

13. Learning the Benefits of Godly Living

In our last topic, we saw that one of our goals, as Christians, should be to help our physical and spiritual children learn to enjoy a clear conscience. We saw that they will experience a clear conscience when they confess their sins as soon as they realize they have sinned. We also saw that a clear conscience will empower them to speak the Word of God with boldness because they are walking in fellowship with Christ. Today, we want to show our physical and spiritual children how to enjoy three other benefits of godly living.

In 1 John 3:22-24, we read, “And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight. And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us commandment. Now he who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. And by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.” In these verses, we see that Christ promises to answer our prayers. We see that He works mightily in our lives as we keep the new commandment. We see that we now have the Holy Spirit abiding in us. These are three very important things to help our physical and spiritual children understand.

First, in verse 22, we see that Christ promises to answer our prayers when we are walking in fellowship with Him. 1 John 5:14-15 says, “Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.” In these verses, we see that He will answer any prayer that is according to His will. This means that we want to help our children learn to pray according to the will of God. For example, in 2 Peter 3:9, we read, “The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.” Here, we see that the desire of the Lord is for all people to come to repentance. As we show our children, by our example, how to pray regularly for the salvation of relatives, friends, co-workers, neighbors, and other acquaintances, we are showing them how to pray according to the will of God.

There are many other things we want to teach our physical and spiritual children about the way the Lord will answer prayer in their lives. Ephesians 6:18-20 says, “Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints--and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.” Paul asked the Ephesian Christians to pray that the Lord would give him the strength to open his mouth boldly to share the Gospel with others. In the same way, our children need to hear us praying regularly for boldness to share the Gospel with others. As they hear us pray for boldness, they will also learn to pray for boldness.

Paul began nearly every letter with a prayer for the Christians who were receiving that letter. We want to help our children learn how to pray for other Christians so they can see the Lord answer their prayers for other Christians. An example of one of the prayers of Paul was his prayer for the

Colossians. In Colossians 1:9-12, it says, “For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy; giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light.” In this prayer, we see that Paul gave us an example of how to pray for other Christians as he prayed the following things for the Christians in Colosse:

1. That they would be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.
2. That they would walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him.
3. That they would be fruitful in every good work.
4. That they would be increasing in the knowledge of God.
5. That they would be strengthened with all might according to His glorious power.
6. That they would experience all patience and longsuffering with joy.
7. That they would have an attitude of thankfulness to the Father.

Second, we see that Christ wants us to show our physical and spiritual children how to obey the new commandment. John 13:34-35 says, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” Here, we see that part of the process of helping our children become disciples is showing them how to love one another as Christ loved them. Christ told the disciples to follow His example. He said to love each other in the same way they had seen Christ love them. This means the only way we can help our children learn to love as Christ loved is to show them that love by our example.

Paul often invited other Christians to follow his example. In 1 Corinthians 4:16, Paul said, “Therefore I urge you, imitate me.” Then, 1 Corinthians 11:1 says, “Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.” Here, we see that Paul gave the Corinthians an example to follow. He also explained to them the example that he was following when he said, “Just as I also imitate Christ.” In the same way, we are to invite our children to imitate our example. However, we will only be effective as we imitate Christ in our own lives. Our children watch us when other people do not see us. As a result, they know if we live what we teach others. If we live what we teach, we are actually showing them how to imitate Christ. They will then learn to imitate Christ by following our example.

We see that Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy taught the new Christians in Thessalonica the same way. 1 Thessalonians 1:6-7 says, “And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit, so that you became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe.” In these verses, we see that the new Christians in Thessalonica had learned how to follow the Lord by following the example of Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy. Then, we see that they used their example to help and encourage other Christians throughout Macedonia and Achaia.

Third, we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand what it means to have the Holy Spirit abiding in us. The night before His crucifixion, Christ told the disciples, in John 14:16-18, “And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever--the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.” Christ wanted the disciples, and all Christians, to know that He has placed the Holy Spirit in our lives so that He is in our lives and we are not alone.

In Ephesians 1:13-14, we read, “In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.” We want to help our children understand that each one of us received the Holy Spirit at the moment we repented of our sin and placed our trust in Christ. At the moment of our salvation, the Lord placed the Holy Spirit in our lives as the down payment and guarantee of our salvation. Christ already purchased our salvation when He died for our sins. Now, the Holy Spirit is placed in our lives as the guarantee until the time we are taken to heaven.

However, the Holy Spirit does more than just guarantee our salvation. Luke 24:49 says, “Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.” Then, in His final words before He returned to heaven, Christ said, in Acts 1:8, “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” The fact that we have the Holy Spirit abiding in our lives is the source of power to be able to witness effectively to others. As we yield our lives to the Holy Spirit, He gives us the power to witness boldly as we tell others about Christ.

The night before His crucifixion, Christ told us another thing the Holy Spirit does for us because He abides in our lives. John 14:26 says, “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.” Here, we see that the Holy Spirit is our Teacher who helps us to understand and remember the things Christ taught. 1 Corinthians 2:12-13 says, “Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.” Here, we see that as the Holy Spirit teaches us, because He compares spiritual things with spiritual, we gain godly wisdom instead of just human understanding.

We want to help our children understand that as they practice godly living, the Lord will answer their prayers, the Lord will give them His strength to obey the new commandment, and the Lord has placed the Holy Spirit in their lives. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your physical and spiritual children learn to enjoy the benefits of godly living.