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**Portrait of a Gospel Mom
I Samuel 1 and 2**

Times have changed, and cultural ideologies change:

In the 1970's: Atheists were killing people
The government was corrupt
And we thought that all the world needed was to all be converted to a market economy - Free enterprise would solve the world's issues

In the 2000's: Religious zealots are the ones killing people
And now business is what's corrupt
And we are led to think that all the world needs is to be converted to a socialist economy - Redistribution of wealth will solve the world's problems

Families have changed, from nuclear and "normal" as the face of America, to now any grouping of people can constitute a family, with 54% of American households led by one parent (78% of African-American families)

And parental expectations have changed - exposing an idolatry we had not previously considered: the idolatry of children, our children

As parents, we ask questions like:
Are my children happy?
Am I happy being a parent?
Do they each love me?
Are they going to be successful?
Will they affirm me, or embarrass me?

When our kids become adults we want to keep them close by - but that selfish desire can crush them
But if we allow them to move away, we think it might crush us

Sometimes we find ourselves parenting our children out of continuing to bow down to what we think are our own parent's expectations, and many times we become our own parents

Sometimes we mistake spiritual gifts for spiritual fruit
And we make the mistake of teaching moralism as authentic gospel living

Moralism assumes an unhappy God.
Moralism tells us that we need to continue to be good so God will be good to us; so we teach our children a code of "do's" and "don'ts."

For too many of us our children's grades, the number of friends they have, their achievements, recognition and awards, the number of college scholarship offers they receive, and their productivity as adults has direct bearing on our own self-esteem

We want them to produce so we can feel good about ourselves

Our children can become our false gods

Tim Keller says this: One day one of you will be looking at the other in a coffin. Will your god die at that time?

Let's look at another kind of parenting: a gospel-centered Mom

1 Samuel 1:1-11 *there was a certain man of Ramathaim-zophim of the hill country of Ephraim whose name was Elkanah the son of Jeroham, son of Elihu, son of Tohu, son of Zuph, an Ephrathite. He had two wives. The name of the one was Hannah, and the name of the other, Peninnah. And Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children. No this man used to go up year by year from his city to worship and to sacrifice to the Lord of hosts at Shiloh, where the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were priests of the Lord. One the day when Elkanah sacrificed, he would give portions to Peninnah his wife and to all her sons and daughters. But to Hannah he gave a double portion, because he loved her, though the Lord had closed her womb. And her rival used to provoke her grievously to irritate her, because the Lord had closed her womb. So it went on year by year. As often as she went up to the house of the Lord, she used to provoke her. Therefore Hannah wept and would not eat. And Elkanah, her husband, said to her, Hannah, why do you weep? And why do you not eat? And why is your heart sad? Am I not more to you than ten sons? After they had eaten and drunk in Shiloh, Hannah rose. Now Eli the priest was sitting on the seat beside the doorpost of the temple of the Lord. She was deeply distressed and prayed to the Lord and wept bitterly. And she vowed a vow and said, O Lord of hosts, if you will indeed look on the affliction of your servant and remember me and not forget your servant but will give to your servant a son, then I will give him to the Lord all the days of his life, and no razor shall touch his head.*

It's okay and perfectly right to desire children

1 Samuel 1:12-18 *as she continued praying before the Lord, Eli observed her mouth. Hannah was speaking in her heart; only her lips moved, and her voice was not heard. Therefore Eli took her to be a drunken woman. And Eli said to her, How long will you go on being drunk? Put your wine away from you. But Hannah answered, No, my lord, I am a woman troubled in spirit. I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I have been pouring out my soul before the Lord. Do not regard your servant as a worthless woman, for all along I have been speaking out of my great anxiety and vexation. Then Eli answered, Go in peace, and the God of Israel grant your petition that you have made to him. And she said, Let your servant find favor in your eyes. Then the woman went her way and ate, and her face was no longer sad.*

Trusting God for his best and for his glory is gospel living

1 Samuel 1:19-20 *They rose early in the morning and worshiped before the Lord; then they went back to their house at Ramah. And Elkanah knew Hannah his wife, and the Lord remembered her. And in due time Hannah conceived and bore a son, and she called his name Samuel, for she said, I have asked for him from the Lord.*

Children are a gift

For to have children shows us our relationship with the Father

Psalm 103:13 *as a father shows compassion to his children,
so the Lord shows compassion to those who fear him*

1 Samuel 1:21-28 *The man Elkanah and all his house went up to offer to the Lord the yearly sacrifice and to pay his vow. But Hannah did not go up, for she said to her husband, As soon as the child is weaned, I will bring him, so that he may appear in the presence of the Lord and dwell there forever. Elkanah her husband said to her, Do what seems best to you; wait until you have weaned him; only, may the Lord establish his word. So the woman remained and nursed her son until she weaned him. And when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, along with a three-year-old bull, an ephah of flour, and a skin of wine, and she brought him to the house of the Lord at Shiloh. And the child was young. Then they slaughtered the bull, and they brought the child to Eli. And she said, Oh, my lord! As you live, my lord, I am the woman who was standing here in your presence, praying to the Lord. For this child I prayed, and the Lord has granted me my petition that I made to him. Therefore I have lent him to the Lord. As long as he lives, he is lent to the Lord. And he worshiped the Lord there.*

Children belong to God - they are only entrusted to the parent for a period of time

1 Samuel 2:1-11 *And Hannah prayed, and said, My heart exults in the Lord; my horn is exalted in the Lord. My mouth derides my enemies, because I rejoice in your salvation. There is none holy like the Lord: for there is none besides you; there is no rock like our God. Talk no more so very proudly, let not arrogance come from your mouth; for the Lord is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed. The bows of the mighty are broken, but the feeble bind on strength. Those who were full have hired themselves out for bread, but those who were hungry have ceased to hunger. The barren has borne seven, but she who has many children are forlorn. The Lord kills and brings to life; he brings down to Sheol and raises up. The Lord makes poor and makes rich; he brings low and he exalts. He raises up the poor from the dust; he lifts the needy from the ash heap to make them sit with princes and inherit a seat of honor. For the pillars of the earth are the Lord's, and on them he has set the world. He will guard the feet of his faithful ones, but the wicked shall be cut off in darkness, for not by might shall a man prevail. The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken to pieces; against them he will thunder in heaven. The Lord will judge the ends of the earth; he will give strength to his king and exalt the horn of his anointed.*

Then Elkanah went home to Ramah. And the boy was ministering to the Lord in the presence of Eli the priest.

God is sovereign. God is worthy of all praise and all worship

Mom and Dad are tasked with the same job - to raise up the children in the Lord
Dad's are teachers and leaders
Mom's are teachers and nurturers and care givers
Both Moms and Dads are examples: of one thing or another

How can we then raise our children up in the Lord?

Deuteronomy 6:4-6 *hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart.*

You cannot raise your children to be something you are not. Your children will only learn to love and be devoted to Jesus to the extent they know you love and are devoted to Jesus

Deuteronomy 6:7-9 *You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on our hand, and they shall be as frontlet between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.*

You invite Jesus into every aspect of your life at home, your life with your kids
You invite Jesus to be a normal, present and frequent part of your conversations.

Ephesians 5:1-2 *therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.*

You display what a gospel life looks like to your kids

1 Samuel 1:10 *she was deeply distressed and prayed to the Lord and wept bitterly*

You pray constantly for your children. And when they move out someday you find yourself praying for them more than you ever did before

1 Samuel 1:22 *but Hannah did not go up, for she said to her husband, "As soon as the child is weaned, I will bring him, so that he may appear in the presence of the Lord and dwell there forever"*

A child is not born to validate the parent - It is not the child's responsibility to serve as a false idol so the parent can have a positive self-esteem

Children, and therefore Parenthood is a gift from God, the giver of all good gifts
But being without children can also be a gift
Like marriage is a gift, but singleness can also be a gift

Parenthood teaches us humility and dependency
God uses our role as parents to reform our own heart for the gospel

If you are not a Mom, but want to be a Mom, let us pray with and for you.

Psalm 37:4 *Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart*

If your own Mom was an example of the gospel to you - praise God, and thank your Mom

If your own Mom was not a positive example of the gospel to you - praise God, that you now know the difference...and that you can now be the difference, as the gospel makes you different, to God's own glory