

LESSON 6

THE FATHER'S PLACE IN THE HOME

Scripture Texts: Proverbs 17:6; Genesis 18:19; Exodus 12:26-27; Isaiah 38:19; Proverbs 20:7; 1 Timothy 3:4-5; Ephesians 6:4

As the husband becomes a father, his responsibility to his wife becomes greater because it now reaches out to the new responsibilities created by the children born into the home. As the father, he becomes responsible not only to feed and clothe them, but God holds him responsible to see that they are taught His statutes and raised under His admonition.

For a man to share the title of "father" with God Himself is a high honor. What kind of man does God wish one to be who wears this title?

The glory of children are their fathers. The father influences his children for God by teaching, example, and discipline.

MEMORY VERSE: *Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.*

Colossians 3:21

Father's Responsibility

Proverbs 17:6 The glory of children are their fathers. Although a mother's qualities are the highest, the father is given qualities the mother will never have. Children draw honor from the father whose blood flows in their veins. They take pride in knowing "This is my father." Children's character is greatly influenced by the character of their father. In a real sense his honor IS their honor.

Genesis 18:19 For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him. These are the words of the Lord concerning Abraham. He will lead his children to follow his example, using his authority to secure obedience, if necessary. **They shall keep the way of the Lord.** Abraham walked in the way the Lord led and would see that his children did the same. He was not an indifferent or negligent father. For this reason, God could use Abraham in the place He planned for him. The responsibility of raising the children for Christ rests upon the father. He does it by example, by teaching and training, and by discipline. With firmness and kindness, he requires obedience. He teaches them God's Word. This is the most important quality for bringing up children.

Exodus 12:26-27 When your children shall say . . . What mean ye by this service? Children are always asking why. It gives parents an excellent opportunity for teaching. **Ye shall say**—tell them what the Bible has to say, and how it leads to their salvation in Christ. God commanded Israelite parents to teach their children of God and His blessings and commands. (Read Deuteronomy 6:20-25 and Joshua 4:21-24.) **When your children shall ask their fathers . . .** Fathers were to take the lead in teaching children.

Pass On the Truth

Isaiah 38:19 The father to the children shall make known thy truth. God's truth is a trust which must be passed on. It is the father's responsibility to pass it on. This is TEACHING. Almost any change can be made in one generation. The Gospel can be lost or gained in that time. We cannot suppose that our children will know the Gospel just because we do. They will not unless it is taught to them. We are the ones who must teach them.

Proverbs 20:7 The just man walketh in his integrity. He lives righteously. **His children are blessed after him.** How? Children are not rewarded for their father's good life, but his life is an example to them. A good example is a blessing. It shows the way and encourages them to walk in it. A father's life cannot save his children, but it can be a powerful influence drawing them to be saved. This is EXAMPLE.

Rule Well

1 Timothy 3:4 One that ruleth well his own house. The advice that Paul gave Timothy here is the standard for fathers to follow also. What is a good ruling? Having his children in subjection—obedient. It is the duty of the father to direct his children and see that they obey. Not by severity, force, threat, bribery, coaxing, or scheming. The effectiveness of these are limited. They do not reach into children's hearts and create a desire to obey. He is to do it with gravity—with a serious appreciation of the importance of his duty. He is to use Christlike judgment. He is concerned with all that affects his children's welfare. He is to direct with firmness in a consistent manner—not changeable indecision. This is DISCIPLINE. The children will, in turn, respond with respect for the will of the father and for the rightness of his methods.

1 Timothy 3:5 If a man cannot rule his own children well, **his own house**, how can he be used in any work in the Church of God? He is not capable to rule over any part of the work of God.

A Good Father

Ephesians 6:4 Ye fathers—God places the upbringing of children squarely on the father's shoulders. He is the superintendent with responsibility. A good father **pitieth his children** (Psalm 103:13). Even in punishing, he uses judgment and consideration without anger. **Bring them up in the nurture and admonition**—warning. A father with a deep interest in his children notices their faults and studies how best to correct them. He sees their needs and plans how best to fill them. He will guide their feet out of wrong ways into right ones. Both the **nurture** and the **admonition** must be **of the Lord**—in His Spirit of love and according to His Word. To do this, one must have the Lord within. An unsaved father may be a good father in many earthly ways, but to measure to God's standard, he must be saved.

There is nothing more important than the upbringing of our children. God gave them. God will require an account. This is our first task. All our other activities and interests should be planned, regulated, or changed so as to do this task in the best way, acceptably to God.

JUST A THOUGHT

Some children strive to live up to the character of their father; others must strive to live it down.

This lesson is adapted from a lesson by Mary Lehmann.
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