

General Topics :: What Does God Call our Children?

What Does God Call our Children? - posted by moreofHim (), on: 2004/8/6 11:45

I know most of you are not mothers but many of you are fathers and/or grandfathers. This article by Nancy Campbell is very wise. I often refrained from using the word "kids" because something in my spirit was not comfortable with that. Yet I would use it sometimes so not to appear too "girlie" or vulnerable. Now this makes perfect sense. I think younger men also have a hard time using the word children instead of kids because they feel it makes them sound weak. Enjoy!

What Does God Call Our Children?

The most common word for 'children' in society today is the word 'kids'. However, is this a word that God has chosen to call our children? No. We don't see it anywhere in the Bible in relation to children. In fact, if you check the 1928 Webster's Dictionary you will not find this word for children. 'Kids' is a modern word that has been added in later years.

I have to confess that for a long time, I also used this word. I did not like the word and never felt that it was right, but I succumbed to the trend around me. Oh, how easy it is to do things just because everyone else is doing them, without thinking whether it is actually the best thing to do.

However, there came a time when I was challenged. A number of years ago I read an article about a sheep farmer in New Zealand. This farmer had diversified into raising goats as well as sheep and he noticed an interesting comparison. The ewes remained close to their lambs, watching them while they fed. He noticed however, that the goats would herd their young together in one spot on a knoll of a hill and leave them while they went off to forage for the day. They did not provide the same individual attention which the sheep gave to their offspring.

Inspiration clicked in my mind as I read this, but before I accepted it, I felt I should check out if it was really true. I asked my father who is an authority on sheep. He was the World champion Sheep Shearer in his younger days and has shorn over a million sheep in his life time.

"Yes," he said, "sheep will never go further than earshot from the little lambs.

I was very challenged. Has 'kids' become the accepted word for children today because we have become a generation of 'goat mothers'? Instead of staying close to their lambs, thousands of mothers are dropping them off at nurseries and day care and going off to fulfill their own careers. This is 'goat mothering'. No wonder we call our children 'kids'!

THE CHARACTER OF GOATS

A lady in Australia, shared with me that she and her husband used to hunt for wild goats for a living in out-back New South Wales. She observed that in the face of danger the nanny goat would leave her little kids unprotected and run from danger to save herself. And yet the sheep, which is a docile animal, will protect its young. While walking around the ewes and lambs with my father in New Zealand a couple of years ago I noticed a little new-born lamb, struggling to its feet for the first time. I crept right up to it to get a picture. The mother ewe was scared of me and ran away a couple of yards, but because of her protective instinct over her lamb, she came right back to guard her baby, even though she was afraid! She was a protecting mother who would not leave her young.

Another thing this lady noticed was that the goats were cowards and would give up easily. When they caught the goats live, they would turn them over onto their backs. She said that the goats did not struggle. Their eight-year-old daughter was able to put her foot on the goat's neck and it waited until they came to tie it up.

A farmer's wife in New Zealand wrote to me, "Over many years we have raised lambs on our land and indeed the sheep are wonderful mothers. This year, for the first time, we had goats and baby kids. One Sunday, as we drove in the front gate we heard a loud bleating and stopped to check. There, on top of a hill were young twin kids, brown and white and

no mother anywhere at all. My eight-year-old son was very worried and kept going back to check. After two hours they were cold and getting weaker so we heated bricks, wrapped in newspaper, and went to warm them and prepare to feed these 'orphans'. When we arrived, there to our amazement, was the mother, who was not dead, but had simply gone off to feed. She must have continued this neglect because not long after, the little white kid was taken by a fox. I'm sure we don't want to be classified as one of these goat mothers!

This is certainly not the kind of character we want to speak into our children either, is it? Do we really want them to be like 'kids'? We used to have a pet goat when we were children, and although we loved "Jilly", she was the biggest problem of our lives. We were always in trouble with neighbors as she would get into their gardens and eat their flowers, vegetables, and trees - and their clothing hanging on the line! We weren't very popular! Goats by nature are independent, proud, rebellious, destructive, and yet cowardly in the face of danger.

THE CHARACTER OF SHEEP

God always likens His people to sheep, who by nature are meek and submissive.

So we thy people of thy pasture will give thee thanks forever. (Psalm 79:13)

Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a flock. (Psalm 80:1)

We are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand. (Psalm 95:7)

All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way. (Isaiah 53:6)

He called his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out... he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. (John 10:1-15)

Even Messiah Himself is likened to a sheep because of His total submission to the Father's will.

He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, and yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. (Isaiah 53:7)

Behold, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. (John 1:29)

GOD SEPARATES THE SHEEP FROM THE GOATS

The people whom God calls 'goats' are those He separates from His company.

I punished the goats: for the Lord of hosts hath visited His flock... (Zech. 10:3)

When God visits His flock, He will separate the sheep from the goats and punish the goats! The goats and the sheep are in the flock together, but only one belongs to Him - the sheep. We noticed this when we visited Israel a number of times and saw the Bedouin shepherds with their little flock of goats and sheep. They both look alike and from a distance you can't tell the difference.

In the church today the goats and sheep are all in the flock together, but there will come a day when God will visit His flock and He will separate the one from the other.

Now then, my flock, I, the Sovereign Lord, tell you that I will judge each of you and separate the good from the bad, the sheep from the goats. (Ezekiel 34:17)

When the Son of man shall come into His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory: and before Him shall be gathered all nations, and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left... and these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal. (Matthew 25:31-46)

Wow! After realizing all this I decided that I didn't want to be part of the goat company. I didn't want to impose the goat character on my children. Our children should be different from the children of the world, anyway. I therefore made an effort to stop using the word 'kids'. Now, I find that it grates upon me when I hear it.

That's the negative, what about the positive? If 'kids' is not the kingdom word for our children, what can we call them? How about using the word, 'children'? The most common word of children in the Bible is 'ben' which literally means, 'the builder of the family name.' That's a name that is worth using, isn't it? Our children need to understand that they are helping to build the family name. This will encourage them to take pride and responsibility in their family. They are part of the team, along with their parents, to build the character and integrity of their family name.

Apart from "children, sons and daughters, offspring, lads and lasses", which are all Biblical names, we find many expressions of God's heart for children. These are wonderful expressions you can use when speaking about your children. Let's discover them together, shall we?

GIFTS

Read Genesis 33:5, 48:9, Joshua 24:3, Ruth 4:13b, 1 Chronicles 25:4-6, Psalm 127:3-5. Our children are gifts from the hand of the Lord. They are given to us by God. We can call them our 'gifts'. What we call our children has an amazing impact upon their attitude and their behavior.

I had a lovely revelation recently from Jeremiah 1:5, Before I formed thee in the womb I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations. As I checked the word "ordained" in my concordance I was amazed to notice that the Hebrew word, "nathan" is a primary root word meaning "to give". God planned Jeremiah's future before he was even conceived! And God gave him as a "gift" to the nations.

Every child has a gift to the world! Isn't that exciting? Our children are not only a gift from God to us, but a gift to others. Each child God has given you is a gift from God to the world. Who knows which one will be another David, or Paul, or Einstein, or Billy Graham! Or anointed and faithful builders, teachers, store managers, or whatever! And of course, godly mothers and fathers. Praise God, the world will never be the same because of these "gifts" that you have brought into the world and will bring into the world.

BLESSINGS

I remember a friend of mine with three difficult little children. She often referred to them as her 'brats'. One day God convicted her that these children were blessings from God and that she should acknowledge them as such. She began to call them her 'blessings'. As she changed her vocabulary, her attitude to her children changed. As she changed, her children changed. Instead of being 'brats', they became the blessings she called them. These children are now grown today and are continuing to bring much blessing to their parents.

HERITAGE OF THE LORD Psalm 127:3

FRUIT OF THE WOMB Psalm 127:3

BELOVED FRUIT OF THE WOMB Hosea 9:16

I love the beautiful names God calls our children. Isn't this a lovely one? Not just the 'fruit of the womb', but the 'beloved fruit of the womb'! The context of this passage is that God was going to destroy the beloved fruit of their womb, because of their continual disobedience. However, it shows how God views children and also how the early Hebrews felt about their children.

Here's what some of the other translations say...

NIV Cherished offspring

RV Beloved children

NAS Precious ones

NEB Dearest offspring

TJB Darlings

NAS Treasures of the womb

REWARDS Psalm 127:3

We feel really special when we have been rewarded, don't we? Imagine how special your children will feel when you call them your 'rewards'.

ARROWS Psalm 128:3

Our task as parents is to polish, sharpen, and prepare arrows to be ready to be sent forth from the bow to hit the mark God has planned for our lives. We are 'arrow polishers'. It gives our children a sense of destiny to know they are arrows, being sharpened and prepared for God's army. This is a great name to call your children. Here are some of the kinds of arrows God wants you to prepare for His purposes: Ready (Psalm 21:12); Polished (Isaiah 49:2); Piercing (Numbers 24:8); Scattering (2 Sam 22:15; Psalm 18:14); Sticking fast (Psalm 38:2); Sharp (Psalm 45:5; 120:4); Bright (Jer 51:11); Light giving (Hab. 3:11); Going abroad (Psalm 77:17); Destroying (Psalm 144:6); Hitting the mark (Jer 50:9); Lightning (Psalm 12:14; 144:6); Shooting (Psalm 64:7); Victory (2 Kings 13:14-19).

OLIVE PLANTS Psalm 128:3

I wonder why God calls our children 'olive plants'. I think I may have a few ideas:

Olive trees were a symbol of blessing to the Israelites. When they saw the new olive shoots coming up around their olive trees, they knew they were blessed. (Deut 6:11; 8:8)

Olive plants have to be cultivated or they will deteriorate and grow wild. So our children have to be cultivated and trained if they are going to grow up in wisdom and stature.

Olive trees are a symbol of beauty. (Hosea 14:6) The Hebrew word 'hod' used for beauty, although sometimes used for men, is mainly associated with God. It means splendor, majesty, glory, and honor. This time it is used of the olive tree. God wants our children to grow up beautiful like the olive tree, revealing to the world the glory and splendor of God.

Olive trees had a purpose. They were not just ornaments. Our children also have a purpose. Before the foundation of the world God chose them and prepared their destiny. It is our role as parents to help them find that destiny and prepare them to walk in it. In Bible days the olive tree was used for:

Building - The two cherubim's within the oracle and the doors into the oracle were made of olive wood. (1 Kings 6:32, 33)
) The purpose of our 'olive plants' is to help build the kingdom of God.

Light - The oil from the olive tree was used for lighting the lamps in the tabernacle. (Ex 27:20, 21; Lev 24:1-4) Let us pray that our 'olive shoots' will grow up to be lights in the midst of the darkness of this world. There are many who are afraid to have children because they fear to bring them into this evil world. But this is the very purpose God wants us to bring forth the godly seed - to be lights in the midst of the darkness! If we hold back the godly seed, evil will increase.

Holy Anointing Oil - (Ex 30:22-33) Let us pray that our 'olive plants' will grow up to be anointed of God to preach good tidings unto the meek; to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound... (Isaiah 61:11)

Food - The Israelites could hardly survive for food without the olive tree. Even in our countries what could we do without olives, olive oil, and all the things that are made from them? May our children "feed many" who are broken and starving and need God. (Prov 10:21)

Olive trees live forever. Well, just about. There is a saying in Israel that the "olive tree never dies". On a number of occasions we have visited the site of the Garden of Gethsemane which is at the base of the Mount of Olives and looks up to the Golden Gate of the City of Jerusalem. This is the gate that the Bible says our Messiah is going to walk through one day. In this garden, there are a number of very old, gnarled olive trees. The guides tell us that they are two to three thousand years old and they are still alive and growing. Our children are also eternal souls who will live forever. Mothering is an eternal career. It is not a waste of time. It lasts into the eons of eternity.

VIGOROUS GROWING PLANTS Psalm 144:12

POLISHED CORNER STONES Psalm 144:12

What a powerful description for our daughters. The corner stone is the most important stone in the building - it is the pivot, foundation, and plumb-line from which everything is measured. We must raise up our daughters to be mothers and homemakers for motherhood is the foundation of society. It is the greatest career they will ever embark upon. Many daughters today are prepared for other careers instead of motherhood. This brings great confusion. When they get married they face a dilemma. "What do I do with this career for which I have been trained?" They think it is more important than motherhood, and therefore don't fully embrace their mothering role. Because of this, they never really enjoy it. They have no understanding of their highest calling.

Motherhood is a dignified role. It is not to be degraded. We should raise our daughters to be who they are, daughters of the King of kings, with beauty, regality, and splendor. Other translations of this scripture say:

NAS "fashioned as for a palace"

TLB "of graceful beauty like the pillars of a palace wall."

NIV "carved to adorn a palace"

SIGNS AND WONDERS Isaiah 8:18

How exciting that our children are 'signs and wonders' for God!

LAMBS Isaiah 40:11

As many mothers change their vocabulary and call their little ones their 'lambs' instead of 'kids', they notice a new attitude toward their children. They experience a fresh tenderness in caring for their offspring. They become more like the Good Shepherd, who does not leave His young, but carries them in His bosom.

WORK OF GOD'S HANDS Isaiah 29:23, 24

How important it is for our children to realize they are not a nuisance to our pursuits in life. They should be reminded they are the 'work of God's hands' and it is our highest privilege in life to teach and train them on God's behalf.

GODLY SEED Malachi 2:15

The greatest way we can please our Father God is to bring forth and nurture a godly seed. This is what God looks for. And he looks for godly parents to produce this godly seed. The Hebrew word that is used for the 'godly' seed is 'elohi m' which is one of the names of God. Isn't that amazing? God wants our children to come forth who are like Him. God wants children who will show who He is to the world. God wants children who are pure and righteous. God wants children who will allow Him to transform them into His image.

GLORY Hosea 9:11

Children are the 'glory' of a nation.

CROWNS Proverbs 17:6

This is a special name for grandchildren

RESTORER OF LIFE Ruth 4:15

NOURISHER OF OLD AGE Ruth 4:15

Of course there are many other special names you can call your children apart from these biblical ones. Each family will have their own pet names, but let's keep to the positive ones. Will you take up this challenge with me? Let's start a revolution and eliminate the word 'kids' from our society!

Re: What Does God Call our Children? - posted by repenter, on: 2004/8/6 12:16

Great insight Chanin!

I too have long disliked the term "kids" for children. I have still used it because I just didn't take a stand on it, but how true it is that if we call our children certain names we shouldn't be surprised when they act like the names we call them. I am really going to endeavour to use better words for children.

I can't remember where I heard or read it, but I have a memory of a comforting, loving, grandmotherly type figure calling her grandchildren her "lambs", and I think it's a rather commonly used word in the UK. Lamb has such a soft, kind, and tender sound to it as opposed to Kid. If the Lord blesses us with little ones I think I would like to use that term. It might do a lot to change us too--it's kind of hard to growl or get angry at your little lambs:-) Thanks for the food for thought!

Re: - posted by moreofHim (), on: 2004/8/6 12:41

Thanks for your comment :-)

My only concern with this article is that I know there are some mothers who are single for whatever reason (no fault of their own) and must work. I don't mean to put down ALL working mothers.

My concern is the motives of the heart. If we are really parenting as sheep or shepherds then we will not be as goats who look out for themselves and their own interests before their own children.

I have a wonderful book by Tedd Tripp called "Shepherding A Child's Heart" which is also a good analogy to how our Heavenly Father parents us.

To tell you the truth, my own recent health problems (being faced with my mortality) has also caused me to treat my children differently. I am much more patient and look at my time with them as more precious. I try to make each day count with them. You never know when your last day with them might be. I want to leave them a wonderful legacy and heritage - a love for the Lord above all things.

In Him, Chanin

Re: - posted by revival9 (), on: 2004/8/6 13:43

Thank you Chanin!

That is a wonderful article!

I will admit to using 'kids' and the generic 'guys' when I'm frustrated with my children. 'Nobody knows' who left the wet towels on the bathroom floor or the dirty socks under the beds. (See Mom standing in the middle of the room, looking at the ceiling and whining 'GUYS!') I am not excusing myself -- it does no good and only frustrates everybody more.

I've always called my girls 'ladies' and my sons 'men' or 'menfolk'. Children respond positively to these labels, and I find myself treating them as ladies and men instead of annoying little children.

Toddlers are 'short persons' to me, instead of little. It helps me remember they are just that: Short PEOPLE, worthy of being talked to and treated as people, not as babies or cute animals. Toddlers and young folk respond warmly when you get down on their level and talk with them as the intelligent human beings they are. They will live up to that standard. If they are talked to like babies and puppies, their behavior will match.

Mrs. Fred

Re: What Does God Call our Children? - posted by Rahman, on: 2004/8/6 14:33

Ok Sister Chanin,

Now you've gone and made me all misty eyed in remembrance of my Dad ...

The following was one of my Dad's favorite scriptures;

Pss.127: Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward. As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth.

And that's exactly how he (and my Mom) made us all feel, that other than God we were the most important in their lives, they sacrificed for us, never called us "kids", and no body else better not either ... Both would tell you quick that they didn't have "goats" ... A lady just recently called my sister 3 year old twins "pups" ... Not a good move on her part! ... 'O) ... We were always referred to as their "children", or as "son" (4 brothers) and "daughter" (one sis) ...

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i, even today, try my best not to get "slangy" in refering to my "children", but i do slip up from time to time, and to my utter dismay if it's in front of my Mom, she'll say, "Boy, you were raised better than that"! ... But i mostly refer to my children as my "daughters", of which i have three, 34, 32 & 30, whom i love dearly ... They are my blessing! ... and occasionally will call me Dad, even tho grown, in the same tone as when the were little girls ... Talk about melting my heart!

PS - Children are a blessing, but equally so are good, godly parents!