

What Does the Bible Say About Having Children?

Genesis

Compiled by Jessica Roldán

Introduction

For married Christian couples, the subject of whether or not to have children, how many children to have, and when, is often approached with deep concern. Birth control in all its forms (hormonal, barrier, surgical, “natural,” etc.) has become prevalent as a way of controlling this area of our lives; very few people today, it seems, choose to follow the path less traveled of *not* using some form of *child-prevention method*. There are opposing voices wrestling for our attention: the voice that says to “be responsible” and take matters into our own hands – which is usually the loudest and most insistent – and the voice that suggests we trust God and leave it up to Him – which is usually drowned out by the common consensus.

But which voice is God’s?

Is this a matter about which we can’t know the truth *for sure*? Has God not spoken on this subject, so that we must each decide this for ourselves without His clear guidance and by depending upon something vague and undependable such as a feeling, a dream, or a sign?

In my personal Bible study, I have come across a surprising *multitude of verses* that speak God’s mind on the topic of having children. So much so that I have had to conclude that we *can* know the truth, that God *has* spoken, and that He *has not* left us to decide this for ourselves but has given us His clear guidance.

What a relief!

And yet, at the same time, for many this can be scary. For, if God’s opinion about this *contradicts* what the culture – and even modern *church* culture – tells us is right, then the only option available for the devoted follower of Christ and His word is a complete transformation: a transformation of our *way of thinking*, first, and a transformation of our *way of living*, second.

What does the Bible say about having children?

This is simply a compilation of verses; I have decided not to state my opinions here beyond this introduction, but to allow you to see the verses in their uncluttered simplicity. If you would like to read more of my personal thoughts on the topic, I kindly invite you to view my blog:

TheHeavenlyHearth.com.

Before you begin browsing through these verses, I would like to humbly offer a word of caution. It's easy to read the Bible through the lens of our own culture's current beliefs. Sometimes when we come across something counter-cultural, we automatically dismiss it as not applying to us. But we must be careful. We must distinguish between that which was *only a cultural practice* of Bible times, and therefore not meant as something God intended for all believers everywhere to follow, and that which is a *timeless principle*, founded in God's creation order and design for the human race as a whole, no matter which culture we find ourselves in.

Also, please note that I have mostly listed Bible verses that deal *strictly* with having children. These verses are *specifically* about **conception, pregnancy, childbirth, the blessing and value of children, and the significance of a multi-generational legacy**. A few verses I thought meaningful to include deal with **God's design and purpose for marriage**, along with what He says about **the sacredness of human life in general**, and **His sovereignty over life, death, and human destiny**.

However, there are many other important verses in Scripture I did not include which mention principles *also* applicable to this topic: principles such as having faith in God's timing, trusting in God's provision, and living our lives with an eternal perspective, for example. I cannot list them all here, but I trust that as you study the Bible in your personal devotions, you will see the connection between those beautiful concepts and the topic we are addressing here.

Because these verses appear listed in isolation, *you the reader* are responsible for looking them up within context in order to fully understand their meaning. Please take time to digest that meaning and to pray for the Holy Spirit's guidance as you seek the truth. I have underlined the portions that I believe are most pertinent.

I pray that the Lord will shed His light on this subject as we study it with a soft and open heart.

~Jessica Roldán

Bible Verses from Genesis

(King James Version)

Genesis 1:27-28

(27) So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

(28) And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

Genesis 2:22-24

(22) And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.

(23) And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.

(24) Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

Genesis 3:16

Unto the woman he [God] said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

Genesis 4:1

And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the LORD.

Genesis 4:25

And Adam knew his wife again; and she bare a son, and called his name Seth: For God, said she, hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew.

Genesis 5:1-5

(1) This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him;

(2) Male and female created he them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created.

(3) And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth:

(4) And the days of Adam after he had begotten Seth were eight hundred years: and he begat sons and daughters:

(5) And all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years: and he died.

[The rest of the chapter continues the genealogy.]

Genesis 9:1, 6-7

(1) And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.

(6) Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.

(7) And you, be ye fruitful, and multiply; bring forth abundantly in the earth, and multiply therein.

Genesis 12:2-3

(2) And I [the LORD] will make of thee [Abram] a great nation, and I will bless thee and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:

(3) And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

Genesis 13:14-16

(14) And the LORD said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward:

(15) For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever.

(16) And I will make they seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered.

Genesis 15:2-6, 18

(2) And Abram said, Lord GOD, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus?

(3) And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir.

(4) And, behold, the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir.

(5) And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be.

(6) And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.

(18) In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates:

Genesis 16:2

And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now, the LORD hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai.

Genesis 16:10-12

(10) And the angel of the LORD said unto her [Hagar, Sarai's maid], I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude.

(11) And the angel of the LORD said unto her, Behold, thou art with child, and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael; because the LORD hath heard thy affliction.

(12) And he will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren.

Genesis 17:1-8

(1) And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.

(2) And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly.

(3) And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying,

(4) As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations.

(5) Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee.

(6) And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee.

(7) And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.

(8) And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.

Genesis 17:15-21

(15) And God said unto Abraham, As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall her name be.

(16) And I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her: yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of people shall be of her.

(17) Then Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, Shall a child be born unto him that is an hundred years old? And shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear?

(18) And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before thee!

(19) And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him.

(20) And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation.

(21) But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year.

Genesis 18:10-14

(10) And he said, I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life; and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son. And Sarah heard it in the tent door, which was behind him.

(11) Now Abraham and Sarah were old and well stricken in age; and it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women.

(12) Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?

(13) And the LORD said unto Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, which am old?

(14) Is any thing too hard for the LORD? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son.

Genesis 18:17-19

(17) And the LORD said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do;

(18) Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?

(19) For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.

Genesis 20:17-18

(17) So Abraham prayed unto God: and God healed Abimelech, and his wife, and his maidservants; and they bare children.

(18) For the LORD had fast closed up all the wombs of the house of Abimelech, because of Sarah Abraham's wife.

Genesis 21:1-2; 6-7

(1) And the LORD visited Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did unto Sarah as he had spoken.

(2) For Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him.

(6) And Sarah said, God hath made me to laugh, so that all that hear will laugh with me.

(7) And she said, Who would have said unto Abraham, that Sarah should have given children suck? For I have born him a son in his old age.

Genesis 21:12-13; 17-18

(12) And God said unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of thy bondwoman; in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice; for in Isaac shall thy seed be called.

(13) And also of the son of the bondwoman will I make a nation, because he is thy seed.

(17) And God heard the voice of the lad [the son of Hagar, the bondwoman]; and the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven and said unto her, What aileth thee, Hagar? Fear not; for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is.

(18) Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him in thine hand; for I will make him a great nation.

Genesis 22:15-18

(15) And the angel of the LORD called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time,

(16) And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son:

(17) That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies;

(18) And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.

Genesis 24:7

The LORD God of heaven, which took me from my father's house, and from the land of my kindred, and which spake unto me, and that sware unto me, saying, Unto thy seed will I give this land; he shall send his angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife unto my son from thence.

Genesis 24:60

And they blessed Rebekah, and said unto her, Thou art our sister, be thou the mother of thousands of millions, and let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate them.

Genesis 25:21-24

(21) And Isaac intreated the LORD for his wife, because she was barren: and the LORD was intreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived.

(22) And the children struggled together within her; and she said, If it be so, why am I thus? And she went to enquire of the LORD.

(23) And the LORD said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger.

(24) And when her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in her womb.

Genesis 26:2-5

(2) And the LORD appeared unto him [Isaac], and said, Go not down into Egypt; dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of:

(3) Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I sware unto Abraham thy father;

(4) And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed;

(5) Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.

Genesis 26:24

And the LORD appeared unto him [Isaac] the same night, and said, I am the God of Abraham thy father: fear not, for I am with thee, and will bless thee, and multiply thy seed for my servant Abraham's sake.

Genesis 28:3-4

(3) [Isaac said to Jacob his son] And God Almighty bless thee, and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a multitude of people;

(4) And give thee the blessing of Abraham, to thee, and to thy seed with thee; that thou mayest inherit the land wherein thou art a stranger, which God gave unto Abraham.

Genesis 28:13-14

(13) And, behold, the LORD stood above it [the ladder to heaven], and said [to Jacob], I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed;

(14) And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.

Genesis 29:31

And when the LORD saw that Leah was hated, he opened her womb: but Rachel was barren.

Genesis 30:1-2

(1) And when Rachel saw that she bare Jacob no children, Rachel envied her sister; and said unto Jacob, Give me children, or else I die.

(2) And Jacob's anger was kindled against Rachel: and he said, Am I in God's stead, who hath withheld from thee the fruit of the womb?

Genesis 30:17

And God hearkened unto Leah, and she conceived, and bare Jacob the fifth son.

Genesis 30:22

And God remembered Rachel, and God hearkened to her, and opened her womb.

Genesis 32:12

[Jacob reminds God] And thou saidst, I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.

Genesis 33:5

And he [Esau] lifted up his eyes, and saw the women and the children; and said, Who are those with thee? And he [Jacob] said, The children which God hath graciously given thy servant.

Genesis 35:11-12

(11) And God said unto him [Jacob/Israel], I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins;

(12) And the land which I gave Abraham and Isaac, to thee I will give it, and to thy seed after thee will I give the land.

Genesis 35:16-18

(16) And they journeyed from Bethel; and there was but a little way to come to Ephrath: and Rachel travailed, and she had hard labour.

(17) And it came to pass, when she was in hard labour, that the midwife said unto her, Fear not; thou shalt have this son also.

(18) And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing, (for she died) that she called his name Benoni: but his father called him Benjamin.

Genesis 37:3

Now Israel [Jacob] loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of many colours.

Genesis 38:6-10

(6) And Judah took a wife for Er his firstborn, whose name was Tamar.

(7) And Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the sight of the LORD; and the LORD slew him.

(8) And Judah said unto Onan, Go in unto thy brother's wife, and marry her, and raise up seed to thy brother.

(9) And Onan knew that the seed should not be his; and it came to pass, when he went in unto his brother's wife, that he spilled it on the ground, lest that he should give seed to his brother.

(10) And the thing which he did displeased the LORD: wherefore he slew him also.

Genesis 38:27-28

(27) And it came to pass in the time of her travail, that, behold, twins were in her womb.

(28) And it came to pass, when she travailed, that the one put out his hand: and the midwife took and bound upon his hand a scarlet thread, saying, This came out first.

Genesis 41:50-52

(50) And unto Joseph were born two sons before the years of famine came, which Asenath the daughter of Potipherah priest of On bare unto him.

(51) And Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh: For God, said he, hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house.

(52) And the name of the second called he Ephraim: For God hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction.

Genesis 45:7

[Joseph says to his brothers] And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance.

Genesis 46:3

And he said, I am God, the God of thy father: fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation:

Genesis 46:26-27

(26) All the souls that came with Jacob into Egypt, which came out of his loins, besides Jacob's sons' wives, all the souls were three-score and six;

(27) And the sons of Joseph, which were born him in Egypt, were two souls: all the souls of the house of Jacob, which came into Egypt, were threescore and ten [70].

Genesis 47:27

And Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt, in the country of Goshen; and they had possessions therein, and grew, and multiplied exceedingly.

Genesis 48:3-4

(3) And Jacob said unto Joseph, God Almighty appeared unto me at Luz in the land of Canaan, and blessed me,

(4) And said unto me, Behold, I will make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, and I will make of thee a multitude of people: and will give this land to thy seed after thee for an everlasting possession.

Genesis 48:9a

And Joseph said unto his father, They are my sons, whom God hath given me in this place.

Genesis 48:15-16

(15) And he [Jacob/Israel] blessed Joseph, and said, God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day,

(16) The Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth.

Genesis 48:17-20

(17) And when Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand upon the head of Ephraim, it displeased him: and he held up his father's hand, to remove it from Ephraim's head unto Manasseh's head.

(18) And Joseph said unto his father, Not so, my father: for this is the firstborn; put thy right hand upon his head.

(19) And his father refused, and said, I know it, my son, I know it: he also shall become a people, and he also shall be great: but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his seed shall become a multitude of nations.

(20) And he blessed them that day, saying, In thee shall Israel bless, saying, God make thee as Ephraim and as Manasseh: and he set Ephraim before Manasseh.

Genesis 49:3

[Jacob said] Reuben, thou art my firstborn, my might, and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power:

Genesis 49:25

[Jacob said to Joseph] Even by the God of thy father, who shall help thee; and by the Almighty, who shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts, and of the womb:

Total number of references (some include multiple verses) from *Genesis* that are about **conception, pregnancy, childbirth, the blessing and value of children, the significance of a multi-generational legacy, God's design and purpose for marriage, the sacredness of human life in general, and His sovereignty over life, death, and human destiny:**