

# Sincerely Yours

from Covenant Theological Seminary

## Children of the Covenant

*The following two articles discuss the benefits of living in the light of God's covenant.*

### FAITH NOT FEAR

What does a covenant have to do with parenting?

Genesis 17:7 shows God's covenant of grace embraces not only believers, but our children as well. God's promise to Abraham included his children, and his purpose was for Abraham to teach his children to keep the way of the Lord (Gen 18:19). As heirs of Abraham (Rom 4:16), we have the same promise and responsibility. In fact, the Bible addresses our covenant children, not as unbelievers to be converted, but as members of God's household who must walk in faith and obedience. (Eph 6:1-3).

What difference does this covenant make? We can rear our children in faith, not fear. They're the Lord's! We're to treat them with tender, gracious love and discipline, just as God treats us.

Our task is to equip them to grow in faith.

- Our instruction will not be, "here's how to become God's child," but, "here's how to think and act as God's child."
- Our prayers will not so much be that God would save them, but that they would appropriate our instruction into their lives.
- Our confidence will rest not on ourselves but on God's promise to bless our tainted efforts when they are

carried out in faith and prayer.

We will find this confidence severely tested as they grow, but as a pastor, I had similar experiences with people I was once sure were real believers.

What does a covenant have to do with parenting? God's covenant gives us confidence to parent in faith, not fear.

*Dr. Jack Collins  
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#### Would you like to learn more about God's love?

To receive a free copy of President Bryan Chapell's tape message, "Jesus Loves Me" simply call 1-800-264-8064.

# As a Father Loves...

My first child was born in the middle of the day after 20 hours of labor and 33 hours without sleep. After performing the required tests and cleaning, the nurses handed her to us, and we had our moments of bonding. My wife then placed her in my arms and said, "Here, I need to sleep."

Next came the ensuing newborn ministrations. The doctors and nurses undressed and weighed her. This caused a small protest, but she was cooperative. Next they stretched her out for measurements. This produced screams from my daughter, and I began feeling rather protective.

A tube was placed down her nose and then in her mouth to clear out mucous. At this point her tears flowed. Gel was smeared in her nose and eyes, and I almost had to restrain myself from getting hostile. "Hey what are you do-

ing to her? Leave my daughter alone," I thought.

I was surprised by the strength of my emotions. I loved this child and wanted to protect and care for her. "Where did this love come from?" I wondered.

That is what parental love is like. It has nothing to do with the child's merit. The child doesn't earn it. Parental love is **free**.

There are costs in the relationship. We have responsibilities and rules in our family, and some responsibilities can be quite difficult. My youngest will tes-

tify that it is impossible to match all the white socks correctly.

Yet my children work hard to obey the rules and please their father. Why do they do this? Is it in order to **obtain my love**...In order to **obtain a father**? **NO!** They love me **because** I love them. They obey me **because** they love me.

Do we do what God wants us to do to **obtain his love**? Do we do good works to **obtain a Father**? No, we love him **because** he loves us. We obey **because** we have his love.

Why does God love his children? Is it because we merit it? No, God's love is **free**.

*And so we know and rely on the love God has for us.*

*1 John 4:16*

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## Covenant Seminary

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