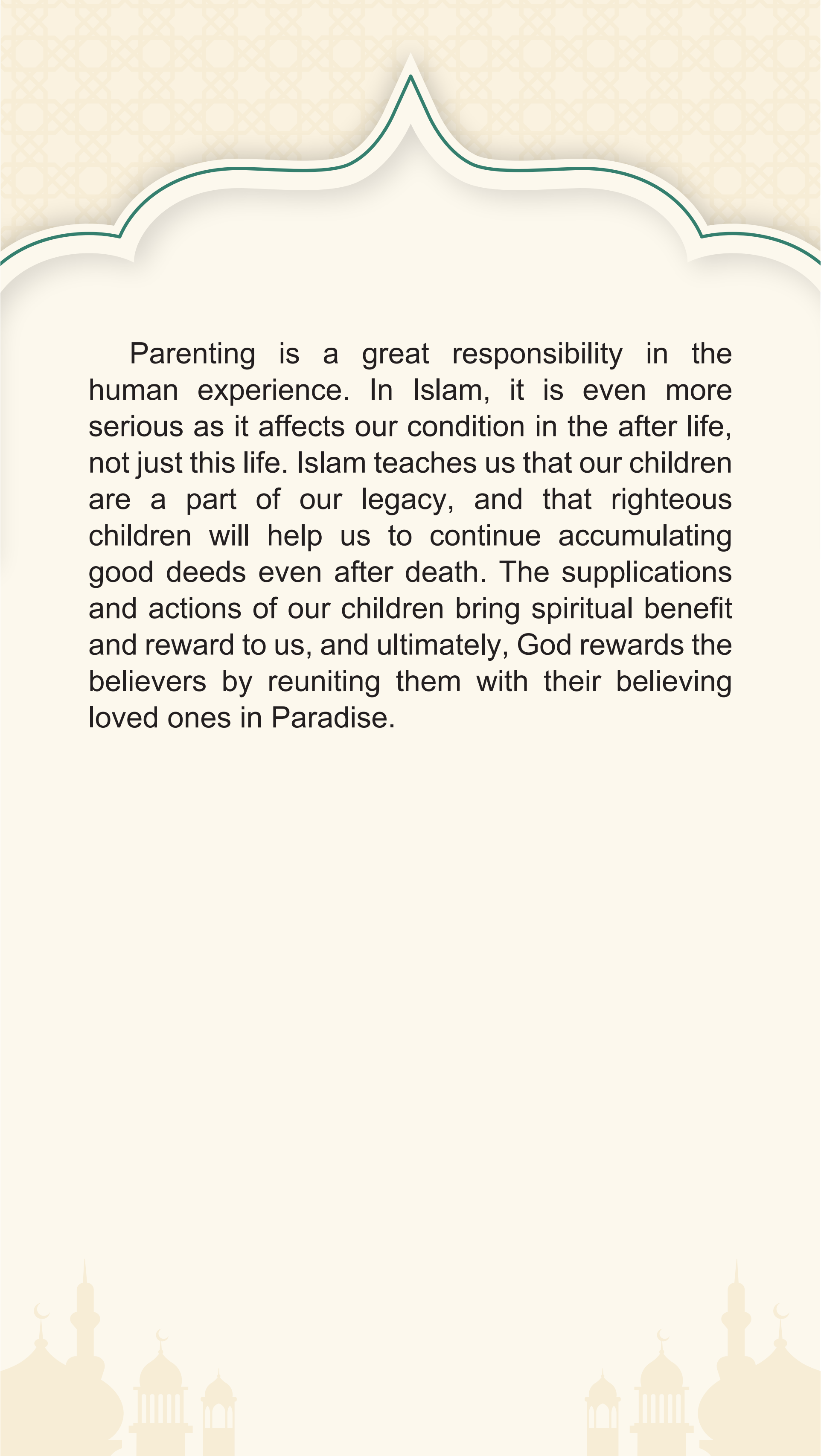




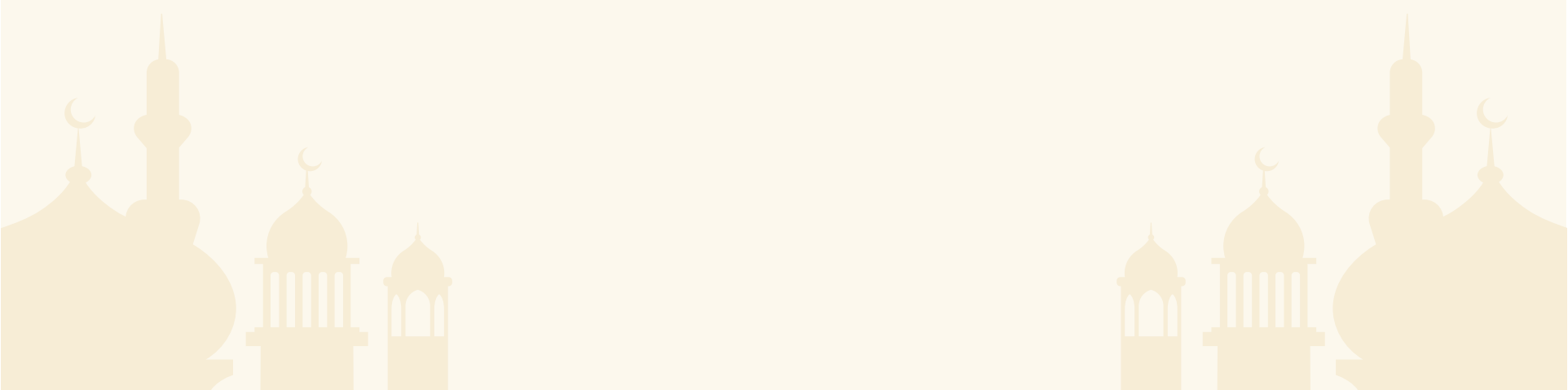
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Parenting with Purpose for New Muslims



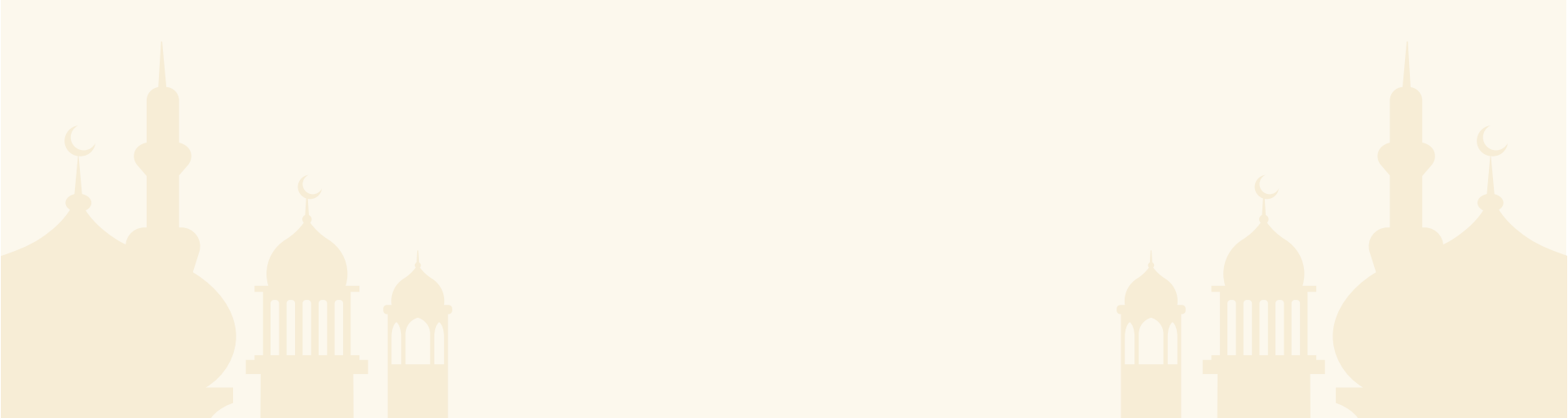
Parenting is a great responsibility in the human experience. In Islam, it is even more serious as it affects our condition in the after life, not just this life. Islam teaches us that our children are a part of our legacy, and that righteous children will help us to continue accumulating good deeds even after death. The supplications and actions of our children bring spiritual benefit and reward to us, and ultimately, God rewards the believers by reuniting them with their believing loved ones in Paradise.






In the Quran, we are taught the story of Luqman the Wise, who counsels his son about important issues he wants him to understand. These wise words are in many ways, the foundations and core principles of parenting for Muslims. “Indeed, we blessed Luqman with wisdom...” [31:12] Luqman was not a Messenger of God according to many Muslim scholars. He was a righteous and upright wise man that God praises in the Quran because of his sage words.

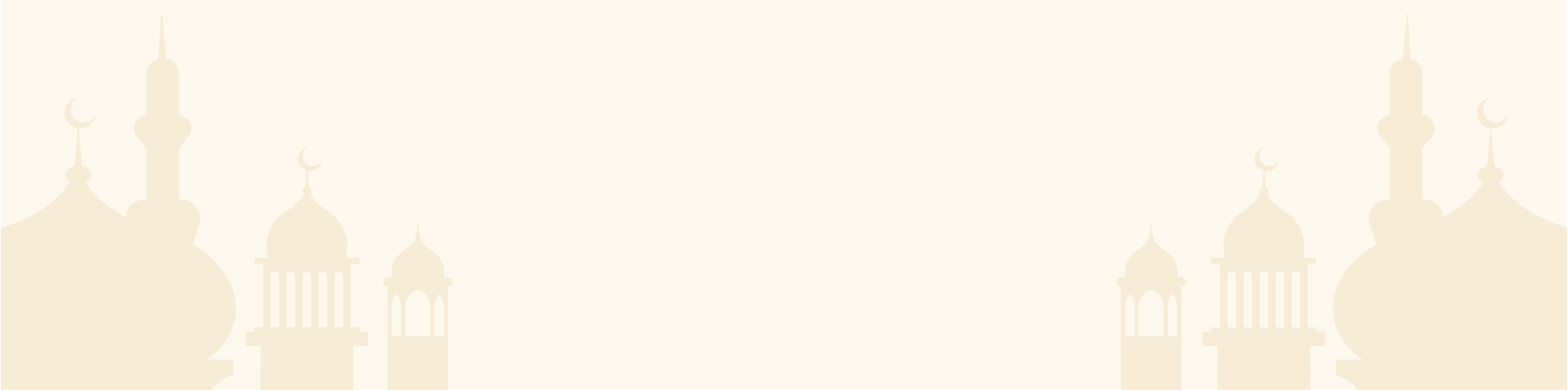
The first principle Luqman focuses on is the exclusive rights of God, namely to worship God alone. “Luqman said to his son, while advising him, ‘O my dear son! Never associate anything with God in worship, for associating others with Him is truly the worst of all wrongs, it is the greatest injustice and oppression.’ [31:13] This passage shows the importance of fostering a good and positive relationship with our children. Luqman is speaking to his son with love and care, addressing him in a loving and positive way, and advising him about the most important issues of life.






This counsel shows the importance of the exclusive right of God to be worshipped alone, as it is what Luqman begins with. Our focus with our children should revolve around strengthening their faith in God and love for Him. This starts by modeling faith in our behavior. As for instruction, it can be done through study of the Quran and the example of the Messenger Muhammad ﷺ, as well as through acts of worship, kindness and charity to others. This solid foundation allows for the other points mentioned by Luqman in this passage to be actioned.

A major part of strengthening faith in God and love for Him is through the process of being God conscious. This strong moral compass allows for our children to always be mindful of what is right and beloved to God, irrespective of what others may think or say. They will be mindful of God and will desire to constantly please Him. This concept is discussed when Luqman says to his son, “O my dear son! Even if a deed were the weight of a mustard seed – be it hidden in a rock or in the heavens or the earth – God will bring it forth. Surely, God is Most Subtle, All Aware.” [31:16]

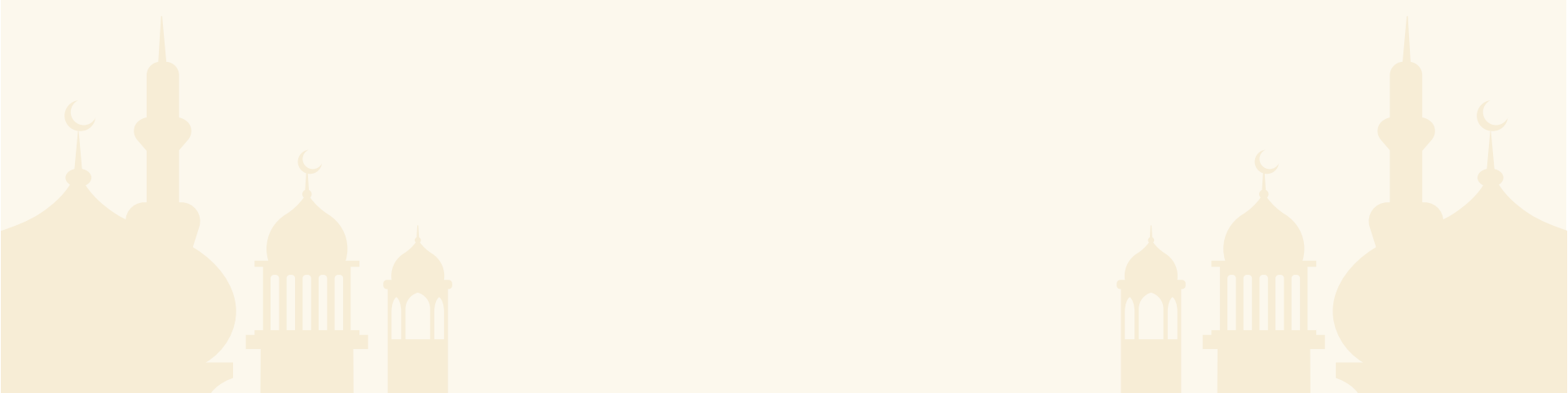





This knowledge of God's attributes, and that He sees, hears, and knows all, makes us constantly self-aware of what we are doing, and mindful of God always watching and recording what we do. Luqman encourages his son to focus on the small issues, even the mustard seed hidden in the mountain, because once we are conscious of the small things, the big things will take care of themselves.

Luqman then tells his son what he can do to help him to attain this level of piety and God-consciousness. He says, "O my dear son! Establish the prescribed ritual devotions, encourage what is good and forbid what is evil, and endure patiently what befalls you. Surely this is a resolve to aspire to." [31:17]

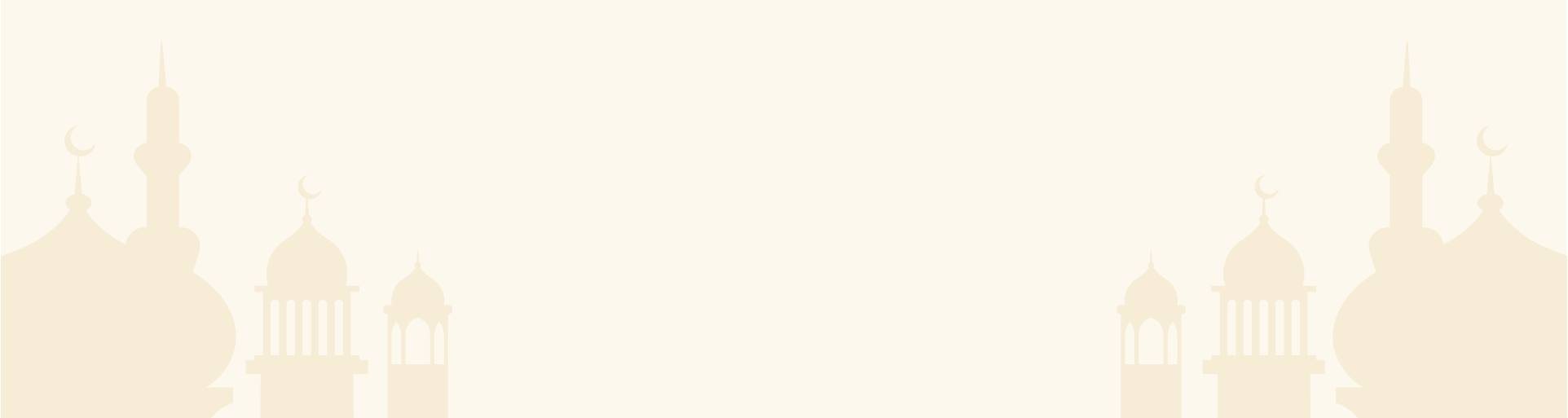
These points help greatly when it comes to implementing the aforementioned advice.

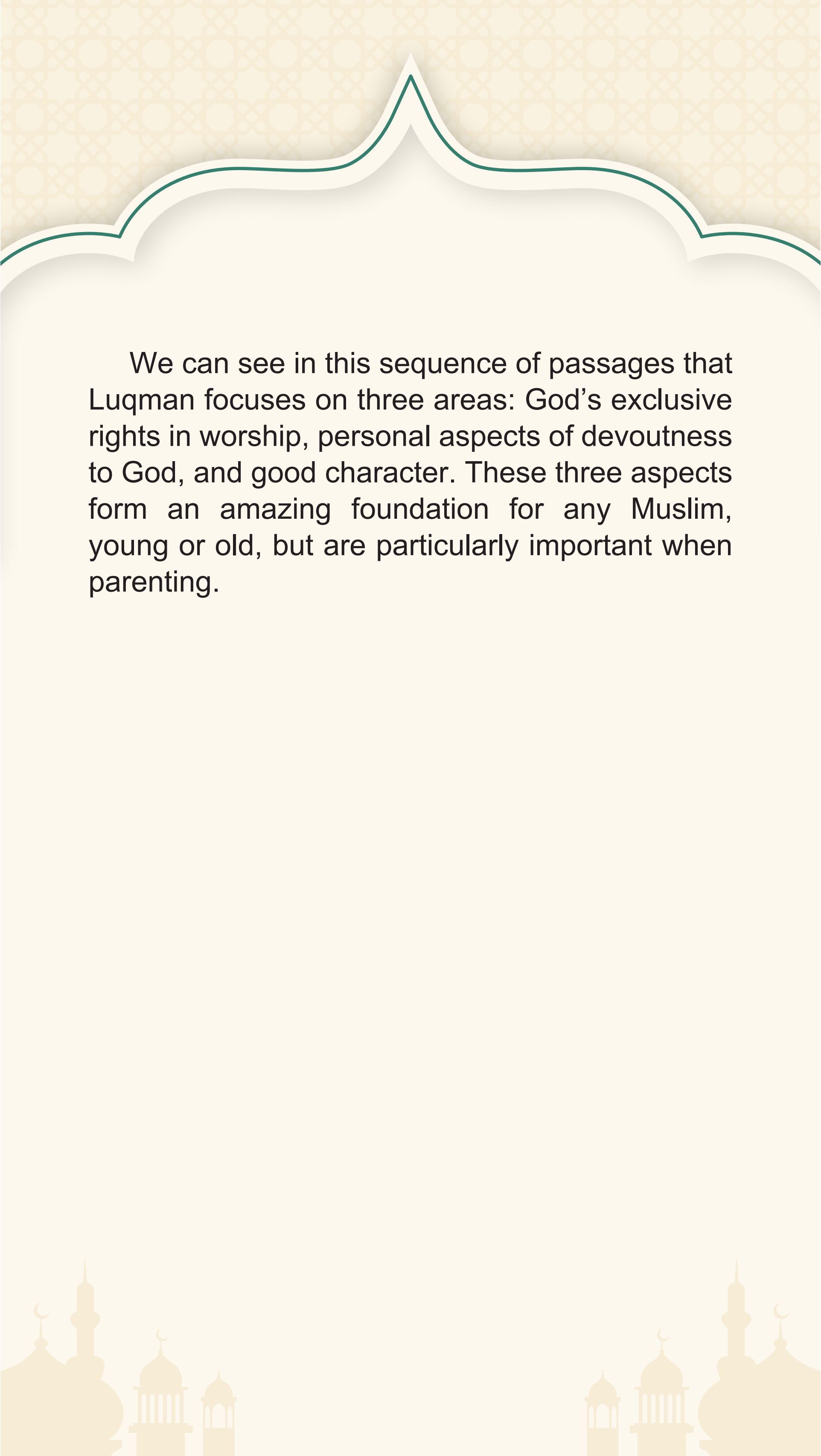




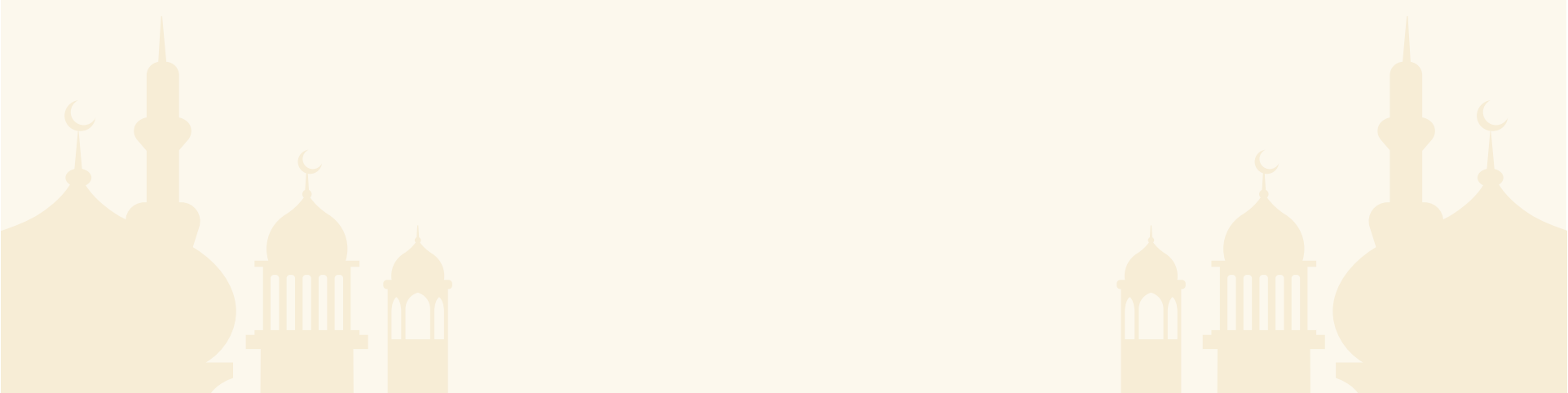
Devotional acts of worship, desiring good for others and being patient in the face of challenges, are all praiseworthy traits and important habits to cultivate in children from a young age. The Messenger Muhammad ﷺ instructed us to encourage our children to start performing the prescribed ritual devotions from the age of seven. God often reminds us to want good for others by encouraging it. Patience is mentioned many times as one of the greatest virtues beloved to God.

Luqman concludes his advice by speaking about points of character, “Do not turn your nose up to people, nor walk pridefully upon the earth. Surely, God does not like whoever is arrogant, boastful. Be moderate in your pace. And lower your voice, for the ugliest of all voices is certainly the braying of donkeys.” [31:18-19] Being humble, well-mannered, kind, compassionate, understanding, calm and measured are all good characteristics. On the other hand, arrogance, boasting, looking down upon others, shouting, being abrasive and obnoxious are disliked characteristics.





We can see in this sequence of passages that Luqman focuses on three areas: God's exclusive rights in worship, personal aspects of devoutness to God, and good character. These three aspects form an amazing foundation for any Muslim, young or old, but are particularly important when parenting.



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