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CHRISTIAN CHILDREN AND PARENTAL UPBRINGING IN THE LIGHT OF THE SCRIPTURE

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ABSTRACT

This research investigated the biblical foundations of parenting and their effects on Christian children. Adopting a qualitative research methodology, this study evaluated scriptural guidance on parenting and its relevance in modern Christian families. The research delved into the duties and roles of parents in influencing the spiritual, emotional, and social growth of their children. Additionally, it looks into the difficulties that Christian parents encountered while raising their children in a secular environment and the approaches they utilize to navigate these difficulties. The results of this study underscored the significance of parental guidance in molding the beliefs and values of Christian children. The research concluded by offering suggestions for Christian parents, churches, and communities on how to assist and empower parents in their responsibility of nurturing children in reverence to the Lord.

Keywords: Christian parenting, biblical foundations, parental guidance, Christian children, faith growth, spiritual development.

INTRODUCTION

The view of children coming into being in a one-marriage life is theocentric or is it anthropo-centric? This paper aids at telling us the position of children in the marriage life of a Christian by way of digging into the scripture, although the Holy Scripture is not a centered book, I stand by the scripture to bridge the dichotomy view that exists in the life of many who deft into marriage institutions with wrong notion without noticing Gods injunction in putting children drama into play in Christian marriage life. The researcher is here not trying to make those with no children feel bad; neither is the researcher trying to make those with children feel at home.

But apparently, the researcher stands to state the place of children in married life and to discuss their parental guidance, because many are just globe-rating children without taking good care of them for many children have become orphans. In contrast, some of their parents are still alive while others are aborting theirs and others use their own for rituals of sacrifice while others are already single mothers, and fathers many have failed to think of their upbringing in the light of the bible. Many children have become fatherless, motherless, homeless, and wanderers nobody cares for them. A lot of people don't have time for children and in many homes, children have no value they are being molested to a higher standard. This has led many children's lives in shambles and that's why they are spiritually, academically, morally, psychologically, mentally, financially, and materialistically bankrupt

as such, this will serve as a clarion call to many, and it will serve as a eye opener on to us. To reinstate, and to retreat our wrong conception of who children are, and on how to train them in a Godly manner, and to bring them up as ambassadors of the kingdom of God in this life and life to come. (Storms, 2013)

CHILDREN AND CHRISTIAN UPBRINGING

God says, "Let them have dominion over the fish, fowl, cattle, and all the earth," knowing that God made man in his image and likeness. In addition, Gen. 1:26 mentions all the creeping things on earth. It is assumed that God has recognized the need for an heir apparent to the kingdom (earth) who will oversee and manage his entry. All of his possessions were created in his image and likeness, so that when you see him, you will say, "This is the son of his father." He then came to realize that, if he lives at all, the creation is without a successor who will take over from them. Therefore, reproduction is necessary.

"God brought the first man and the first woman together in paradise and commanded them to be fruitful and multiply," according to the Catholic perspective (Gen. 1:28).

According to John Witte (2005), "God gave them the physical capacity to join together and to beget children," which indicates that one of the purposes of marriage is procreation, or the bi rth of children in order to populate the planet.as directed by God.Therefore, this mandate is not limited to parents with children, as is evident in Christian marriages, as couples without children or unable to have children can nevertheless fulfill their marital communion by actin g in a motherly and fatherly manner toward each other.. One way they resemble God is by participating in his creative endeavors and working together to complete the human race, which is the result of his entire creative project to be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it (Gen. 1:28). This is not because God cannot fill the earth; rather, it is to demonstrate to humanity that marriage is more than just a union of two people or the enjoyment of sexual activity; it is also about bringing into the world another life, namely children, and raising them in a godly manner.

The fullness of God's revelation in Jesus makes clear the ultimate significance of the married couple's work of procreation each of their children is called to be a member of God's kingdom and to share in his happiness forever "since the good of children is interest to the good of marriage, the vocation of marriage includes the vocation to parenthood. Thus Vatican II teaches that the particular mission of spouses is to transmit human life and raise children … Paul Vi teaches that the transmission of human life is a most serious office of spouses, In which they offer a free and conscious service to God and John Paul II explicitly teaches with the vocation to love there is inseparably connected the vocation to the gift of life" (Alsdurf , 2018).

CHRISTIAN FAMILIES WITHOUT CHILDREN

Since God is the master planner of all things what happens if there is a lacuna of children in Christian marriage life? That means he knows. But the researcher discovered over some pages in the scripture the harm that the absence of children caused in marriage life that leads to the void of many marriages or the absence of children has left a lot of marriage homes with big or large scars. (Glahn, 2005). Consider the marriage lifestyle of Abraham and his wife Sarah in other to proffer to them a child that led to the stage of having Ishmael that brought about Islam, and if not for God's intervention Abraham's married life could have been in shambles

manner, Gen.16:1-15, and also the absence of children in one marriage life lead to scarcity of joy like the case with Hannah in 1Samuel .1:1-19. Furthermore if the place of children in your marital life is vacant it leads to turn-by-turn marriage like the case of Judah's children with his daughter-in-law Tamar Gen.38:1-30, Matt.22:23-28 the wife of seven husbands, childlessness has to lead many into polygamous marriage; also lead to adoption "couples can adopt a child from either a close relation or even from the orphanage whom they can brood and they will make him or her automatically their heirs like the children of their womb" (Philip, 2015) thus some regard the death of one without offspring as a terrible fate " people neglect a childless person as if he or she is nobody, this is not supposed to be so and it is not supposed to be a problem to a believer since childbearing is not a condition for heaven except faith and one's intimacy with the lord" (Philip, 2015).

Thus, in some cultures and traditions is a void in marriage "but for Africans, the lack of children leaves a void in the marriage union. The chief purpose of marriage is to provide an opportunity for the unborn members of the family to spring forth" (Samuel, 2008), but is another thing to understand that God is the giver of a child or the father of the unborn members of the family, he has given you the yardstick to procreate and it is his will for Mr. A & B to fulfilled the mandate and it is another thing to him for Mr. C & D not to. And many people are unwilling to bear the space or the condition. For them to endure the shame of infertility "people will go great lengths to try to conceive, even Christians will consult witch doctors and all sorts of medicine men and women in an attempt to solve the problem regardless of the cost. If the attempt fail many will result in divorce or polygamous relationship" (Campbell, 2018) many believe that if you don't have a child you have sinned or you are not a true Christian meanwhile some "African Christians, however, argue that the command to be fruitful and increase in numbers Gen.1:28 applies to all marriages, they also point to the fact that God's blessing on his people include fertility none of your men or women will be childless, nor any of your livestock without young Deut.7:14, Exod.23:26", (Samuel, 2008) also views that "many Pentecostal newer churches place great emphasis on the need for offspring. They believe that barrenness and impotence are the work of the evil spirit and infertility can be cured by the special prayers of a man or woman of God e.g. Rachel and Hannah in the Old Testament Gen.30:6, 23-24, 1 sam.1:8" (Chapman, 2019).

Those who insist that children are essential to a marriage need to be reminded that a childless marriage can still be full of love companionship and sexual fulfillment. The presence of children is no guarantee that these other important aspects of marriage are present "Children are wonderful gifts from God, but sin in general not necessarily the couple's sin, can interfere with this aspect of marriage" (Clarkson, 2018) in the same vein the researcher look at it that Abraham was not sinful or Sarah that led to their childlessness, Isaac and Rebecca, Hannah & Elkanah, Elizabeth and Zachariah barrenness; all these people mention where they sinful? Where was it stated that they will have children until their sin is forgiven? When you face such, if you search yourself and discover that you are pure, believe that God allowed that for a purpose, for his name to be glorified John 9:1-4 we have a lot of pastor ministers of the word that are living example of barrenness and they are without children and their marriage is full of tremendous blessing. As such do not be deceived. (Wickman, 2017)

THE JOY OF CHILDREN IN CHRISTIAN HOMES

If the absence of children in the marriage life of a Christian will cause a lot of havoc, then what about their presence?

Children As Heir Apparent To The Family: Like Father Abraham duly says a foreign son will inherit me, so in the world of Old Testament and New Testament in as much as other cultures, children, especially males greatly desire Gen.15:2,30:1,1Sam.1:11, Luke 1:27-33Among the Hebrews all first born belong to God and had to be redeemed Numbers 3:40-51 and children are particularly prominent in the first half of the book of Exodus in the genealogy of the opens chapter, one and second genealogy in chapter six in the story of pharaoh's attempts at killing the Israelite male infants in the birth and rescue of Moses in such a context and especially in the final plaque on Egyptian in which the firstborn of the Egyptians are slain while the firstborn of the Israelite is passed over. Herod in an attempt to kill Jesus at the infant stage Matt 2:1-18 in other not to have one like him. (Panner, 2003)

Children as Blessing to the Family*:* "Gen.12-50 children are the focus of God's promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob for the promise of many descendants depends upon the birth of children. But children are hard to come by in the family of Abraham with all the emphasis upon generation, Children in the opening chapter of Genesis, it is striking that the chosen family experiences so much barrenness, Sarah, Rebecca and Rachel all have such difficulties, and this reality regularly complicates plat, putting pressure on the divine promise Gen. 5:2-4;18:1-15;25:30:18,22-24" (Cloud, 2019) as many will conceive it in your marriage when you lack marriage blessing they refer to children if you are childless they will say you are without a marital blessing. "The scripture describes children as the crown of old age, sons, in particular, are described as being like olive shoots round your table (Psalm.128:3), children are also described as being like an arrow in the hand of a warrior blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them ps. 127:3-5The children will defend and provide for their parents in their old age" (Crouch, 2018)

Children are Sources of Assistance to the Family: Mother Sarah was singing praises to God. Likewise Zachariah and his beloved wife Elizabeth because of the presence of a child, Gen. 21:1-8, Matt. 1:67-80 that will tell you that the presence of children called for merriment, Isaiah will put it this way Sing O barren woman you who never bore a child, burst into songs, shout for joy, you who were never been in labor because more are the children of the desolate woman than of her who have a husband (54:1 KJV) it called for "Gratitude to God's, and evident in the response of this mother and fathers to their newborn children as elsewhere in the Old Testament, again and again, children are the source of great joy. Especially to be noted is the response of Sarah to the birth of Isaac Gen. 21:16 she says God has brought laughter for me everyone who hears will laugh with me, Deep appreciation and love for children may also be seen in Jacobs's reaction to the apparent death of Joseph gen37:33-35 he cries out for his child with deep intensity, with traditional sign s of mourning lamenting for many days unable to be comforted by his other children in another case if Benjamin does not return with his older brother Jacob will be so distressed that he will die bringing the gray head of our father down to the grave in sorrow love and affection for children are often noted in the old testament with both tenderness and discipline evident" (Dillow, 2019).

After the discovery of the present of children in Christian marriage life; Then it is another interesting thing for you to know that their guidance and upbringing in a godly manner is under their shoulders as parents and to love them women are expected to love their children because they are blessings and not as unwanted burden (Titus 2:4, ps. 127:3-5,128:1-5). Parents who love their children will do what is best for them. This refers to taking time with children both quality and quantity time; abusing and neglecting children are not love (Smith, 2015).

If parent extent their parental love to their children and also guide them how to love God, because even in the lord's many children are not faithful, as such it is now the duty of the parent to train the children up in admonishing of the Lord, .this include bringing the children to all meeting of the church, and also teaching them God's word in Deut.6:6-9, and that Intel that training children is primarily parental responsibility, rather than the church, when children grown up without knowledge of God and his will the parent are to be blame Proverbs.22:22-25;3:13;2 Tim.1:5;3:15 for "making happy homes is not easy especially in a corrupt society. but God 's plan is always best, and the homes that accomplish the most good are those that learn and do his will" (Wikipedia, 2024) "God specifically command Abraham to teach his children Gen.18:19,26:5 this divine charge to Abraham is focused on the children's religious education and its implications for their daily work the reader of the depth and breadth of this education" (Dobson, 2018) "teaching and learning happen in a community as a whole Deut.31:12-13, but there are explicit indications that the learning of children takes place in the family context especially one may assume that there were schools that provided instruction, but the whole orientation of Deut. Teaching in the family context 4:10 that goes on in a variety of ways ,as indicated below ,from daily recitation in the family setting .with parents reciting the words of the law ,the divine instruction ,and having the children repeat them back 6:7a to continue speaking out laud or meditating on the word of the law 6:7b to the family particularly in the religious life of the community 4:23;31:10-13" (Eggerichs, 2019), parent should take to heart that the education of their children is their duty .for it is their responsibility to teach their children how to do some domestic activities and teaching them how to farm ,do some business to earn their own living. "Parent should consider the place of training children seriously mother should concentrate on the training of the girls on how they can maintain the environment and keep it tidy and keeping their body neat and admirable … the male parents should pay proper attention on the male children so that they can understand how to care for the house …" (Philip, 2015).

Sex Parents must teach their kids sexual etiquette. "Therefore, Christians are too frequently letting their kids down when it comes to sex. If kids are affected by this basic force of life, we provide them with very little support or understanding to help them deal with the forces that are exploding inside of them. Too often, we don't even acknowledge that the forces exist, so our kids have no choice but to look elsewhere, and that somewhere is totally insufficient" (Wilson et al., 1973).

Christian Children and Marriage: It is the duty of the parents to guide their children on how to go about their marriage. Christian parents should desire the good of their children only in the Lord, and they should consider for a while whether they are giving their children to a child of God or irresponsible person. Furthermore, Paul charged the Christians in his epistle to the Corinthians (i.e.) first 7:36-40 by saying marriage is not to be insisted upon, it is too common in many circles, especially in the case of the female and thus it becomes prolific of

evil. Doubtless with an eye to the present distress, but assuredly in opposition to any forcing of the inclination, and to any notion that marriage is universally described it is not the parents wish so much as the child's wishes should be consulted. spheres should be opened for unmarried children. This has been done largely in recent years, but a greater extension is one urgent need of the times consent to marriage is not to be capriciously withheld vs.36, the dread of refusal of consent has often led to rash acts of marriage involving much subsequent suffering parents often blame their children for marrying without consent when they should blame themselves for withholding it. Some parents seem to think that their covariance and predilection are the chief things concerned, as though it were their marriage and not their children (Smith, 2018).

But the researchers' submissions here are that at times children's wishes should be consulted .as to allow them to get married to whom they love not whom their parents love "Marriage unites the couple as a principle for handing on human life and they should procreate in responsibility. Since a human person's life is complex, children grow and develop over many years. Thus the responsibilities of parents are similarly complex and prolonged, though it may be said, in general terms that they should raise their children to be good people and good citizens, and good Christians it is important to treat children fairly and to exercise parental authority within its limits parents have special responsibilities for their children's religious formation and should see to it that Christian principles shape all other aspects of their upbringing" (Gresh, 2019) should also see to it that "the sacrament consecrates them for the strictly Christian of their children that is to say, it called upon them to share in the very authority marriage and love of God the Father and Christ the shepherd. And in the motherly love of the church, and it enriches them with wisdom counsel, fortitude and all the other gifts of the holy spirit to help the children in their growth as human beings and as Christians" (Hendrick, 2018). Parents should rather pray for their children marriage.

Parents should not Expose their Children to Danger: Many parents are found to abuse their children for their benefit, what about the child's rights? Many parents consider not. They abort their children; some cook and eat off their children the case with the Samarian women just for them to survive. What about the children? 2 Kings 6:26-28.Without human sympathy they were into the banking system with their children bring yours today and my tomorrow. Get to think of father Abraham who claims to "love his son Gen 22:2 yet Abraham thinks nothing of his son putting him through the trauma that most have been involved in, is this not child abuse oblivious to such a reality? If so, does that make the issues of child abuse irrelevant?" (Kimmel, 2019). Where is his seal of questioning God in Gen.18 about how to save Lot? Yet he opened room for human sacrifice.

"Parents certainly do their share in jeopardizing the life and health of their children … one thinks Joseph whose life was threatened from within his household Gen.37. Joseph's brothers became jealous of their father's favoritism, first they conspire to kill him instead they sell him into slavery, also Benjamin treated like a pawn amid familial struggle Gen. 43-44 one thinks of Lot's virgin daughter Gen.19 endanger them by offering them to men of Sodom for sexual pleasure …that they are betrothed and yet unmarried suggests that they are youth Deut.22:23-29 Later he has sexual relations with each of them even if under the influence of alcohol what goes around comes around" (Leman, 2018).

This happened because "the place of children has been surely neglected in a centuries-long focus on the trusting response of Abraham to God's testing" (Samuel, 2008) parent need to be reminded that the well-being of their children is in their hands because we can see it in the old testament and new testament how parent express care for their children's wellbeing approaching Jesus, prophets and the apostles 2 Kings 4:1-7,4:19-36, John 4:46-54, Matt.8:5;15:21-28;17:14-18;20:20-23 the quality of children is determined by the care and protection children receive or fail to receive from their parents.

Parental Discipline: the scripture employed all parent to discipline their children whenever they are in error at times. Discipline your child and he will give you rest; he will bring delight to your soul Prov.29:17 Train a child in the way he should go; when he is old, he will not depart from it. Prov.22:6 but then why discipline Hebrew 12:5-11 Our father in heaven is an example to parents in chastening children and this is done for their benefit v.10, it causes the child to respect their parent and authority in general v.9 and it teaches them to act righteously v.11, Prov.6:20-23, 1:8,15:5,23:22, Ephesians 6:2,3, Matt. 15:4 Col.3:20, 2 Tim.3:1-2 Romans 1:30-32, Deut.21:18-21, Acts 5:29, Romans 12:17-21correction aimed at the avoidance of moral fault and the acquisition of moral insight, when "discipline is administered rightly is truly in the child's best interest not just the parents or the family's discipline is an essential investment in the child future it is the mean to his maturity and moral integrity" (Samuel, 2008).

Discipline needs to be done with the act of love. It should not be done because the parents lost their temper or to satisfy a loss of power Prov.22:15, 19:18, 13:14, 23:13-14. The rules of discipline should be consistent. Inconsistency provokes the child to anger Eph. 6:4 The father and mother should agree and work in harmony Matt.12:25 and the children must be treated fairly and justly not favoritism James 2:8-9 Parents who do not discipline their children will be held accountable by God. Eli was once a living example 1samue.3:13 Instead of following societies on ungodly philosophies about child rearing, Christians need to fight those concepts with every upright weapon at their disposal families that follow God's will are the ones that will truly be blessed Col. 3:21. Matt.23:23.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- "For all parents aiming to raise their children in a manner that honours God and fosters their well-being, there is need to use the Bible as a foundation for more effective parenting.
- In a landscape where parenting advice is abundant yet often conflicting, the Bible shines as a guiding light full of hope. The Scriptures underscore the significance of discipline, communication, and faith in nurturing children who love and devote themselves to God.
- What makes the Bible unique is its practicality and ease of understanding. It provides countless examples and stories that help parents implement biblical teachings in everyday scenarios. Whether you are a new parent or an experienced one, the Bible serves as a vital resource that will uplift, equip, and motivate you to be a more loving and effective parent.
- The Holy Bible should be used by all parents, irrespective of their backgrounds or beliefs. The principles found within it are ageless and universal, benefiting any family striving to foster a deeper, more loving connection with one another and with God.

CONCLUSION

In summary, Christian parenting demands a dedication to nurturing our children in a way that is rooted in the Bible and filled with love. Let us aim to be purposeful and steady in our

approach to parenting, striving to honour God and His vision for our children's futures. May we responsibly care for the invaluable blessing of children that God gave us.

Ultimately, Christian parenting focuses on guiding children to love and serve God. Let us pledge to pray for our children, seek God's wisdom and guidance in how we parent, and rely on Him to work in and through the lives of our children. May we faithfully present Christ to our children as model thus leading them to the love and salvation found in Jesus Christ.

As we endeavour to nurture our children in a scripturally sound and affectionate way, let us keep in mind that Christian parenting is a journey rather than a final goal. Let us pledge to be purposeful and consistent in our approach to parenting, aiming to honour God and His plan for our children's lives. May we faithfully acknowledge the precious gift of children that God has entrusted to us.

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