

“How to be a Godly Father”

Ephesians 6:1-4

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I. Introduction

- A. It's Father's Day, and I want to look together with you at the subject of how to be a godly father.
 - 1. Someone has said, "A Child is not likely to find a father in God unless he finds something of God in his father."
 - 2. The three greatest joys in my life:
 - a) Saved
 - b) Married
 - c) Father and Grandfather
- B. It is not easy to be a godly father in today's world. Why?
 - 1. The drift away from the Biblical pattern for marriage
 - 2. The decaying morality
 - 3. The description of the Last Days (2 Timothy 3:1-3)
- C. As Christian fathers, God has given us precepts in His Word to follow; however, before we look at that, we will look first at His Word to children

II. The Duty Paul Sets before Children (Ephesians 6:1-3)

- A. The action of obedience (v.1)
 - 1. What does it mean to “obey?”
 - a) It is fitting and right in accordance with natural law
- B. The attitude of honor (v.2)
 - 1. How do children honor their parents?
 - a) It's hard because not all parents are honorable; however, we should still honor them by:
 - 1) Obedience
 - 2) Respect
 - 3) Love
 - 4) Care
 - 2. Why? Because it is a commandment with a promise
 - a) *"A child who grows up to love, honor, and obey his mother and father lays the foundation for a happier, more stable, and more successful life than does a child who is rude, disrespectful, self-willed and rebellious. A stormy path lies ahead for a disobedient child. He will drift into bad company, resent all rule and authority, and in many cases end up on the wrong side of the law. Contemporary society has produced a bumper crop of young people who are determined to "do their own thing." Many of them are enmeshed in the drug and sex scene, and are filled with restlessness and rage." – John Philips*

- b) “The fear of the Lord adds length to life, but the years of the wicked are cut short.” (Proverbs 10:27)
- c) “The eye that mocks a father, that scorns obedience to a mother, will be pecked out by the ravens of the valley, will be eaten by the vultures.” (Proverbs 30:17)

III. Instructions for Fathers (Ephesians 6:4)

A. The Bible is a balanced book. God does not command children to obey and honor their parents without also giving the parents a corresponding responsibility.

- 1. Paul gives his instruction to fathers specifically
 - a) The responsibility for managing a home and raising children is primarily theirs
 - b) In one pungent sentence, Paul gives the principles we need to be faithful fathers
 - c) It comes in two parts. The first is negative, and the second is positive

B. The negative (v.4a)

- 1. “Provoke not your children to wrath” (v.4)
 - a) "Do not exasperate your children."
- 2. Fathers can easily misuse their authority. How?
 - a) Criticism
 - 1) Winston Churchill has such a father in Lord Randolph Churchill. He did not like the looks of Winston; he did not like his voice; he did not like to be in the same room with his son. He never complimented him—only criticized him. His biographer excerpts young Winston's letters begging both parents for his father's attention: 'I would rather have been apprenticed as a bricklayer's mate...it would have been natural...and I should have got to know my father...'
 - b) Over strictness
 - 1) Don't be overly strict and controlling
 - 2) It happens often in Christian homes. Why?
 - a. To keep them from the world
 - b. Living by the Law, not by grace
 - c. Concerned about what others will think
 - 3) Inconsistency
 - a. What you say and what you do
 - b. Promises you don't keep
 - 4) Favoritism
 - a. Illustration- Isaac favored Esau over Jacob, so Jacob favored Joseph
 - b. Equal time and attention

- 5) Irritability
 - a. Impatience
 - b. How many children lose heart because their fathers have “hard days?”
 - c. Dads, we must walk in the Spirit, and we will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh.
- 6) Neglect
 - a. *“God has created our children with their hearts turned toward ours. Our power is awesome. We must take God's Word to heart.”* – R. Kent Hughes.

C. The positive

1. Paul now provides the formula that will prosper a child and help fathers to be faithful to God’s call
2. Three “do’s” for fathers:
 - a) Tenderness
 - 1) “Bring them up” (v.4)
 - 2) Let them be fondly cherished
 - 3) The term expresses the loving care that a parent should have for his children.
 - 4) Children need a father's love. It is not only to provide for them physically; we need to mature them with the Lord.
 - a. Tell them
 - b. Hug them
 - c. Listen and talk with them
 - d. Spend time with them
 - b) Discipline
 - 1) “Nurture” (v.4)
 - 2) If we love our children, we will discipline them
 - a. “He that spareth his rod hateth his son, but he that loveth him chasteneth him often.” (Proverbs 13:24)
 - b. Same as God with us (Hebrews 12:6)
 - 3) It should be done at an early age
 - a. “Chasten thy son while there is hope and let not thy soul spare for his crying.” (Proverbs 19:18)
 - b. “The rod and reproof give wisdom but a child left to himself bringeth his mother shame.” (Proverbs 29:15)
 - c. “Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.” (Proverbs 22:15)
 - 4) How?
 - a. Start young
 - b. Based on prior instruction
 - c. In private

- d. Tell them why
 - e. Not in anger
 - f. In the right place of the body
 - g. Look for a change of heart
 - h. Take time for love and forgiveness
- 5) Susannah Wesley, the mother of seventeen children, including John and Charles Wesley, once wrote these words: 'The parent who studies to subdue self-will in his child walks together with God in the renewing and saving of a soul. The parent who indulges in self-will does the devil's work, makes religion impractical, salvation unattainable, and does all that in him lies to drown his child, soul, and body forever.'
- c) Instruction
 - 1) "Admonition of the Lord" (v.4)
 - 2) It is verbal instruction with a warning
 - a. "To place before the mind."
 - 3) It's a father's responsibility to instruct their children in Spiritual things.
 - 4) Some say we should be non-directive and leave children to find their own way.
 - 5) If we fathers are to instruct our children in Spiritual matters, then we must know the Word of God for ourselves. We must pray and set the example of serving the Lord.
 - a. (Deuteronomy 6:4-9)
 - b. "And that from a child..." (2 Timothy 3:15)

V. Conclusion

A. To be a Godly father, we must:

- 1. Be right with God
- 2. How?
 - a) Salvation (Ephesians 2:8-9)
 - b) Sanctification (Ephesians 5:18)
 - c) Scripture
 - d) Service
- 3. Be right with our wives. How?
 - a) Love them
 - b) Be devoted to them
 - c) Give honor (1 Peter 3:7)

4. Be right with our children

- a) Don't exasperate them
- b) Love and cherish them
- c) Discipline them
- d) Instruct them
- e) Spend time with them
- 1) (Psalm 127)
- f) Lead them in worship
- g) Take them to church