5-7

We should be looking to our elders for guidance in our parenting journeys! I myself have a couple of people I look to for advice, encouragement and their example. You know who you are!

We should not be walking alone, we should have people around us to support, teach and encourage us, to point out our mistakes in love, so that we can do our absolute best for our children!

If we confess our sins, He is trustworthy and righteous to forgive us the sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:9

We need to confess and repent our sins, even to our children if we sin against them – if we yell at them in anger, snap and say something nasty in a moment of impatience... We should repent and say sorry and ask for their forgiveness, as well as for YAHUAH's forgiveness! This will also teach them that they should do the same.

Children, obey your parents in the Master, for this is right. “Respect your father and mother,” which is the first command with promise, in order that it might be well with you, and you might live long on the earth. And you, fathers, do not provoke your children, but bring them up in the instruction and admonition of the Master. Ephesians 6:1-4

Sha’ul brings us right back around to the 5th Commandment! We should teach our children to honour, obey and respect us. YAHUAH promises them blessings for their obedience! But, as their parents, we should try to never give them reason to disobey or disrespect us, we shouldn’t “provoke” them into disobedience with ridiculous or frivolous rules, or with our own bad examples.

I would like to add a few things that I have learnt after nearly 10 years of being a parent myself, not above the Scriptural advice of course!

My advice is that whatever it is that we might be struggling with as parents, with ourselves or our own children that we should take it up in prayer with the Father first and foremost – He has awe-inspiring and surprising ways of answering our prayers! We should also seek advice from other parents, especially those who have been doing it for longer. They understand the troubles that we go through daily and can encourage and advise us with their experience and prayers for us.

Next is this – research everything! I have found that pretty much everything in the standard parenting narratives is false and often dangerous to our children in some way. Standard “healthcare” is unnecessary and can be harmful, research anything and everything before doing the norm, even if a doctor or professional tells you it’s safe.

Research the food you will feed them, the water they will be drinking, the products that will go on their skin or teeth. Even research their pajamas and sheets! Toxins can be found lurking almost everywhere these days.

Find out what the schools are teaching and decide if that is really what you want your child to be learning, away from your influence for the majority of their waking hours.

Keep them away from the influences of social and mainstream media.

Make sure you know who they are spending time with.

Simplify their lives and allow them to just be children for as long as you can!

And most importantly, give them back to their Father, He loves them best and He will fill in everything you cannot do for them!

