

## Considering Children

Each of us have distinct strengths, passions and experiences that guide what we do in life. Marriage and parenting are a general calling that applies to most people of faith. And while having children isn't the only purpose for marriage, it is a foundational part of God's call to couples who are able to conceive or willing to adopt. "Be fruitful and multiply" was the first charge God gave His creation in the garden.

When we bear and raise children we cooperate with God's desire for a "Godly seed" (Malachi 2:15). Parenting is also the primary way most of us fulfill the call to lay our lives down for others (Philippians 2:4-8). Producing and guiding the next generation is a mission that stretches us and pushes us to depend on God like few other things in life, all the while revealing and shaping our larger purpose within God's plan for humanity.

### Children are a Blessing

God calls children a blessing (Psalm 127:3-5). Even in the face of what one writer called the "bone-wearying work" of parenting, children provide the joyful reward of marital and parental love. Studies consistently find that children are people's greatest source of happiness.

### How and When Might God Grow Your Family?

Seek the Lord together as a couple as you begin considering this question. Every couple is different and there is no perfect "when" for having children. Couples who marry in their late twenties and then spend a couple of years getting to know each other are often surprised to find that they are already pushing past their prime fertility season when they start thinking about having kids. You may also find that God may want to grow your family in various ways, including adoption and foster care. Prayerfully seek God's wisdom together about how and when to grow your family.

### God is Your Provider

Couples seeking to start their families may feel overwhelmed by a variety of concerns about being pregnant, giving birth and adjusting their marriage, budget and lifestyles. This can be a natural response because children do change everything and push couples beyond themselves. But God is faithful. Paul told the Corinthians, "And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work" (2 Corinthians 9:8). Having children is a good work and gives couples new opportunities to see how God is able to supply what they need.

Trust God and be open to His plan for you and your family. Know that His plans are perfect and beautiful.

## GOING FURTHER - Resources

*Start Your Family: Inspirations for Having Babies* (by Steve & Candice Watters) provides inspiration for those considering children and practical insights from his and her perspectives.

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