

Scriptural Truths

E-Mail Newsletter

The Lord May Come . . . Perhaps Today . . . Behold, I Come Quickly . . . Rev. 22:7

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Godly Fathers

*“Lo, children are an heritage
of the Lord”*

Psalms 127:3



Life with its memories can be a wonderful blessing, yet, I would say there would be very few fathers, if any, that can live without sorrow for something they have said or done. Decisions have been made which were not the best, but at that time we thought were best for our families. However, we must take into consideration the words of Paul: “Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before” (Phil. 3:13). We cannot change the past, but we can learn from it, and possibly help others.

There is no easy answer as to why some very spiritual fathers have unruly and unsaved children and vice versa. The blame has at times been put on the parents, and in particular, the father. When it is said if one “trains up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it” (Prov. 22:6), we know from experience this is not the case. Since the scriptures cannot be wrong, then we must have the wrong interpretation of the verse. Scripture itself gives us the example of Adam who had Cain for a son (Gen. 4:1), or David who had Absalom (2 Sam. 18:33). The reality is that both fathers also had good sons, namely “Abel” (Gen. 4:2), “Seth” (Gen. 4:25), and “Solomon” (2 Sam. 5:14).

Fatherhood is more than being the paternal or father of an adopted child. It is being to that child the manifestation of God as Father. We pray with our children and call God Father, and the children call us “father”. The question that must be faced is: “When my children watch me as father, what sort of an impression am I giving of God as Father? This leads to another question: “What sort of a Father is God?”

God Is Presented As “Father”

The following is a list of the expressions of relationship in which God is “Father”, and which we Christian fathers should convey. The Lord Himself drew this observation when he said: “If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father . . . how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?” (Lk. 11:11-13). Some of the terms used of God in this relationship are:

- a) Father
 - i) What a blessedness this is to simply call God “Father” and to be a follower of Christ as an example and manifestation of God to those around us, especially our children. (Jn. 1:18; 14:9)
- b) Holy Father (Jn. 17:11)
 - i) The scriptures command us to: “Be ye holy; for I am holy” (1 Pet. 1:16). That is, be fathers who are devoted to God. This is a father who walks the fine line between his responsibilities to God and those to his family. As such, he will be a righteous Father in all his dealings with his children (Jn. 17:25).

As our Father we can cast on Him our every care, knowing that: “He careth for you” (1 Pet. 5:7). As such, He:

- a) Provides for our needs (Matt. 6:8, 26, 30)
- b) Answers our requests (Matt. 7:7)
- c) Takes pleasure in giving (Lk. 12:32)
- d) Protects in danger (Jn. 10:29)
- e) Secures a home (Jn. 14:2)
- f) Loves His own (Jn. 16:27)
- g) Trains in discipline (Heb. 12:7)

Our children and grandchildren live in a different world from that which we were brought up in, being exposed to that which we were never exposed to. There is a need for fathers who display the characteristics of God. Thank God He has given to us examples of such men.

Enoch

Enoch was one of two men of whom it says: “walked with God”. Before this was ever said of Enoch, he lived sixty-five years, and it was after the birth of his son that he walked with God, and did so for three hundred years.

When Enoch’s son Methuselah was born, he was named this because God had revealed to Enoch, when his son dies, it shall come to pass. That which was to happen was the judgment of God, which was the flood. Enoch lived in a world of which he was conscious was under the judgment of God. Not knowing when his son would die, he lived in fellowship with God. Enoch walked with God for three hundred years of his three hundred and sixty-five years. Surely there would be changes in our homes if fathers walked with God for three hundred days out of every year.

Noah

What a father Noah was. Of course he was not perfect, but God speaks of him as:

- a) “A preacher of righteousness” (2 Pet. 2:5)
- b) A man who “walked with God” (Gen. 6:9)
- c) Who was a man of faith and “prepared an ark to the saving of his house” (Heb. 11:7)

Like Enoch, he lived in the awareness of impending doom on this world and sought, by preaching, to warn the people and did all that he could do for the saving of his family. When any of the fathers came to our Lord during His earthly sojourn seeking the physical or spiritual health of their children, it was never a casual request. They begged in all sincerity. Praying for our children and grandchildren ought not to be a repetition of names like a grocery list, but an entreating to God to be merciful. I had an uncle who was for years a missionary in Venezuela, and at times I heard him pray to the Lord to save the children “when they were young and tender of age”. Sadly, there may be some who wait until their children or grandchildren have got into drugs, etc., then they start to earnestly pray for their salvation.

Abraham

What a wonderful man Abraham was. Three times over he was called “God’s friend” (2 Chron. 20:7; Isa. 41:8; Jam. 2:23) and he alone had the distinguishing title of: “father of all them that believe” (Rom. 4:11). His character is seen when God told him to offer the son of promise on an altar. He obeyed and: “Rose up early in the morning” (Gen. 22:3). This man held nothing back from God. He was a father whom the son submitted to without reservation, even to the extent of death despite the fact he did not understand all that was happening. A lesson for our children today.

Joshua

Moses had sent spies into the land to scrutinize it. When they came back, only two gave a good report, Caleb and Joshua (Num. 14:6). This man believed God concerning the promised inheritance (Ex. 3:8). It did not matter to him that which other fathers would do. Boldly he made the declaration: “As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord” (Josh. 24:15).

Jehonadab

Jehonadab was a man whose degree of spirituality was a living reality affecting his family for over two hundred years. He is mentioned ten times, with his name spelt as “Jehonadab” (2 Kgs. 10:15, 23); and “Jonadab” (Jer. 35:8-19). In the book of Kings, that which is emphasized is his fellowship in the work of the Lord with another, and the emphasis in Jeremiah is the effect he had on his family.

- a) Jehonadab was in fellowship with Jehu and was zealous for the holiness of God (2 Kgs. 10:15-31). He is first mentioned working with Jehu toward the fulfillment of the reformation which began with Elijah. Through the leadership of these two men, the worship of Baal from the Northern Kingdom was permanently purged. This is the attitude we ought to have against all false doctrines whether they be the denial of the humanity or deity of Christ; His bodily resurrection; the solitariness of God; the Trinity; or the sufficiency, fidelity and finality of the scriptures. It would also seem that Paul had this man in mind when he wrote: "Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringeth into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10:5). The Lord set a principle for godly fathers when he said: “What He seeth the Father do: for what things soever He doeth, the Son likewise” (Jn. 5:19). This carries a very important principle for us earthly fathers. When I was a child and did something or said something not right, I would hear dad ever so gently ask: “Did you ever hear daddy say that word?” or “Did you ever see Daddy do a thing like that?” The fact is, I can honestly say, and I am sure my brother and sister would concur, dad never rebuked us for something he himself had done, or was doing, for he always set a good example for us.
- b) Jehonadab believed that which the prophets of God had spoken (1 Kgs. 14:15-16; 19:17; 21:17-24). So often we hear people speaking of the “still small voice” of the Lord (1 Kgs. 19:12) as a voice of delightfulness. It was a voice of judgment, a calm controlling of circumstances foretelling fierce judgments. Irrespective of how things looked, this man, like Enoch, Noah and Abraham, believed God, and his confidence in the unerring word of God was a characteristic that his children perceived.
- c) Jehonadab, in fellowship with King Jehu, would finish what Elijah had begun that day. That is, He worked with another “believer”, and they, in fellowship with the purposes of God, brought about the fulfillment of the promise of God (1 Kgs. 14:15-16).
- d) Jeremiah gives us another glimpse into the long range effects of this man. He ordered his family life around God's word (Jer. 35:1-19). We would call ourselves blessed if our effect on the spiritual development of our children reached to our grandchildren. This man’s spiritual teaching went to his sixth generation. My grandmother Milne was very much like that. She prayed for her children, her grandchildren, and the children not yet born. Her spiritual effect has lasted through five generations, reaching to my children. What a legacy she left us. Jehonadab’s children were still following in his precepts some 250 years later. The events of 2 Kgs. 10 took place around 840 BC, and the descendants of Jehonadab were awaiting the fall of Jerusalem around 603 BC. Was this only lip service or real spiritual holding to the truths taught so long ago by their great great great grandfather? God sent Jeremiah to test obedience one more time by putting wine before them, and they all refused. As fathers, we ought to learn to say “no” to our children in the things which are questionable, and be able to ask: “Have you ever seen dad do that or say that?”, and instill into their minds while they are young and of tender years the necessity to hold fast to the word of God.

Have we been all that we should have been? “A thousand times No!” Could we have been better fathers? “Yes!” Thank God for many of us there is still time to be the spiritual fathers and grandfathers who can leave a spiritual legacy to our children.

. . . *Rowan Jennings*

*Fathers, give your children guidance
And instruction from God's Word;
Then with wisdom and compassion
Teach them how to love the Lord.*

A godly father reflects the love of the Heavenly Father.

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