

FATHER KNOWS BEST

Perhaps some of you remember the show “Father Know Best.” While it was a great show that was an example of “Good” T.V., there is an even better example of fatherhood in Ephesians 6: 1-4.

As a father myself, I want us to reflect on some things that have a special meaning to me, in hopes that they will encourage your heart as well.

Definition of small boy: “Father’s Day is just like Mother’s Day except you don’t have to spend as much.” Another said: A Father is someone who carries pictures in his wallet where the money used to be.”

Good definitions, but my aim is twofold today. In obedience to Eph. 6:1,2, I want to honor my earthly father. I also want to be a good earthly father. Childhood is the time to learn obedience. However, as a child grows, obedience should mature to honor, tribute, and care.

Notice the promise in verse 3. It comes from Deut 5:16. In the days of Israel, God protected his people from their enemies. This verse is meant as a general principle not to forsake the relationship God had put in place. Also, “first” doesn’t always mean first in a chronological sense. It can also mean “first in rank.” I have heard some say that they cannot “honor” their parents because their parents have an ungodly lifestyle. But even so, we are to see the things in others which reflect God’s image, no matter how distorted.

It is sad when this happens, however. I read in a Sat. Evening Post an old article called “The Seven Stages of the Married Cold.”

1. “Sugar, I’m worried about your cold. I’m taking you straight to the hospital. I know that sometimes the food is not the best, so I have arranged to have your meals catered.”
2. Second year – “Listen, Darling, I don’t like the sound of that cough. I have called the Dr. who is coming right over. Now go and rest.”
3. Third Year: “Now maybe you better lie down and rest a little. Do we have any chicken soup?”
4. 4th year – “Look, dear, be sensible. After you feed the kids and get the laundry done, you better lie down.”
5. Fifth year – “Why don’t you take some aspirin?”
6. “For Petes sake stop sneezing, you are going to give me pneumonia.”
7. “You know, if you would just gargle, you wouldn’t be barking like a seal.”

Billy Sunday said: “Gentlemen, try praising your wife, even if it frightens her.”

So we want to do two things. First, I want us to think about honoring our earthly Fathers in obedience and appreciation. Then, we need to take our cues from the Lord. Jesus’ aim was to glorify God. Ours should be nothing else.

I. My Father

1. He is nearing 87 years on this earth. He has not simply transmitted information to me, but rather demonstrated a life that reflects the glory and honor of God. He has done this in many ways. Today I will mention four.

HE HAS TAUGHT ME THAT THERE IS A GREAT MAJESTIC GOD IN HEAVEN,
AND WE WERE MEANT TO LIVE FOR HIS GLORY, NOT OUR OWN.

This lesson is taught when the connection between “Grace” and “glory” is seen. (Compare Ephesians 1:7 with Ephesians 3:16. Dad uses stationary that says on the bottom: “Not unto us, not unto us, O Lord, but to Thy name be glory.” Obviously “giving glory to God” does not imply that we have something to give Him which He lacks. It means to find our sufficiency in Him and Him alone. In two speeches I have heard him deliver recently, he ended both by saying: “Glory to God.” But it is not just saying it – it is living it.

WHEN THINGS SEEM TO CRASH IN ON YOU, REMEMBER THE POWER OF GOD TO MAKE THEM TURN OUT GOOD. Romans 8:28. A clear demonstration of this was when my Mom died. Visiting him months after her funeral, he was in better shape than most people who knew my Mom. Of course, he grieved and missed her, but he lived day by day (still does) with a firm confidence in God.

LIFE IS PRECIOUS. DON'T PRESUME ON TOMORROW AND DON'T WASTE OPPORTUNITIES OF TODAY. Dad retired because his full time vocational job was hindering him from doing what he liked most – ministering to others. For over 30 years, he has gone to the RYDC to minister to those kids. Recently, they named the facility for him. I dare not begin to guess how many kids he has influenced for God.

SCRIPTURAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHERS ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT WAY TO INSPIRE, ENCOURAGE, AND HELP OTHERS. Going out to eat at some of my favorite spots in Dalton is like a yo-yo. You are up and down – up and down with all the people stopping by the table to speak. It may not be the most convenient way to eat, but it is good on your digestion. He bakes cakes for newcomers and those sick. He takes the young people of his church under his wing to feed them Chili. He goes to weddings to rejoice with others, and to funerals to offer his love. He and Mom used to give Bibles to graduating seniors. Even though it is politically incorrect now, I'm sure he finds ways to get the Bibles given in some other fashion, even if just to a few. I dare say that everything he does is governed by one rule – RELATIONSHIP of LOVE.

It is such an awesome privilege
And a big responsibility
God has given to us as parents
This wonderful opportunity

To raise our precious children
And instill within their lives
The wonder and amazement
Of the love of Jesus Christ

Through everything they face in life
Be there to cheer them on
We only have one chance at this
For childhood soon is gone
Relying on our Father God
To raise them to become
Men and women who trust in Him
And in His precious Son

II. OUR HEAVENLY FATHER

You sum up the whole of the NT teaching in a single phrase: It is the revelation of the Fatherhood of God. If you want to know how well a person understands Christianity, find out how much he makes of the thought of being God's child. Everything that Christ taught and everything that is distinctively Christian as opposed to merely Jewish, is summed up in the knowledge of the Fatherhood of God.

It implies four things:

1. Authority. Jesus came to do His Father's will (John 6:38; 17:4; 5:19; 4:34).
READ
2. It implies affection. (John 5:20; 15:9) READ
3. Fellowship. (John 16:32; 8:29). READ
4. Implies HONOR. God wills to exalt His Son (John 17:1; 5:22ff).

These things BEGIN to help us understand how He is Father. Go through the Sermon on the Mt. and underline all the times Jesus says: FATHER.

Questions for consideration:

1. Do I understand "adoption?" Do I value it and understand what a blessing it is?
2. Do I treat God as my Father in heaven who is to be honored, praised, worshipped and loved?
3. Have I learned to hate what my Father hates and love what He loves?
4. Do I love others as brothers and sisters who also have the Father as their own?
5. Am I proud to be a son/daughter of God?
6. Does the family likeness appear in me?

When Charles Wesley came to Christ in 1738, his experience overflowed in some marvelous verses which are in the Methodist hymnal:

O how shall I the goodness tell
Father, which Thou to me hast showed
That I, a child of wrath and hell,

Should now be called a child of God.

How indeed?