

# The Challenges of Fatherhood

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The subject of fulfilling the biblical challenge of fatherhood into day's world is most critical. The family is the foundation of society from a worldly perspective and also as pertains to the church. The absence of a father in most homes where children are growing up, hastens the demise of our American society. The danger of fathers in our church family homes not assuming their proper place as a husband, priest and parent is also a growing menace. The Judeo-Christian ethic, with all its spiritual benefits, is slowly being lost as materialism requires too much time away from effective parenting. Too many of us have fallen into the mindset that "our children deserve to have it better than we did when we were growing up." Unfortunately that translates into a nicer house, better car, fancier clothes and a better education. The quest for all these things robs fathers of the time needed for **effective parenting**, which is the focus of our meeting together.

Becoming an effective father requires us to examine God's word in three functions a family man must excel in. They are a **godly husband**, a **priest in the home**, and an **effective parent**. Each area of responsibility will be addressed separately. All discussion is based on the assumption he is a born again believer.

## What traits are to be found in a godly husband?

1. He has sought God's guidance for a "---- **help meet for him.**" Genesis 2:18; "**And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make an help meet for him**" What does that mean? How shall man respond to God as to what she is like?

How shall he love her?

a) Eph. 5:25; "**Husbands, love you wives, even as Christ loved the church: and gave himself for it.**" Give examples of what that means in terms of loving our wives.

b) I Peter 3:7 states; "**Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honor as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.**" What kind of knowledge is he alluding to? (body, soul and spirit) What does giving honor unto the weaker vessel mean? (deferring to her physical needs) What does being joint heirs of the grace of life imply?

c) In what phases of married life does I Peter 3:7 apply? Consider the following two scriptures: Prov. 5:18; "**Let thy fountain be blest: and rejoice with the wife of thy youth.**" and Eccl. 9:9a; "**Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of the life of thy vanity---**" What do these two verses imply?

The honeymoon really should never end until death. Though the elements that comprise "the grace of life" change somewhat with age, the intimacy should not. Children (and grandchildren) that witness an abiding love between mom and dad feel safe and secure and courageous when they seek "an help meet for them." It has been said; cont. 'The finest gift a father can give his children is to love their mother.'

## 2. A priest in the home:

There is such a short time for us to be fathers. The short time allotted for this most important privilege comes at a time when many other responsibilities inundate us. They loom large as we labor to provide the necessities of life for our families. Nothing is more critical than seizing every opportunity to sow the seeds of Christian truth in the hearts and minds of our children. That is our responsibility as priests of our home. Consider the following elements of our priesthood:

**a) The teaching of God's Word:** Deut. 6: verse 3 declares, **“Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe to do it; that it may be well with thee, -----,”** Then verses 4 – 6 declare the commandments of God. In these terms: **“Hear, O Israel, The Lord our God is one Lord. And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day shall be in thine heart:”**

How shall we teach them? (diligently – verse 7) When shall we teach them? (at every opportunity – verse 7) Where shall they be displayed? (on our hands, between our eyes, verse 8 – on the door post and gates – verse 9) What does obedience to these instructions require?

**b) Teaching the dangers of affluence:** Deut. 6: 10 – 12; verses ten and eleven enumerate the following; **great and goodly cities** (which you didn't build); **houses full of all good things** (which you didn't fill); **wells** and **vineyards** and **olive trees** (which you didn't dig or plant), **when thou shalt have eaten and be full, Then beware lest thou forget the Lord, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.”** (verse 8) How does that message apply to us? What did God imply with the statements, they didn't dig the wells, plant the vineyards and trees or fill the houses? Why does affluence tend to diminish God in our family's life?

**c) Teaching the uniqueness of us as a people in this world:** Deut. 6:20 reads; **“ And when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What mean the testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgments, which the Lord our God hath commanded you?**

Then verses 21 – 23 declare the wonderful leading of God for his people. Verses 24 and 25 reveal the full value of those things that identified them as a separated and preserved people; **“And the Lord commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the Lord our God, for our good always, that he might preserve us alive, as it is this day. And it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the Lord our God, as he hath commanded us.”**

What are some commandments we observe that make us a **peculiar people?** How do we answer our children when they ask us about them? How do you explain to them the observations they sometimes make that others among us don't practice it?

**d) Defending our faith and brotherhood:** Joshua 23:6 **“Be ye therefore very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the Law of Moses, that ye turn not**

**aside therefrom to the right hand or to the left;”** I Cor. 15:58 reflects the Apostle Paul’s uncompromising position on upholding biblical principles; **“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”** How should we respond to our family when challenges arise that threaten upholding tenets of the faith? Joshua later declared to all Israel, **“----- but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”** Joshua 24:15

**e) Living the example:** All the teaching and preaching avails nothing if the preacher doesn’t practice it. His failure to live it leaves the impression it isn’t worth much. Edgar A. Guest wrote, “I’d rather see a sermon than hear one any day. I’d rather someone walked with me that only pointing out the way. Paul reminded Timothy of his heritage when he wrote; **“When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also.”** II Tim. 1:5

### **3. Parenting God’s Way: POEM – Children**

Proverbs 22:6 exhorts parents to **“Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.”** What does this verse imply to us as parents? What does **“and when he is old”** mean? How is training a child different than raising a child?

Professional trainers declare that four things are necessary to train anyone. All four steps are necessary to reach the intended outcome. They are; **telling someone what needs to be done; showing them how to do it; watch them do it until they know how to do it and follow up to make sure they are still doing it.**

Consider several elements that are involved in successful training:

- a) Understanding the uniqueness of each child: **“Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.”** Psalm 139:16 The Amplified Bible reads; **“Your eyes saw my unformed substance, and in Your Book all the days of my life were written before ever they took shape, when as yet there was none of them.”** What else is unique about each person besides their DNA? What does that suggest is necessary in training each child? The goal in training each child is to direct their will without breaking their spirit!
- b) Father and mother agreeing together on “rules of the home” and maintaining consistency. **What families in the Bible failed in doing this, and what were the outcomes?**
- c) Exercising proactive discipline: Eph. 6:4; **And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.”** Under what conditions are we **least likely** to provoke a child to wrath? How can a parent exercise corporal punishment without provoking a child to wrath? Under what circumstances is corporal punishment necessary?

d) Maintain a loving relationship with each child. A loving relationship will be the strongest deterrent for a child to make wrong choices. Solomon felt the love of his parents and wrote about it in Proverb's 4: 3&4; "For I was my father's son, tender and only beloved in the sight of my mother. He taught me also and said unto me, Let thine heart retain my words: keep my commandments and live." This parental love probably caused him initially to follow in his father's footsteps. It caused God to give him greater wisdom than he asked for and caused Israel to be at peace as long as he lived. Unfortunately, he became a fool in his latter years through bad associations.

POEM --- My Father's Footsteps

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