

Expectations for Your Child's Future

When children are young and dependent, it is difficult to imagine a future when they can and will be responsible for themselves and others. If parents do envision them as adults in a grown-up world, parents may privately fantasize or hope the children become financially successful, attain a position of recognition and esteem or develop a career, which warrants parents' pride in their accomplishment.

All children represent *hope* – a future with rewarding accomplishments in which parents can also take pleasure. The hope and fervent prayer of every Christian parent should be that God's purpose will be accomplished in the life of their child. The Christian standard of success is not based on the world's evaluation of success, recognition and accomplishment. The ultimate success for a Christian is to bring glory to God. It is never too early (or too late) to inspire this desire in your child.

Parental Expectations

Adults often ask, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" Just a small change in the wording of that question to, "What do you think *God might want you to do* when you grow up?" conveys an entirely different attitude and mindset! It plants seeds of truth that:

- God has a purpose for your life.
- Success in a Christian's life is measured by God's standard.
- As your parent, my hope and expectation is your life's work is chosen according to God's plan for you.

Parental Prayer

It is easy to pray that your child lives a life pleasing to God, but sometimes there is a parental reservation that adds, "as long as it is *within reason*!" The phrase *within reason* means, of course, within the limits of the parent's own personal desires for his child's future!

Many Christians admit they have had to struggle with inner conflict in asking God to control the life's work of their child. Parents want to manipulate choices, control

circumstances and desire to protect their children from any hardship. Can you identify with these expressions of other parents?

- I want my child to serve God, but I do hope it is not as a missionary far away; I want my child to be safe!
- It would be hard to see my child in a job that is not financially rewarding.
- I hope my child's life will be easier than mine.

It is often only through painful honesty in prayer that a parent comes to a place of sincerely saying, "I want to help prepare my child for *whatever the work* and *wherever the place* God shows him as he matures." The greatest blessing will not be in always having your child located close to you, or in attaining luxury or an abundance of money. The greatest blessing will be in seeing your child content and productive in a work that pleases and honors God. Joy and peace develop through knowing your child is in the center of God's will.

Daily Example

If you truly desire your child to know and achieve God's purpose in their lifetime work, the natural outflow of this desire will be evident in your home. Your child will intuitively come to know this is your hope and expectation when she sees her parent daily prioritizing what is eternal by:

- Seeking God's will through prayer and His Word
- Responding wholeheartedly when God reveals the needs of others
- Joyfully obeying God
- Putting aside the world's goals and attractions

It will be thrilling to see how God answers your prayers of offering and commitment on behalf of your child. Your joy will be compounded as you encourage your child: "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters" (Colossians 3:23).