

The Worth *of* A Child

Dan Brewster

Foreword by Roy B. Zuck

THE CHILDREN & FAMILIES IN THE BIBLE SERIES
Book 1



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April 2014, Penang, Malaysia

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Design and production by Kok Chik Bu

Cover photos courtesy of Compassion International

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Contents

Acknowledgements	1
Foreword	2
Introduction to the Series	3
How to Use this Booklet.....	3
The Worth of a Child	5
Study 1: God’s View of Children.....	7
Study 2: Jesus’ Heart for Children	10
Study 3: The Sacredness of Unborn Life	15
Study 4: Parents in the Bible <i>Wanted</i> Children	22

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

THE IDEA FOR these studies came from a reading of the excellent book *Precious in His Sight* by Roy B. Zuck (Baker Books, Grand Rapids, Mi., 1996). Much of the material in the early versions then was based on gleanings from *Precious in His Sight*, and I am grateful to Dr. Zuck for permission and encouragement to explore in his book for those insights and principles. The book called *Children and Childhood in the Bible Revised Edition* was a result of that exploration.

This series of booklets uses much of the material in *Children and Childhood in the Bible*, but in this shorter “booklet” format. The material in each one can be covered in a day or so of group or individual study. I am grateful to Dr. Rosalind Tan, the Director of the Holistic Child Development Institute (HCDI) in Penang for the idea and the inspiration to rework the material in this smaller, booklet format. The booklets are in response to her passion to create materials very suitable for “grassroots” pastors, “lay” leaders, children’s workers and care givers. Thanks Rosalind!

Dan Brewster

I am very grateful once again for the expert assistance to my friend Ms. Lim Siew Ling. She contributed substantially to the creation of this Series. Her comprehensive familiarity with Scripture and wealth of pastoral and ministry experience gives her a marvelous ability to both explore and interpret Scripture and also to craft appropriate and provocative reflection questions. Thank you very much, Siew Ling!

And once again, I have been helped by my friend Mr. Kok Chik Bu in the overall design, look and feel of the books in this series. As has been the case with his work on other Holistic Child Development (HCD) resources, his creative touch has fashioned the attractive and readable style and format of the book. Thanks Chik Bu!

Finally, and not least, I am grateful to Compassion International, the organization in which I have served for nearly 30 years now, for the opportunity to spend time exploring the Word of God as part of my work to develop resources like these.

FOREWORD

“WHY BE CONCERNED with children? They can’t learn spiritual things or contribute in any way to the life of the church.”

Unfortunately this is the view of many Christians. They think of children as having no interest in the Bible.

But nothing could be further from the truth! Children are sensitive to spiritual things and are open to the gospel. Surveys show that many Christian leaders came to Christ for salvation at an early age. And an individual’s personality is largely formed by the time he is six years old. A person’s life as an adult is largely determined in his early formative years.

Jesus had an intense interest in children. He brought back to life three people, two of whom were children. He encouraged children to come to Him, and He used

them as an illustrations of simple trust in Him. His interest in children is seen in His taking them in His arms and blessing them.

Thus, to neglect children is to run counter to what the Bible says about them.

This Study Series will enable you to explore many aspects of ministry to children, including ways to teach them, parental responsibilities, and theological issues related to children. Each Study introduces you to statements in the Scriptures about children, gives you key insights on the topic of that chapter, and asks you “reflection questions” that encourage you to think of the implications of the issues in that lesson.

May you be blessed as you study about and minister to children, all of whom are “precious in His sight.”

Roy B. Zuck, Th.D.

Senior Professor Emeritus of Bible Exposition,
Dallas Theological Seminary, and editor, *Bibliotheca Sacra*
(Sadly, Dr. Zuck passed away in March, 2013)

INTRODUCTION TO THE SERIES

THE PURPOSE OF this booklet and the others which follow is to help learners dig deep into the Word to see what it says about children and childhood. But more importantly, they are to create understanding of the worth and significance of children, and their role in pointing to and illustrating Christ's "upside down" Kingdom..

Some people have said that the Bible has little to say about children and childhood. But in fact the Scriptures are *full* of references to children. These booklets include hundreds of verses relating to the child. Moreover, these studies show that children play a significant role in the unfolding of the message of the Bible – that God loves and protects them; that they are extremely perceptive in understanding the things of God; and that God often deploys them as His messengers and models – often it seems when adults may have been too corrupt and deaf to His calling.

The Booklets in this Series are:

Book One: The Worth of a Child

Book Two: Family Life in Bible Times

Book Three: Nurture and Training of Children

Book Four: Parental Modeling and Generational Consequences

Book Five: Child Protection

Book Six: Theological Significance of Children

Note: A bibliography for the Series can be found at the end of Book Six.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOKLET

EACH OF THESE booklets contains four studies on a specific theme with a variety of Bible verses or reflections about children. The studies are structured as follows:

Topic Overview: A brief introduction to the topic which presents real life case-studies or scenarios as a backdrop to the Scriptures and reflections of the study.

What Does the Bible Say? Here you will be asked to go to specific Bible passages to explore what the Bible says about children and understand more of God's heart for them.

Key Insights or Principles: For those Bible passages, you may find new insights or key learning related to the theme. It may be that the number and breadth of Scriptures on a topic surprises or impresses you. Or you may be convicted anew with the biblical perspective on some topics which contrast sharply with the perspectives we see today and hear about in the news. Write down the main biblical principle, as well as your personal observations and gleaned knowledge about the Scriptures on the topic.

Reflection Questions: This section asks you to apply the key biblical principles to your **personal life**, the **culture** in which you live, and the **context** of your society and circumstances in your own country. They may require more inquiry, research and personal reflection. There are no right or wrong answers to the reflection questions, but they will provide the basis for interesting and lively discussions about how children are viewed and treated in your own personal life, context, and culture/country. Ideally these questions should be discussed in groups. The discussions will draw you deeper into the biblical material, and point to the contemporary significance of the topic.

Where I have quoted Scriptures, I have used the New International Version. However, as you are doing your studies, you may profit from using a variety of versions if available. Also, while often single verses are given; good Biblical scholarship requires you to read the Scriptures around the verses, to have a fuller understanding of the historical settings, and contexts of the Scriptures.

Note: There are frequent references especially to Dr. Roy Zuck's outstanding book *Precious in His Sight*,¹ which inspired this Workbook. In some places we have sought to include more of Dr. Zuck's fine analysis and development of the many themes he addresses in his book. However, the references to his book can surely not do it justice. I highly recommend that learners using these booklets get a copy of *Precious in His Sight* which will add immeasurably to the depth and breadth of the topics explored here.

Whether you are a front-line childcare worker, a church or organization leader, I trust that these booklets will encourage, inspire, and provide you broad new insights about children and childhood in the Bible—and about your ministry and mission priorities.

¹ Roy B. Zuck, *Precious in His Sight-Children & Childhood in the Bible* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1996).

THE WORTH OF A CHILD

ADULTS ACROSS THE world differ in their perspectives about the worth of children in as many different ways as there are cultures, languages, and countries! At the beginning of Roy Zuck's book, *Precious in His Sight*, he presents the following contrasting common attitudes about children. Do these statements describe your feelings about children?²

"Children are such a nuisance! I don't like to be around children because they are so demanding and annoying."

"My wife and I don't plan to have children. We can't be tied down to parenting, which demands such time, energy, attention, and money."

"I'm pregnant, but I don't want a baby. So I'll simply get an abortion."

"How can I have time for child-rearing when my career demands so much time?"

"Changing diapers, getting up in the night with a sick child, helping kids with homework are not for me. I'd rather be child-free."

Or do these more accurately reflect your feelings about children and childhood?³

"Children are so much fun! They are full of life and energy, and are so eager to learn new things."

"I enjoy the way children respond so readily to love and attention."

"Raising kids is one of the greatest rewards in all of life."

"It's a delight to teach children. They are so open to spiritual truths."

The two extremes are common among people in many cultures today. Interestingly, similar attitudes about children were apparently common in biblical times as well. We know from the well-traveled passage in Mark 10:13, that Jesus' disciples certainly didn't think children were worthy of taking His valuable time. But Jesus had a different attitude. Mark says Jesus was indignant – very displeased and told the disciples in no uncertain terms that they were to let the children to come to Him, and He demonstrated His love by taking the children in His arms and blessing them (Mark 10:16).

That contrast provides a good starting point for our reflections on what the Bible says about children, and how our churches, communities, societies and cultures view the worth and role of children. Our first studies will zero in on the inherent worth of children, regardless of their gender, status, health or any other external characteristics. You will discover that the TRUTH of Scripture speaks to the highest standard, God's standard—every child is a precious gift from God!

Let's begin.

² Roy B. Zuck, *Precious in His Sight – Childhood & Children in the Bible* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1996), p.11.

³ Ibid.

STUDY 1: GOD'S VIEW OF CHILDREN

■ Introduction

WHAT DOES THE Bible say about the origin and importance of children? The Bible's perspectives about children are both explicit and implicit. They provide the basis of how children should be treated and valued. They form the core foundation from which all child development agencies should view and structure their work. They are eternal principles that speak to our conscience daily in our personal encounters with children.

Let us explore the origin, importance, formation, images and perception of children both in the Old and New Testaments.

For Further Exploration:

Roy B. Zuck, *Precious in His Sight*, pp. 11-15, 39-44 and 53-56.

■ What Does the Bible Say?

1. READ: Genesis 1: 27-28.

What do these verses say about the origin of humanity and where did the idea of children begin?

2. READ: Deuteronomy 14:1-2 and Isaiah 66:13.

How does God's relationship with Israel in the Old Testament compare to a father's and mother's relationship with their children?

3. Describe how children are valued in these passages:

References	The Value of Children
Psalm 8:2	<i>The praises of children and infants are precious and powerful in God's eyes. He uses them to silence the enemies.</i>
Psalm 34:11	
Psalm 131:2	
Isaiah 9:6	

■ *Key Insights or Principles:*

■ *Reflection Questions:*

1. God's first command to Adam and Eve concerns children. What was it? How does this reflect the importance of children in families and society? Is the command still valid today? Why or why not?

2. In *Precious in His Sight*, Zuck notes the significant number of Bible references about children viz. “child”. (121 times); “children” (448 times); “childhood” (4 times), and “sons” (2700 times). There are more than 1,400 references to children, childhood, parenting and other matters related to children in the Bible.

What are the implications of this number of references?

3. How are children viewed in your family and community in the past and recent times? Are they treated as a blessing or a burden? Has this changed in the past generation? Explain by citing examples.

4. How might studies on biblical perspectives of children affect the perception of children in your culture? What role can you play to correct wrong perceptions and treatment of children in your culture? (Think of one or two examples in terms of your home, school, and community.)

STUDY 2: JESUS' HEART FOR CHILDREN



Jesus and the Children



Compassion Reception area

■ *Introduction*

THE NEW TESTAMENT shows Jesus has a high regard for children. Believing that Jesus is fully God and fully human, we can discover in the New Testament, God's heart for children through Jesus. Jesus' own words and attitudes about children set the stage for this set of verses. Remember the many incidents involving children in the life of Jesus, e.g. the boy who offered Jesus the loaves and fishes (John 6), the son of the widow of Nain (Luke 7), and the daughter of the Canaanite woman (Matthew 15:21-28). These are just a few examples. We may not know the names of these children but their very presence in the biblical record lets us know that they were significant to Jesus. Though it is often overlooked, we cannot deny the prominent role of children in the life and ministry of Jesus.

Jesus loved to have children around him. "While few of the world's great religious leaders have had little regard for children, Jesus was different. Not only did he welcome them; he even used them to

teach adults some essential spiritual lessons!"⁴

In the spacious lobby of the international headquarters of the organization for which I work, are several slightly larger than life size bronze figures. The main figure is Jesus, seated on a rock, with a child on his lap playing with his short beard, and the laughing Jesus has a big smile on his face. In the setting around him, there comes another little girl, bringing Jesus a flower, and a boy with a lamb, shyly coming towards him. A playful little bronze dog is eagerly wagging his tail, joining in on the fun. But off in the distance (over by the front door), is another bronze figure of a little Asian boy, pulling his mother along with one hand, and excitedly pointing to Jesus with the other. The message is clear. The little Asian boy wants his mother to come meet this gentle man who so enjoys playing with the children.

⁴ Zuck, p.201, quoting from Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to St. Luke: An Introduction and Commentary*. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1974), p.226.

This picture depicts our understanding that Jesus did indeed have time for the children, and that the children themselves are often spiritual resources, influential in bringing their parents to Christ. Especially in non-Christian contexts, children are often the first to understand the love of Jesus. They may be the ones who learn to pray for their parents. Because the children may be learning to read, while the parents are illiterate, the children may be the ones who are able to tell or read the stories of Jesus to their parents, and tell them of his healing power. Compassion's programs are replete with stories of just

those things happening. Countless parents testify that it was their children who first heard of the Jesus, and who influenced them to make a decision to follow Him.

There is no better way to understand Jesus' attitude and heart for children than to reflect on how Jesus interacted with the children, what he said about the children, and the lessons he taught about and through children. Let's see how they fared.

For Further Exploration:

Roy B. Zuck, *Precious in His Sight*, pp. 201-216.

■ *What Does the Bible Say?*

1. For each spiritual truth Jesus taught the adults, list the things the adults must do or avoid with regard to children (the first is done for you):

Spiritual Truths For Adults	References	Things To Do or Avoid with regard to children
Enter God's Kingdom	Matthew 18:1-3 cf: Mark 9:33-34; 36; Luke 9:46-47.	<i>Become like little children.</i>
Be great in God's eyes	Mark 9:35 cf: Matthew 18: 4; Luke 9:48b.	
Demonstrate our welcome of Jesus	Luke 9:48 cf: Matthew 18:5; Mark 9:37	
Avoid God's Judgment	Matthew 18:6-7 cf: Mark 9:42; Luke 17:1-2	
Identity with God's plans	Luke 18:16 cf: Matthew 18: 10,14; Mark 10:14	
Avoid rebuke from Jesus	Mark 10: 13-16 cf: Matthew 19:13-14; Luke 18:15-16	

2. The following passages in the Synoptic Gospels record the disciples trying to hinder children from going near to Jesus. What was Jesus' reaction to the disciples?

Synoptic Gospels	Jesus' Reaction
Matthew 19:13-15	
Mark 10: 13-16	
Luke 18: 15-17	

3. Jesus' heart and attitude towards children is also revealed by the fact that He healed many of them. Who are the children Jesus healed and what types of sicknesses were they were healed from?

References	Children	Sicknesses
John 4:43-54	<i>A royal official's son</i>	<i>"Dying" – no specific illness</i>
Matthew 17: 14-18 cf: Mark 9: 17-27 Luke 9: 37-43	<i>A boy belonging to a man in the crowd</i>	<i>Demon-possession</i>
Mark 5:21, 35-43 cf: Matthew 9:18-19; 23-26		
Luke 7:11-17		

■ *Key Insights or Principles:*

■ *Reflection Questions:*

1. Discuss what Jesus was teaching His disciples who were striving for position and greatness. What principles was Jesus teaching them when He placed the child in the midst of the discussion?

2. Compare and contrast the attitudes of Jesus with the pastors and church leaders you know today. Are their attitudes more like those of Jesus or more like the disciples? Why? Give examples.

3. In your context, do children have opportunities to serve or respond to altar calls for salvation, healing or prayer. Why or why not?

4. How can we apply the above principles learned from Jesus with regard to children in our church context today?

STUDY 3: THE SACREDNESS OF UNBORN LIFE

■ Introduction

FEW SOCIAL ISSUES in recent times have provoked such passionate support and condemnation as the matter of abortion. The contending issue is: "When does life begin?" The "Pro-Choice" camp (pro-abortion really) would have us believe "that the foetus is not a person and that, therefore, a woman has a legal and moral right to end a pregnancy if she so chooses."⁵ They argue further that every child should be a *wanted* child, and that aborting an unplanned or "inconvenient" unborn child is only being responsible and preventing the likelihood of future neglect or mistreatment. Surely, such a stance trivializes all human life and ultimately demeans the child. The child is denied the basic right to be born or to exist.

Interestingly, but tragically, "pro-choicers" have made themselves as gods. If the mother wants a baby, then the foetus is a child. If not, then it is just a piece of tissue which can be done away with.

Since the United States Supreme Court gave women the legal right to abort their unborn babies in 1973, more than 50 million unborn babies have been aborted in the U.S. And each year, in the United

States, 1.3 million⁶ unborn babies die as a result of their "Pro-Choice" mothers. Similar statistics could be cited for many nations around the world. In some countries, abortion is almost assumed. One worker in Ukraine was asked by a new Christian, "What is the Christian way to have an abortion?"

We have seen that God forms children in the womb. In this study, we will also see that God called individuals *even while still in the womb*. Let us revisit these and other biblical passages with the question of abortion specifically in mind, and once again learn from the pages of Scripture.

For Further Exploration:

Roy B. Zuck, *Precious in His Sight*, pp. 71-81.

⁵ Zuck, *Precious in His Sight*, p.71.

⁶ The 1.3 statistic is from www.prolifeaction.org/faq/abortionphp/. Their source was as follows: Finer LB and Henshaw SK, Estimates of U.S. Abortion Incidence in 2001 and 2002, Alan Guttmacher Institute, 2005 [PDF], accessed May 17, 2005.

■ *What Does the Bible Say?*

1. Read the following verses: Genesis 30:20; Psalms 127:3; John 1:13. What is implied about the VALUE of human life—both born and unborn?

2. READ Psalm 139:13. What expression is used by the psalmist to describe how we are made in our mother's womb? What other words are used in the following verses to describe the formation of the child in the mother's womb?

Primary Scripture	Descriptive Word(s) for the Formation of the Child
Job 10:8, 9	
Psalms 103:14	
Isaiah 29:16	
Isaiah 64:8	
2. Corinthians 4:7	

3. How do these biblical writers describe themselves in the womb?

Authors of the Bible	References	Descriptions of the child in the womb
Job	Job 3:11,16; 10: 8-11	<i>"why did I not perish at birth and die..." "your hands shaped me and made me.... clothe me with skin and flesh and knit me together with bones and sinews."</i>
David	Psalms 139: 13-16; Psalm 119: 73	
Isaiah	Isaiah 49:5	<i>"he who formed me in the womb"</i>
Jeremiah	Jeremiah 1:5; 20: 17-18	

From the above descriptions, discuss the negative and positive ways men and women view the unborn child in the womb today.

4. Doctrine of Incarnation: Read Galatians 4:4 and Hebrews 2:17. In light of these, discuss Zuck's statement that "If the foetus is not a person, then Jesus Christ, when he was in Mary's womb was not a person." (Zuck, p.77).

5. Doctrine of Original Sin: Read Psalm 51:5. Discuss David's confession: "Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me." Based on David's comments, what do you think this passage says about original sin? What does this reveal about the status of the unborn child?

6. In 1 Samuel 1:11, Hannah made a vow to dedicate her baby to serve the Lord all his life if He grants her a child. How does this verse affirm the status of the unborn child?

7. READ Exodus 21:22-25. This Scripture states that punishment will be meted out to the offender if he causes a pregnant woman to give birth prematurely or inflicts serious injury on either the mother or the unborn child. What does this Mosaic instruction reveal about the status and value of unborn and premature babies?

■ *Key Insights or Principles:*

■ *Reflection Questions:*

1. How do people in your society or culture view abortion? What are the legal aspects of abortion in your country? Discuss the impact of abortion on society and on individual mothers in your country.

2. Do you think there are some legitimate reasons for abortion? What about rape or incest? Defend your answer.

3. If there is a foreknowledge of a severe deformity or incapacity of the developing child in uterus, how does this affect the decisions about abortion?

4. Here are two “biblical” arguments sometimes used by “pro-abortion” groups to justify abortion. How do you respond to each one of these?

- a. Because Adam became a “living being” when God “breathed into his nostrils the breath of life” (Genesis 2:7), a child becomes a living being when at birth he or she begins to breathe.

- b. Personhood begins at birth, because, though the foetus appears human, it is not a human being for it lacks consciousness.

5. Here are three other “pro-abortion” arguments. How do you respond to each of these?

- a. The foetus tissue is part of the pregnant woman and, therefore, is not a separate person.

- b. The woman has the right to do with her body what she wishes.

- c. Abortions are a way of avoiding the bearing of unwanted children.

6. What is the view of different kinds of “birth control” in your culture? Which methodologies are validated and which are controversial?

STUDY 4: PARENTS IN THE BIBLE WANTED CHILDREN

■ Introduction

DID YOU KNOW that there are many couples today in postmodern society who don't want to have children? The family size is shrinking and an increasing number of couples are opting for "child-free" marriages. In fact, there are books written and websites created for those who choose not to have children. According to Wikipedia, quoting author Patricia Cohen, (accessed July 5, 2011), a 2003 U.S. Census study found that a record 19% of U.S. women age 40–44 did not have children (compared with 10% in 1976). Being childless was considered bizarre in the 1950s. "Childfree" couples tend to be more educated, have more management and profession commitments, are less "religious", and live in urban areas.

Throughout biblical history, it is clear the women and men wanted to have children. In fact, God wanted His people to bear children. Recall the first commandment given in Scripture! It was to "be fruitful and multiply!" (Genesis 1:28) Barren Sarah referred to having children as a "pleasure" (Genesis 18:12). Job *delighted* in having his children around him (Job 29:5) and the psalmist refers to the "*happy mother of children.*" (Psalms 113:9)

In biblical history, childlessness was considered a disgrace (Genesis 30:23) and misery (Genesis 29:32, I Samuel 1:11).

Barren women of the Bible were sometimes desperate to have children. Rachel cried: "Give me children or I'll die!" (Genesis 30:1). Also, Hannah of I Samuel 1:7-16, was desperate to have children.

In the 21st century, many married couples are experiencing infertility and childlessness, too. To fill the gap of childlessness, many couples choose to adopt while others contribute to society and are satisfied in roles as foster parents. Zuck points out that "as of 1991, more than one million children were in adoptive families."⁷ Thousands more couples are waiting in line for more babies to be available for adoption."⁸ According to the Adoption Institute, over a quarter of a million children were adopted between 1971 and 2001.⁹ In the U.S.A., most of these children were from Russia and China.

It is interesting to note that the New Testament uses the theme of adoption to illustrate some important theological truths. When we place these two pictures side by side—barrenness and adoption—once again, "the child in our midst" will

⁷ Zuck, quoting the *World Almanac and Book of Facts* 1995 (Mahwah, N.J.; Funk and Wagnall's, 1994), p. 962.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ www.adoptioninstitute.org.

shed some light on our human predicament.

(Note: This study can be a painful one for some men/women who desire children but are unable to do so. It is important to be sensitive to the members of your group who may be wrestling with these concerns.)

For Further Exploration:

Roy B. Zuck, *Precious in His Sight*, pp. 45-53, 96-99.

Michael J. Sandel, "The Case Against Perfection" in *Atlantic Monthly* (April 2004), pp.50-62.

■ What Does the Bible Say?

1. Read the following verses which describe how parents responded to having children. Summarize and write their responses to this news!

References:	Parents	Responses to Having Children
2 Samuel 14:7	A woman from Tekoa	<i>To have an heir, for the child to carry on the family name and have descendants.</i>
Job 29:5	Job	<i>Children were a blessing to be around.</i>
Luke 1:58	Zechariah and Elizabeth	
Genesis 30: 11-13	Leah and Jacob	

2. Read the following verses to discover how these biblical characters felt about their children. List what they did or said about their love for their children:

References:	Parents	Statements on Parents' Love for Children
Old Testament Passages:		
Genesis 21:15-16	Hagar	<i>"I cannot watch the boy die."</i>
Genesis 25:28	Isaac and Rebekah	<i>Isaac loved Esau; Rebekah loved Jacob.</i>
Genesis 37:3; 44:34	Jacob	

Exodus 2:3	Moses' mother	
2 Samuel 12: 15-17;	David	<i>After receiving the judgement from Nathan, David pleaded with God for his child to live. He fasted and spent the nights lying in sackcloth on the ground.</i>
New Testament Passages:		
Luke 8: 41-42	Jairus	
John 4:46-49	Royal Official	<i>He begged Jesus to heal his dying son.</i>

3. The following passages refer metaphorically to “motherhood” or “fatherhood”. God explains His love for us through these metaphors. Comment on the Thessalonian passage below.

References:	Metaphor of “Parents”	How God Loves His Children
Isaiah 49:15	God as spiritual “mother”	<i>Just as an earthly mother cannot forget the baby at her breast nor have no compassion on her child, God will never forget us nor have no compassion on us, His spiritual children.</i>
I Thessalonians 2: 7, 11	Paul and the apostles as spiritual “mother” and “father”	

4. In the Bible, there are many Scriptures which refer to “adoption.” In fact, there are specific biblical characters which were either “fostered” or “adopted.” One child was actually a servant! Read the passages and note some details about these specific children:

References:	Adoptive/ Foster Parents	Child's Name/Circumstances
Exodus 2:5-10	Pharaoh's daughter	Child's name: <i>Moses</i> <i>Moses was spotted by Pharaoh's daughter at the River Nile. She felt sorry for him as he was crying and hired a Hebrew woman (Moses' mother) to nurse him. When Moses grew older, he stayed in the palace with Pharaoh's daughter who took him as her son.</i>
Esther 2:7,15	Mordecai	Child's name:
I Chronicles 2:34-35	Sheshan	Child's name: Jarha

■ *Key Insights or Principles:*

■ *Reflection Questions:*

1. How do you feel about married couples who intentionally opt for a childless marriage? What legitimate reasons might there be for being intentionally childless?

2. While some women today do not want to have children, others, like most of the biblical women, are also desperate to have children. What are some of the ways that “barren” or infertile women seek to do so? What are your thoughts and feelings about having “test-tube” babies, or other means available today to aid in conception?

3. How does culture influence parent’s attitudes and decisions about having children (birthed or adopted)? In your role as a spiritual leader, how can you restore or increase the capacity of parental love and respect for children in your culture?

4. Read the following excerpt from the blog called “Motherhood Is a Calling (And Where Your Children Rank)” by Rachel Jankovic.¹⁰ Discuss where children ‘rank,’ in your society, based on the prevailing priorities of action and attitudes.

Children rank way below college. Below world travel for sure. Below the ability to go out at night at your leisure. Below honing your body at the gym. Below any job you may have or hope to get. In fact, children rate below your desire to sit around and pick your toes, if that is what you want to do. Below everything. Children are the last thing you should ever spend your time doing.

If you grew up in this [Western] culture, it is very hard to get a biblical perspective on motherhood, to think like a free Christian woman about your life, your children. How much have we listened to partial truths and half lies? Do we believe that we want children because there is some biological urge, or the phantom “baby itch”? Are we really in this because of cute little clothes and photo opportunities? Is motherhood a rock-bottom job for those who can’t do more, or those who are satisfied with drudgery? If so, what were we thinking?

5. What is your opinion about child adoption and fostering children? Are these practices common in your culture? Share with your group testimonies about child adoption or fostering children. How can the church support those who decide to embark on adopting or fostering children who need parental nurture and love?

¹⁰ Rachel Jankovic, “Motherhood Is a Calling (And Where Your Children Rank).” July 14, 2011. <http://www.desiringgod.org/blog/posts/motherhood-is-a-calling-and-where-your-children-rank#.Th-UzV85Xp1.facebook>. Accessed July 23, 2011.

6. Due to the HIV/AIDS epidemic, there are countless orphans left behind without parents. What is being done in your culture concerning this issue? How can the Church respond to support the plight of the orphans of HIV/AIDS?

THE CHILDREN & FAMILIES IN THE BIBLE SERIES

BOOK 1: The Worth of A Child

This **Study Series** will enable you to explore many aspects of ministry to children, including ways to teach them, parental responsibilities, and theological issues related to children. Each Study introduces you to statements in the Scriptures about children, gives you key insights on the topic of that chapter, and asks you “reflection questions” that encourage you to think of the implications of the issues in that lesson.

May you be blessed as you study about and minister to children, all of whom are “precious in His sight.”

From the Foreword to the Series by Dr Roy B. Zuck

Each of these booklets contains four studies on a specific theme with a variety of Bible verses or reflections about children. The studies are structured as follows:

- **Topic Overview:** A brief introduction to the topic presents real life case studies or scenarios as a backdrop to the Scriptures and reflections of the study.
- **What Does the Bible Say?** Here you will be asked to go to specific Bible passages to explore what the Bible says about children and understand more of God’s heart for them.
- **Key Insights or Principles:** For those Bible passages, you may find new insights or key learning related to the theme.
- **Reflection Questions:** This section asks you to apply the key biblical principles to your **personal life**, the **culture** in which you live, and the **context** of your society and circumstances in your own country.

