

“My Grace Is Sufficient for Thee...”

Childlessness as a Gift from God

A childless couple has the right to examine the matter of being childless and its positive aspects independently and for the best for their own lives. It is not wrong, that such individuals are joyful for example over the opportunity to travel and practice their hobbies. This still does not negate the fact that helping others is also part of loving your neighbor. It cannot be an obligation or a demand—“Since you don’t have children, you should go and take care of your sister’s or brother’s children.” However, the love of God obligates us to help our near ones, including our close relatives. Assisting a brother or sister’s family helps us understand the good things about being childless, too. In that situation one can concretely see the difficulties of raising children.

Believers even have the freedom to be content with the life of a twosome. In my own life I have had the opportunity to do the work of God’s kingdom, especially with children and youth. This work has brought joy and blessings all the way to the evening of life. Many children and youth have become close through this work, and we have kept in touch with each other.

The Bible does not exhort spouses to be ashamed of childlessness nor to blame oneself or others for it. Yet childlessness is not easy to accept as a gift, even though it is part of God’s great creation work. We can believe in a childlike way that God doesn’t make mistakes and nothing is impossible for Him. Only by believing of grace is it possible to make it to heaven’s home. Before the face of God all people have equal value.

Does Our Life Have Meaning?

Pondering the significance of life is common for childless couples in some phase of life. Then it is good to personally focus what truly is the purpose of life. God has created mankind for heaven. According to Christian Doctrine the most precious matter in our life is to know God and our Savior Jesus Christ and to become a child of God. Next to this, mankind has many duties given and ordained by God, which yet serve that main purpose, that the gospel of God’s kingdom would have the means to go forward and call those longing for grace into the Father’s house.

The need to be in a caregiving role can be fulfilled in very many ways. For a good number of people, a career with children and youth provides the opportunity to share much of oneself that would have been given to one’s own children. Providing assistance to the sick, the handicapped, and the elderly brings new content to one’s life.

Satisfaction in a couple’s life increases when the pain of childlessness no longer rules their life. Often the attachment and closeness between couples grows stronger than before—we need each other. Spouses must learn to meet life’s events together, when they cannot seek refuge in their sorrows, grief, or trials from adult children, nor live life through children.

Discussion with childless couples has brought out, how when childlessness has weighed heavy, it is good to unburden one’s heart to a trusted person. It is also necessary to hear the comfort of the gospel. If one has gotten the courage to do so, he or she has noticed that faith and trust in God’s guidance has been strengthened. It doesn’t pay to push bottled-up pain into the recesses of the mind, but instead to talk it out. This brings freedom, joy, mutual understanding, and new hope that life can be good even without children.

We need to remember that even older childless people need to visit about that question that for years has troubled them, often quite painfully. Many family celebrations, mother’s days, Sunday school programs, and mother’s camps bring

painful memories to mind. It's understandable that childless couples do not easily go to such events. God's Word and soul-caring discussions can bring comfort to the aching heart and strengthen faith. In this way the experience of complete fellowship in God's kingdom is also reinforced.

God gives contentment with the life-situation He has assigned and with His grace, which He offered to the apostle, too, who was under trials: "My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." The apostle continues: "Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong" (2 Cor. 12:9,10). When this matter opens through faith, one can more easily see God's powerful blessing and protection in one's life and give thanks for those gifts, that God has with abundant measure given to His children. Most important is to preserve faith and a good conscience. By faith we are the heirs of Abraham in the great throng of God's children and will one day make it to the Father's home in heaven. "Godliness with contentment is great gain" (1 Tim. 6:6).

Pentti Vinnurva

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