

A Father's Responsibility to his Children

The Bible has a great deal to say about parenting. It is filled with examples of what God considers to be effective parenting and how we may be lacking as we bring forth the next generation. It is sad that our world considers the role of fathers to be a largely unnecessary one. Everyone knows a child needs his mother, but few seem to believe the child equally needs his father. While many in our world would limit the father's responsibilities to his children to such things as money, food, and clothing, the Bible is very explicit that his responsibility goes far deeper than these surface issues. Look at what God considers to be a father's responsibility to his children.

Raise them. In our world, the mother is the parent generally considered responsible for the raising of the children. On more occasions than I care to count I have heard phrases such as "I leave the raising of the kids to their mother," proceed from the mouth of a father. Fathers are often deemed too busy, or maybe more accurately, too disinterested to be bothered with such a "woman's responsibility."

But God does not consider it to be the mother's responsibility alone. When God said: "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4), he did not make a mistake. Consider the words translated as, "bring them up." It means "nourish them" or "nurture them." God has placed the responsibility of nurturing our children in the commandments of the Lord squarely on the shoulders of fathers. Most of the problems our families and society encounter today is rooted in the dereliction of duty when it comes to fathers raising their children. If our children are untrained, unruly, and unprepared to serve God or benefit man, it is the father upon whom God places the blame.

Lead them. It is time fathers started stepping back up to the plate in leading their families, especially in the spiritual realm. For far too many generations the mother has been forced to be the spiritual leader in the home. She has been the one making sure everyone is there for services, reading her Bible with the children, and striving to be at every church event she can. Meanwhile, dad can't hardly get out of bed on Sunday morning, would rather be hunting than serving, and has not read the Bible to his children since who knows when. If I had a dollar for every time a Christian wife told me that she wished her husband would take the lead in serving God and teaching the children about Him in their home, my savings account would be vastly improved.

God said of Abraham, "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him" (Genesis 18:19). Abraham was the leader of his household and God respected him for it. Have we earned the same respect from God?

There is no such thing as a perfect father, author included. Nevertheless, these are things God has put on our shoulders. They are also things our wives need us to place on our own shoulders and stop trying to add extra weight to their already heavy loads. Let us, as husbands and fathers, fulfill the expectations of God and bring glory to Him by letting our children see His love in us. ~~ *Adam Cozort*