

LENEXA EDIFIER

"and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:32)

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A Word to Fathers

Jefferson David Tant

Men have some very important roles to fulfill in family life. There are quite a few passages in the Bible, both Old and New Testaments that mention their responsibilities. This article is focused on the relationship with their children that God has given fathers.

One of the early passages on this subject deals with God choosing Abraham to be a leader, since *"Abraham will surely become a great and mighty nation, and in him all the nations of the earth will be blessed? For I have chosen him, so that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice, so that the LORD may bring upon Abraham what He has spoken about him."* (**Genesis 18:18-19**) Obviously God knew something about Abraham's character and what he would do as a father.

Then we have a familiar passage in **Deuteronomy 6:6-7**: *"These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up."*

There are passages that deal with the subject in the New Testament, as well. **Ephesians 6:4** is a well-known admonition: *"Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord."* That phrase *"bring them up"* is from the Greek :ektrepho," which is defined as "to rear up to maturity, i.e. (genitive case) to cherish or train:--bring up, nourish."

We need to be reminded of these exhortations, as we live in a busy world today. Fathers have jobs so they can earn money to provide for the family, and there is time spent watching TV, reading newspapers and magazines, taking care of things around the house such as mowing the lawn and making repairs when needed, etc. And in their busy lives, sometimes neglected is one

of the most important things a father can do, which is to be the spiritual leader of his children.

This is not to negate the influence of mothers in this role, for that is also vitally important. We know that it was Timothy's mother and grandmother that had a great influence on his life. Paul wrote about this in **II Timothy 1:5 and 3:15**: *'For I am mindful of the sincere faith within you, which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am sure that it is in you as well.'* – *"and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."*

We know that Timothy's father was not a Christian, and obviously his mother and grandmother fulfilled their responsibility in his spiritual education.

In today's society, I am afraid that too many times the chief teacher of spiritual values to children is the mother, and it is commendable that mothers fulfill their role in this. But that does not excuse fathers from their God-given responsibility.

In our society today in the United States, there are more and more attacks on faith in God. By some estimates, some 70% of our children lose their faith by the time they graduate from college. There are professors who have stated that their aim is to destroy the faith of their students and make them citizens of the 21st Century. Consider the following quote: "Children have a right not to have their minds addled by nonsense. And we as a society have a duty to protect them from it. So, we should no more allow parents to teach their children to believe, for example, in the literal truth of the Bible... than we should allow parents to knock their children's teeth out or lock them in a dungeon." ("What Shall We Tell the Children?", (Amnesty Lecture, Oxford, Feb. 21, 1997)

This is what we have to deal with in our nation in this day and time, as God and the Bible have been kicked out of our public schools.

Fathers, you have a vital role to fill with respect to your children, not only with your teaching, but with your example. And that role begins when they are young. The word "childhood" in **II Timothy 3:15** is from the Greek "brephos" and is defined as "an infant (properly, unborn) literally or figuratively:--babe, (young) child, infant." The sweet picture is evident that the father is serious in showing his baby a spiritual lesson by his example.



In our home when our children were growing up, the breakfast table was the place for our morning devotional before our children left to go to school. Their neighborhood friends were invited, and some did come, and in time were baptized into Christ.

Fathers, you have various roles to fill in your lives, but there is no more important role than for you to fulfill the role given you as a father, as cited earlier in **Ephesians 6:4**: *"Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord."* -jdtant3@juno.com

GAMBLING # 5 What Are We Slaves To?

"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God

and mammon" (Matthew 6:24). It might be true that a person could work at two jobs. He would have two bosses and could juggle the workload and responsibilities. That is not what Jesus is talking about. A slave cannot have two masters. A slave must be wholly devoted to only one master. A slave cannot be wholly committed to two masters. The essence of slavery is single ownership.

"And Elijah came to all the people, and said, how long will you falter between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him. But the people answered him not a word" (1 Kings 18:21). This passage gets at the heart of gambling, worldliness, the problem of church attendance, giving to the Lord, or whatever the issue might be. The truth is, too many Christians have never fully made up their minds that they want to be followers of Jesus. We are good about dabbling in Christianity. We do not want too much of Jesus. We surely do not want enough to make us uncomfortable or to alienate us from our social networks or enough to cause others to dislike us. We want to have an allegiance to Jesus and at the same time, participate in the world.

Mammon is an Aramaic word (Aramaic a Semitic language; it is like Hebrew but is not derived from Hebrew; Aramaic was spoken by Jews in the 1st c.). It means wealth. Jesus says that kingdom citizens cannot divide their loyalty between Him and wealth. We are either exclusively and entirely devoted to Christ or we are not. We cannot have it both ways; we cannot serve God and mammon.

We are familiar with the phrase "last hired, first fired." We know what that means in terms of employment and then losing one's job. That principle is close to being true in our service to the Lord. That is, when times are tough, the Lord is often the first one to be fired. When we must make sacrifices financially, or, when we must make choices about certain activities, the Lord is often the first "to be fired." We cut and economize our service to the Lord; we refuse to give up our desire for mammon.

Isaiah said about the Lord: *"For My own sake, for My own sake, I will do it; For how should My name be profaned? And I will not give My glory to another" (48:11).* The Lord will not be simply one among many other gods. Our desire for more is often fueled by gambling. Read **Matthew 6:24** again. When we love mammon, we hate Christ. We enthrone self and

dethrone Jesus. We displace the Savior for a higher loyalty. He is willing to give us all we want; we do not want enough. How sad!

Randy Harshbarger

A timely quote from Corrie ten Boom.

“Sex,” I was pretty sure, meant whether you were a boy or girl, and “sin” made Tante Jans very angry, but what the two together meant I could not imagine. And so, seated next to Father in the train compartment, I suddenly asked, “Father, what is sexsin?” He turned to look at me, as he always did when answering a question, but to my surprise he said nothing. At last he stood up, lifted his traveling case from the rack over our heads, and set it on the floor. “Will you carry it off the train, Corrie?” he said. I stood up and tugged at it. It was crammed with the watches and spare parts he had purchased that morning.

“It’s too heavy,” I said.

“Yes,” he said. “And it would be a pretty poor father who would ask his little girl to carry such a load. It’s the same way, Corrie, with knowledge. Some knowledge is too heavy for children. When you are older and stronger you can bear it. For now you must trust me to carry it for you.”

- from *The Hiding Place: The Story of Corrie Ten Boom*
We are asking our children to carry loads that are way too heavy for them. They should not be forced, as children, to see and feel the world through the lens of adults. Innocence is worth protecting and worth fighting for. We need to do our part as teachers, parents and caregivers to carry certain things for them until they are old enough to bear the load.

ARE WE LISTENING?

The prophet Habakkuk asks God why he has to endure violence and injustice even as He calls on God to end it with His power. He then further asks God how He can justify using a nation that is more evil to punish another nation for its evil conduct. The answer he receives is very similar to what a child receives from his parent when he inquires why things cannot always be the way he desires.

God tells him evil must be punished but that, *the righteous shall live by faith*. While that is a short statement, it is filled with a powerful message to all

who would trust in the Lord and His promises.

The Old Testament prophets are inspired to use literal language of power. In reading their words we must understand God will not be sending literal lions to overpower evil in the lives of men. But what He does intend for us is to believe His power is real and active as He supports the righteous and resists the evil ones. For us the understanding of how this occurs in our lives is crucial. Just what has God promised me if I live by faith as He encourages? He has promised by the Holy Spirit, to grant an inheritance with His Son Jesus Christ to all those who remain faithful to Christ unto death (**Romans 8:15-17; Ephesians 1:13,14; 2 Timothy 4:6-8**). What I must understand is this promise is eternal in nature, therefore it is a promise to the spirit of man. It is a promise to that part of man that was created in the image of God.

That means I will need to remain faithful to Christ above and beyond all else in this life. It must truly be God and Christ first and all else next. That is what it means to be faithful unto death. A cursory look at the lives of the apostles and early Christians lets me know that earthly concerns are of a secondary nature and that I should be pleased with His promise to sustain me *here* as I work to go *there* when this life is over (**Matthew 6:33**). Any excuses I may offer to explain my detraction from His cause, whether it be family, job, health, is just that an excuse offered by me, but not accepted by Him.

Jim Stauffer

Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

(2 Corinthians 4:16–18)

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Psa. 1:1 *Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.*

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