



BIBLE

STUDENT BOOK

▶ **8th Grade | Unit 9**

BIBLE 809

Understanding Parents

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Understanding Parents

Introduction

A fish is not usually the best expert on water. In fact, if you could talk to a fish, you might find it difficult convincing the fish that water exists at all. Fish are so familiar with water that they probably have lost all awareness of it. Over familiarity often results in loss of awareness and lack of appreciation. Almost everyone has had the experience of walking into a room and noticing an odor or aroma but being unable to convince anyone else in the room that an odor is there at all. “Do you not smell it?” you say. They may try to smell it, but without success. If you are able to get them to leave the room for a few moments and then re-enter, they may then acquire the ability to smell the same odor that you did. Sitting in the room for a long time, they lost all awareness of it. Even deliberate sniffing may not work because the sense of smell is created by God to detect change, but they may have been in the same odor-filled room for a long time. Only by leaving the room and then walking in again were the sense organs activated, making your friends aware of something that was there all the time. Sometimes we must step back from something before we can see it. In this LIFEPAAC® you will try to bring into focus those people with whom you are most familiar—your parents.

The word *familiar* is an interesting term to start with because it is so similar to the word *family*. Your own family is most familiar to you. Familiarity is not a substitute for understanding as our discussion about odors has just shown. Familiarity may even prevent understanding. People often have very little understanding of those people closest to them. As a method would be necessary to make the water visible to the fish, you may need to step back and look at your parents from some unfamiliar angles to understand them better. In this LIFEPAAC you will look at parenthood from the angles of the animal world and the human world, as well as from a heavenly angle. You will also study your own role in the family. You should then be ready to investigate just what parents do and how they carry out their duties to you, to the community, and to God. You may actually find yourself seeing for the first time who your parents really are.

Objectives

Read these objectives. The objectives tell you what you will be able to do when you have successfully completed this LIFEPAAC. When you have finished this LIFEPAAC, you should be able to:

1. Explain what parenthood involves for animals and for human beings.
2. Identify certain Biblical texts that can help you to understand parents.
3. Discuss your relationship to your heavenly Father.
4. Identify your role in your family.
5. Explain your family duties as defined in Scripture.
6. Tell the difference between disobedience to parents and eventual independence from them.
7. Identify the shortcomings of certain substitute parents.
8. List the valuable functions of parenthood.
9. Explain the duties of parents to their children, their community, and to God.

1. A FIRST LOOK AT PARENTS

So familiar are our own human parents to us that trying to understand them can be a real problem. We are something like the fish trying to see the water or the roomful of people who could not smell the odor. We are too close, too familiar, to get them into proper focus. Hold this page right up against your face and you will no longer be able to read the words. Focus requires a certain distance. To gain the proper

“distance” from parents, you will start by viewing the parents of three animal types. You will examine some animal parents and contrast them with human parents. Then you will study the strengths and weaknesses of three sets of Biblical parents. At the end of this section, you will go beyond your human parents to gain a deeper understanding of the heavenly Father as your divine parent.

SECTION OBJECTIVES

Review these objectives. When you have completed this section, you should be able to:

1. Explain what parenthood involves for animals and human beings.
2. Identify certain Biblical texts that can help you to understand parents.
3. Discuss your relationship to your heavenly Father.

VOCABULARY

Study these words to enhance your learning success in this section.

adolescence (ad’ u les’ uns). Period of life between about age twelve to adulthood.

concubine (kong’ kyü bīn). A woman who, in ancient times, lived in a socially recognized relationship with a man who was not her full husband.

culture (kul’ chur). The customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group.

favoritism (fā’ vur u tiz’ um). Having favorites, liking some more than others.

foreshadowed (fōr shad’ ōd). To indicate something that is to come.

instinct (in’ stingkt). Natural or inherent aptitude or behavior.

polygamy (pu lig’ u mē). Marriage in which a spouse may have more than one mate at the same time.

Note: All vocabulary words in this LIFEPAC appear in **boldface** print the first time they are used. If you are unsure of the meaning when you are reading, study the definitions given.

Pronunciation Key: hat, āge, cāre, fār; let, ēqual, tērm; it, īce; hot, ōpen, ōrder; oil; out; cup, put, rüle; child; long; thin; / ʒH/ for then; /zh/ for measure; /u/ represents /a/ in about, /e/ in taken, /i/ in pencil, /o/ in lemon, and /u/ in circus.

ANIMAL PARENTS

The word parent cannot be limited to human parents. All living things including plants and animals have parents. The acorn is the offspring of a parent oak, and it may grow to be an adult tree that produces acorns for the next generation. This aspect of parenthood is worth thinking about, but many other aspects must be considered when you think about animal parents and even more when you look at your own human parents. As you approach the following study of three animal parents, try to compare them, in your mind, with human parents. Look for the similarities and the differences.

Sea turtles. Sea turtles live and mate in the sea, but they lay eggs that must incubate on land. Every two or three years, the sea turtle travels long distances, sometimes more than a thousand miles, to nest. As difficult as the task is for her, the female sea turtle must come up onto the shore to nest and to lay her eggs. At night, when the beach is dark and still, she drags herself high onto the soft, warm sand well beyond the high-tide water. During the nesting season, she prepares a separate nest each time she lays eggs. First, she digs a shallow pit in which to rest, and then, with her hind flippers, she scoops out the nest hole. Into the nest hole she lays about one hundred soft, white, leathery eggs that look like ping-pong balls. She lays a large number of eggs so that some of them will survive.

The female turtle is on land for only about an hour while laying her eggs, but this period is an extremely dangerous time in her life. She does not see well on land, and her heavy shell makes her slow and awkward. Still, nothing at all can take her mind off of what she is doing. Dogs, noises, and even people will not stop her. She will simply ignore them. Naturally, predators, such as the jaguar and puma, find the nesting female an easy meal.



| The sea turtle lays her eggs and returns to the sea.

Unlike birds, turtles and other reptiles do not watch over their eggs. During the sixty days that the eggs incubate on land, packs of wild dogs, skunks, raccoons, and ocelots usually dig them up and eat them. Only a few turtles are hatched out of every one hundred eggs laid. When they do hatch, their parents are not there to protect them.

These tiny infant turtles have to find their own way to the water, and they must protect themselves and feed themselves as best they can.

Birds. For most birds, parenthood is much more demanding than it is for the turtles. First of all, both parents, not just the female, work to build the nest. Some bird nests are marvelous structures which would cause one to wonder how such work could be done without a pair of skillful hands. Both the male and female birds work for about a week gathering straw, twigs, feathers, and pieces of string until a suitable "house" has been constructed where the female can lay her eggs. Once the eggs are laid, they must be kept warm by the body of the parent. Among many birds both mother and father take turns incubating the eggs by sitting on them. After about two weeks the eggs hatch. Baby songbirds cannot readily open their

eyes, run about, and feed themselves; but by **instinct** they can open their mouths for food.

The two parent birds are busy all day hunting for insects to feed the family. Every few minutes one of the parents comes back with a beak full of food for the children. The parent birds must catch thousands of insects every day to keep up with their babies' appetites and with their own. For the first few nights the mother bird sleeps with her children. When they are big enough to keep each other warm, she roosts somewhere else where she can rest better.

Even after they leave the nest, young songbirds must be fed by the parents for another ten days or so before they learn to feed themselves. Other survival skills come more quickly; for birds are born almost knowing how to fly, to drink, to bath, to preen their feathers, and even to build nests. Birds work hard for their children, but soon their task is done, and the young birds are on their own. For larger animals such as lions, parenthood often lasts much longer.



Write true or false.

- 1.1 _____ Over familiarity often results in loss of awareness and lack of appreciation.
- 1.2 _____ Familiarity is a substitute for understanding.
- 1.3 _____ Sea turtles lay their eggs on the floor of the sea.
- 1.4 _____ Sea turtles lay less than five eggs each nesting season.
- 1.5 _____ Dogs or other intruders can easily distract a nesting sea turtle.
- 1.6 _____ Sea turtles do not watch over their eggs.

Write the correct letter and answer on each line.

- 1.7 Songbirds work about a _____ to build their nests.
a. day b. week c. month
- 1.8 After young songbirds leave the nest, they must still be fed by their parents for about _____.
a. a day b. seven days c. ten days

Answer this question.

- 1.9 Why can the word *parent* not be limited to human parents? _____



Do this activity.

1.10 Describe in your own words the basic parental activities of birds. _____

TEACHER CHECK



_____ initials

_____ date

Lions. African lions do not dig sand nests like turtles, nor do they construct beautiful nests in trees like birds, but the female lion does seek a safe hiding place where she can give birth to her cubs. She may make her nest in a thick clump of thorn bushes where there is no scent of enemies.

Three days after the cubs are born, the mother will leave the nest to hunt for food and water. When she returns to the nest, the lion mother licks each cub vigorously; and then she lies down beside them. The cubs cuddle close to their mother and feed from the milk that nature has provided.

For several weeks the cubs do nothing but sleep and eat. The mother leaves them for hours at a time to hunt for meat. Sometimes, while the mother is gone, a cub will push his way through the thorn bushes to explore the outside world. Unfortunately, the outside world is full of enemies; and a cheetah may find a young lion cub a tasty meal.

When the cubs are old enough, the lioness moves out of the bushes. She makes a low

moaning sound and the cubs follow her. She is taking them to her family group, the pride. When the large male of the pride hears them coming, he looks up and growls softly. One of the cubs may wander over to him. He lets the cub settle down between his forepaws. The cub rubs up against his chin and he licks the little one gently.



| Young lion cubs must learn to be aggressive.

Although the females continue to nurse the cubs, they must now begin to learn to eat meat. That is, the cubs must learn to be aggressive. Learning aggression is necessary to the lion's survival. When a kill is made, usually by a pair of females, the male lion eats first. If a cub tries to eat while the male is eating, a giant paw will send the cub away head over heels! When the male is full, the females may eat; but even they, when they are eating, will sweep aside the cubs with heavy blows. As soon as the lionesses have crouched at their favorite eating spots, the cubs edge in. They all *growl* and snap at each other as they stuff themselves. The cubs, in this way, are each learning to behave like lions.

In about three months, the cubs are ready to join in the hunt. While hunting, their lessons in aggression will be put to the test. At first

they stay in the rear and watch every move of the hunter. Later, in their play, they stalk and pounce on flickering shadows. The cubs have a natural instinct to hunt, and they learn rapidly. One day, two cubs are permitted to go out with one lioness. They may find a young zebra by himself in the tall grass. The lioness stops, with her tail switching back and forth. The cubs are instantly on the alert. They move forward in the dry grass close to the lioness, without making a sound. Without warning the lioness roars and steps back. The cubs spring forward eagerly while the adult female sits down quietly to watch the action. That zebra may escape, but eventually the cub's skill grows to match the challenge. Before they are skillful enough to live on their own, however, they will be two years old. In the meantime, while they are learning, they usually share part of their mother's kill.



Complete this activity.

1.11 For each true statement place an "X" on the line.

- a. _____ Lions build complex nests for their children.
- b. _____ The lioness never leaves the nest until her cubs are full grown.
- c. _____ The family group of lions is called the pride.
- d. _____ Lion cubs must learn to be aggressive.
- e. _____ When a kill is made, the male lion eats first.
- f. _____ The lion, lioness, and cubs share in eating the meat at the same time.
- g. _____ Lion cubs learn rapidly to hunt and kill other animals for food.

HUMAN PARENTS

All three animal parents share one activity with human parents—they reproduce. Two of the three animals share duty with human parents—they feed their offspring. Remember, you learned that turtles must feed themselves from the first day they hatch. The lion spends the most effort in the training of her children. You will now study these three functions of parents:

childbearing, providing food and shelter for their children, and teaching their children.

Childbearing. When a human mother is about to give birth, many preparations must be made. A "nest" must be prepared. We usually call the baby's new room a nursery. Both father and mother may be involved in gathering the necessary items and arranging them in a suitable

location. In our part of the world, large sums of money must be earned to pay for this “nest.” The father, and often the mother, work at various occupations to earn this money.

In addition to themselves, the parents call in certain assistants. A doctor or a midwife may be employed to help with the birth, and the first few days may be spent in a very special “nest,” a hospital. Human parents are extremely careful to insure the survival of each one of their children.

Human babies are helpless at birth. The baby turtles were able to be on their own immediately, but human beings are more like the baby songbirds who have only the strength to open their mouths for food.

Parents of newborn children find themselves with a schedule of chores that goes on around the clock because the newborn can do nothing for himself. He or she must be fed, changed, cleaned, and cuddled. During the first few weeks after birth, the parents are frequently up in the middle of the night attending to the needs of their new child.

Providing food and shelter. Compared to animals, human beings have a long childhood. Human parents will spend over sixteen years feeding and protecting their young. Human parents and their children must live together for a very long time as the children slowly



| Families provide care and protection for the children

mature. Both parents and children may find this long period difficult, but God has a plan in all of this. As He gave special attention to the creation of Adam, forming him in His own image, He has arranged that growing human beings be given much more attention than animals. To insure this arrangement, He has greatly lengthened the period of childhood for human beings. Although we are as helpless as the newborn songbirds at birth, our long education during the slow growth to adulthood provides us with abilities far beyond those of the lions, for example.

Throughout the childhood and youth of their offspring, the human parents are responsible for the feeding and protection of their children. Human infants are almost never left alone. When both parents must be away from the home, they either take the baby with them or they have an older child, a relative, or a babysitter care for the younger one. As the child grows older, he or she may be placed under the care of the other adults for certain periods, such as in school; but adult supervision is still maintained. As the child approaches **adolescence**, the parents will gradually relax some of their protective supervision and gradually prepare the youth for the independence of adulthood. Even young people in their late teens retain



| Families provide training and education for the children.

the benefit of their parents' protection most of the time, and they are usually still completely dependent on their parents for food. If the young person chooses to continue his education after high school, he may continue

to partially depend upon his parents for food, shelter, and personal needs. Human parents dedicate much more time to the feeding and protection of their young than does any other creature on earth.



Complete these activities.

1.12 Name three functions of human parents.

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

1.13 Tell how newborn human babies are like baby songbirds. _____

1.14 Explain how God has insured that children get more attention in their childhood than animals. _____

Teaching. Human beings must learn many complex skills. Because humans have few natural instincts, learning is often difficult. However, in exchange for instincts, God has given us a capacity to think and learn far beyond the abilities of the animal kingdom.

Traditionally, parents have been the teachers of their children. In spite of the invention of schools, parents remain the most important teachers. School teachers find that they can

teach very little to students who have not first learned the lessons taught by their parents. Two forms of parental teaching are teaching for survival and teaching spiritual awareness.

Teaching for survival is a function of both humans and many parent members of the animal kingdom. Depending upon the culture to which you belong, you must learn to clothe yourself, to speak, to tell time, and to use proper eating utensils. All of these skills must

be learned, and most of them must be taught by the parents.

Young people often imagine that the skills that will most help them to earn their livings as adults are mechanical or technical skills. However, other abilities learned at home are just as important. In the History and Geography LIFE-PAC 904, the author lists eleven of these other abilities:

1. The ability to follow directions.
2. The ability to accept criticism.
3. Dependability.
4. Cooperativeness.
5. Initiative.
6. Honesty.
7. The willingness to learn.
8. Enthusiasm.
9. Appreciativeness.
10. Friendliness.
11. Loyalty.

These abilities are not instincts; they must be learned. Schools, churches, and other groups

can help you learn these abilities, but most of your learning in these areas will take place at home with your parents doing the teaching. No other person or organization can really take the place of your parents. Parents will apply both gentleness and sternness, just as the lions did, to teach their children these important abilities.

Other skills that are not directly related to your physical survival may also be taught by your parents. The teaching of spiritual awareness is unique to human beings. Spiritual awareness has to do with our being created in the image of God. All over the world, human beings seek a knowledge of God, which is really more important than a knowledge of how to earn a living. All over the world you can find parents trying to pass along to their children what they have learned about God and His meaning in their lives. Many parents teach their children morals, values, and doctrines. They instruct their children in the Scriptures. Most of all, they teach by example.

A child with dedicated Christian parents is especially blessed. Parents who are dedicated to Jesus Christ can lead their children into the "kingdom of God." Luke 17:21 says that the kingdom of God is within those who trust in Jesus.



Write true or false.

- 1.15** _____ Humans have many natural instincts, which make learning easy.
- 1.16** _____ God has given humans a capacity to think and to learn far beyond the abilities of the animal kingdom.
- 1.17** _____ The government is your most important teacher.
- 1.18** _____ Animals can teach spiritual awareness to their young.
- 1.19** _____ Cooperativeness, honesty, and friendliness should be taught first at home by the parents.



Answer these questions.

1.20 What are the two forms of human parental teaching?

a. _____

b. _____

1.21 What does Luke 17:21 say about the kingdom of God? _____

1.22 What are two important ways in which parents teach spiritual awareness to their children?

a. _____

b. _____

Complete this activity.

1.23 Write a paragraph comparing a human father to the father songbird. _____

TEACHER CHECK

_____ initials

_____ date

SOME BIBLICAL PARENTS

Spiritual awareness is a form of development that should continue throughout your entire lifetime. Learning spiritual truths is the highest form of learning known to man. Your parents will be students *and* teachers at the same time. As you are learning from their example, they are learning also, studying the Scriptures and seeking to follow Biblical examples. What examples of parenthood might be discovered in the Bible? Three significant sets of parents in the Bible were Abraham and Sarah, Jacob and Rachel, and Mary and Joseph.

Abraham and Sarah. Genesis 18–23, tells the story of Abraham and Sarah. The most well-known part of the story focuses on their

Read Genesis 18:9–16;
21: 1–8; 22:1–14; 30:22
and 23; 37:3–36; 45:1–9;
and Luke 2:41–52.



relationship with their son, Isaac. Many unusual events took place in the lives of Abraham, Sarah, and Isaac. What can you learn about your own parents from such unusual examples? You can learn three powerful lessons from the story of Abraham and Sarah. (1) Although Sarah was old, she still had something to learn about the power of God. She laughed when the angel predicted the birth of Isaac. Remember, that everyone, including parents, is a student in spiritual matters. (2) When Sarah

SELF TEST 1

Complete these statements (each answer, 3 points).

- 1.01** Loss of awareness and lack of appreciation for your family is often the result of _____ .
- 1.02** God has provided a way for human children to receive more _____ than animals during their childhood.
- 1.03** Childhood learning is more difficult for humans than for animals because we have so few natural _____ .
- 1.04** Animals cannot teach _____ to their young.
- 1.05** Cooperativeness, honesty, and friendliness should first be taught by the _____ .
- 1.06** Two forms of human parental teaching are teaching for a. _____ and teaching b. _____ .
- 1.07** Luke said that the kingdom of God is _____ us.
- 1.08** Parents can teach spiritual truths to their children by instruction in the
a. _____ and by being an b. _____ of
dedication.

Answer these questions (each answer, 4 points).

- 1.09** What are three functions of human parents?
- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- 1.010** What are the basic parental activities of sea turtles?
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

1.011 What do the parent lions teach their cubs when they eat? _____

Match these items (each answer, 2 points).

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| 1.012 _____ Jacob | a. the mother of Joseph |
| 1.013 _____ Rachel | b. willing to sacrifice his son |
| 1.014 _____ Abraham | c. laughed when her son was born |
| 1.015 _____ Malachi | d. wrote a psalm about God as the Father of Israel |
| 1.016 _____ Isaac | e. shows favoritism toward one of his twelve sons |
| 1.017 _____ Sarah | f. found Jesus teaching in the Temple as a young boy |
| 1.018 _____ Mary and Joseph | g. another name for Jacob |
| 1.019 _____ Israel | h. the only son of two elderly parents |
| | i. expressed the Fatherly nature of God in his Old Testament writings |

Write the correct letter and answer on each line (each answer, 3 points).

- 1.020** The brothers of _____ were jealous of him.
 a. Jesus b. Isaac c. Joseph d. Abraham
- 1.021** Jesus said, "Did you not know that I must be about my _____ business?"
 a. parents' b. kingdom's c. own d. Father's
- 1.022** Jesus _____ left the Temple and returned to Nazareth with His parents.
 a. angrily b. voluntarily c. stubbornly d. rebelliously
- 1.023** The parental role of _____ is demonstrated by Jesus talking to the doctors in the Temple.
 a. teaching b. feeding c. protecting d. a, b, and c
- 1.024** The Hebrews used _____ names for God in the Old Testament.
 a. only two b. only one c. several d. their own



BIB0809 - May '14 Printing

ISBN 978-0-86717-179-2



9 780867 171792



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