

Scriptural Truths

E-Mail Meditations

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

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Fathers

Introduction

Recently at a Bible Study the subject of parenting came up. One brother said (paraphrasing), "If we had no Bible we would have no knowledge on the best way to raise children, no reason to why to train them and the balancing of discipline and truth". We all had parents who, to a great extent, followed the example of their parents and they of theirs. Sadly, none of them were perfect because of sin and the results are, we were brought up with defective parents, and now as parents we are the same. Let it be stated clearly that our parents loved us and would have given their life's blood for their children, and few would say their parents were bad parents. Our parents did the best they could with that which they knew.

In the kindness of God, we who know the Lord as Saviour have a perfect Father and He has given us a handbook which gives knowledge on child rearing. If the children in a family were all of the same temperament etc., then after having the first child we would know how to deal with any others. However, and it's a big however, they are not all the same. In a family of three children they can be as diverse as it's possible to get.

The father has a role on which there must be the balance between negative and positive, a uniting of sternness and gentleness, inflexibility in vital matters, and compromise in non vitalness. Failure of the first will cause the child to be insecure in themselves in case they are wrong, and failure of the latter will result in pampered unruly children void of respect for the parents or the law.

A Suggestion To Cautiousness

In all matters of parental discipline for the wrong doing of a child, being a father and having spoken with many fathers there are matters which have been observed which would possibly have resulted in me being a better father.

Some of them are:

- a) Failing to grasp the seriousness of raising a child. Sadly it is possible to forget that all we do as a father will be reviewed by the Lord at the Judgment Seat. When a child calls the parent "father" and then in prayer the father calls God "Father", what sort of impression is that child getting of God? Does God ever base discipline on an assumption of a wrong done? Of course not, then neither ought we. Does God always take into consideration our limited appreciation of truth, our understanding of what sin is, or how serious it is? Yes, and in His fatherly discipline it is in stages and we are told the reason why He disciplines (Heb. 12:9-10).
- b) The danger of taking a "biblical truth" and distorting it. Illustration: I remember being in a home where another family were also visiting. The father of the other visitors was exceedingly hard, demanding immediate and utmost obedience. There were a number of little children with ages ranging from about 6-10 all happily playing.

This father had told his children not to make a noise. Then as His children stood in the shadows his little son was heard playing and shouting and laughing. In front of all who were there, and I might say an embarrassment to his wife, he brought the child in, made him say sorry and sat him in the middle of a wall and told him not to move. The rest of us were stunned. Sure he was making the child obey him, and children are to obey their parents (Eph. 6:1), but the father's attitude did nothing for a display of Christlikeness. That was about 30 years ago and I wonder where his children are now?

- c) As children grow they automatically begin to develop their own lives. It actually starts the day they begin school for the child is away from mom and dad like a little shoot stretching out on its own. As the years pass they become more independent of the parents but are still dependent on them for shelter, food and clothing. Despite their imagined "knowing it all", they have so much to learn. The scriptures give an excellent principle in the growth of children from babyhood to adult. It is how God teaches His children, "For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little" (Isa. 28:10). It is the parent living in the knowledge that there will come a day when the child will be making their own decisions in education, employment and choosing a spouse. Throughout the intervening years there will be a growing independence until eventually they will live almost independent of mum and dad. They may still come and talk things over when decisions are to be made, but they must be allowed to make their own decisions. As they grow independent but are still under the father's roof, there is a need to understand and respect their private and personal world. Having said that, due to the exceeding wickedness we see in the world today, there must be a balanced careful consideration of what and who they are communing with on the internet.

Biblical Instructions For Child Rearing

What are some of the Biblical guidelines for fathers whether they know the Lord or not?

- a) As the head of the home the father is responsible for the intellectual, physical, academic and most importantly, the spiritual blessing to his children. The Lord has given to fathers almost an entire book on fatherly advice and of a mother's instruction in the book of the Proverbs. Twenty-three of its verses contain the words, "My son", and this is not a little child being spoken to. The "son" is a grown man of marriageable age and with the experience and deep love of the father's heart the father says:
- i) "My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother" (Prov. 1:8).
 - ii) "My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not" (Prov. 1:10).
 - iii) "My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee" (Prov. 2:1).
 - iv) "My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments" (Prov. 3:1).
 - v) "My son, keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother" (Prov. 6:20).
 - vi) "My son, keep my words, and lay up my commandments with thee" (Prov. 7:1).
- b) In reading the New Testament the Holy Spirit, through the Holy Apostle Paul, is very specific in the roles of Father to his children:
- i) "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4). There are several truths for a father to seek to live by:
 1. Do not provoke your children to wrath. Since children are required to obey, the parent must make sure that which is being asked can be obeyed, and not to ask the child to do that which is beyond its capabilities.
 2. There ought never to be the push to try to work out in the child the father's own ambitions which he himself was unable to fulfil.
 3. The child must not be provoked to wrath by needless severity or the parent discipline because "he is the boss". A child that is brought up in an angry house will be filled with tension and will be angry. A child brought up in a belittling environment will have no self confidence and can possibly end up as a bully to give themselves confidence in their own eyes.
 4. Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. To have a child brought up in a christian environment is one of the greatest blessings which can be bestowed on the child. To be taught to pray at mother's knees and to hear dad and mum pray teaches the child the need for God in daily life. There is a need for the family altar where parents gather their little ones and read and pray with them, sing biblical lesson stories with them and instruct them in the ways of God. A child who never sees or hears the father and mother pray will find no value in it, a lack of reverence for God and the things of God, sloppiness in attire for meeting the Lord but being all dressed up for social occasions indicates to a child that the social occasions are more worthy of respect than God.

Have I Succeeded? Was I Always a Perfect Father?

A thousand times “No”. I have yet to meet a father who, if he could live life over again, would not do some of the things he did and do more of the things he did not do. God the Father is the perfect Father and His Son the perfect son. In them we find the perfect interrelationship, but in the context of this paper, the perfection of the Father is as an “Example”.

- a) The Son, our Lord Jesus, was always perfect and prophetically it is said of Him, “openeth mine ear to hear as the learned”, a listening son (Isa. 50:4-5).
- b) His works were those of God the Father (Jn. 5:36; 10:37; 14:10).
- c) He said the words the Father said (Jn. 3:34).

If only we as fathers lived such an example before our children, that they only did what they knew we would do and always use our language and not that of the “streets”. What different families we would have.

... *Rowan Jennings*



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