

Building The Bond Between Parents And Children

Introduction...

- I. Dateline: Oct. 30, 2005. Today I am approximately 19,152 days old (that sounds old, doesn't it?). It occurred to me a few days ago that, out of so many days, seven stand out as head and shoulders above the rest.
 - A. Five of those seven days are related to my children in some way.
 - B. Three of these five are the days upon which each was born.
- II. The birth of a child is a very special thing. Few things measure up to it.
 - A. You take your wife to the doctor for the first time and he confirms what you suspected- you are happy, excited, and filled with anticipation.
 - B. You enjoy telling others and letting them share in your joy.
 - C. The next several months are spent in careful preparation.
 - D. Then the pains start and you rush to the hospital. There are anxious moments. Then one of the most natural, yet also one of the most special, things in all the earth occurs; a new life is born and you look into the precious face of your child.
- III. As a father at this point, whether you are a Christian or a non-Christian will determine exactly the feelings that you have over the next little while...
 - A. A non-Christian father will tentatively lay plans with earthly interests and considerations — feelings of responsibility.
 - B. A devout Christian father will manifest many of these same feelings. But more importantly, eternity will be in his heart. Feeling the responsibility of a soul is considerably more important than feeling responsible to provide a college education.
- IV. Somewhere along the line, a parent asks himself the question: Why did I choose to have children? In answering that question myself I have found two very good reasons:
 - A. The first centers around the heart's immense capacity to love and be loved.
 1. God created every man with the wonderful ability to both dispense and receive love.
 2. There is no love among men to be compared to the love of a parent for a child or a child for a parent.
 3. Without that opportunity to experience love, one misses one of the greatest joys of life.
 - B. A second reason is found in a statement made by the Psalmist in...

Psa. 127:3-5 (3) Behold, children are a gift of the LORD, The fruit of the womb is a reward.
(4) Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, So are the children of one's youth.
(5) How blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them; They will not be ashamed
When they speak with their enemies in the gate.
- V. David described children as "**arrows in the hand of a warrior**" (v. 4).
 - A. Within the heart of man there is a desire to extend his influence beyond himself, particularly into the future. This desire may be rooted in man's longing for immortality. But, perhaps more reasonably, it is simply because you want your life to count for something.
 1. You want to believe that the world is a better place because you have lived – **Matt. 5:13,14**
 2. You want that influence, particularly for good, to continue long after you are gone.
 - B. Therefore, you bear children and you train them (**Prov.22:6**) and they become extensions of who you are. Your central purposes, at least in an ideal world, become their purposes.
- VI. The question I want to raise for consideration is this: How do you practically accomplish this? How do you build such a bond between you and your children that they become extensions of your most noble traits?

Discussion...

I. Dependable Authority To Respect...

- A. Children, merely by definition, are inherently immature (physically, socially, intellectually, and spiritually)... cf. Luke 2:52; Heb. 5:12ff; 1 Pet. 2:2
- B. God gives to parents the responsibility and authority to guide children to maturity... Eph. 6:1-4
- C. Therefore, more than being pals, God wants parents to be parents; to establish consistent parameters of behavior and enforce them.
 1. The parameters insure proper behavior
 2. The consistency insures respect.

II. Infallible Law To Live By...

- A. The Fathers of ancient Israel were given the sacred duty to teach their children the ways of God... Deut. 6:4-9
1. *"Teach them diligently."* (6:7) —
 - a. Teach with commitment and zeal; don't neglect this responsibility.
 2. *"Talk of them when you sit in your house."* (6:7) —
 - a. In private; let the commands of God have an important place in the innermost part of your life.
 3. *"Talk of them...when you walk by the way."* (6:7) —
 - a. Teach wherever you go; even while you travel. Use every occasion to show your children the application of God's law to life.
 4. *"Talk of them...when you lie down."* (6:7) —
 - a. Let the law of God be the last thing your children hear as they go to bed at night. Let them fall asleep with God's word on their mind.
 5. *"Talk of them...when you rise up."* (6:7) —
 - a. Teach your children the law of the Lord in the morning as they go forth to meet the day. Remind them, before they've had occasion in the day to sin against Him, that God is watching over wherever they go and whatever they do.
 6. *"Bind them as a sign on your hand."* (6:8) —
 - a. Let your children see the word of God live in everything you do. You cannot teach your children to do something that you are unwilling to do yourself.
 7. *"They shall be as frontals on your forehead."* (6:8) —
 - a. No one can know what you think like your children. They live with you in such a close relationship that they know what really governs your mind. If the word of God is foremost in your heart, they will know it.
 8. *"Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates."* (6:9) —
 - a. Make a public commitment to God. Your children should see that your commitment to God is not merely a hollow profession, but a commitment that rules your life and a confession which you are not ashamed to make to the world.
- B. Parents today, particularly fathers, have that same responsibility... Eph. 6:4
1. It is a role you cannot abdicate and a responsibility that you cannot delegate (not to the local preacher, the elders, nor Bible class teachers).
 2. Parents, it is your responsibility to spiritually educate your children!

III. Unconditional Love To Live With...

- A. We live in an age when many are unloving and without natural affection – sin which Paul condemned (Rom. 1:31). Child abuse is rampant in our society.
- B. Parents are commanded to love their children... Tit. 2:4,5; cf. 1 Cor. 13:4-8
- C. Love and its demonstration are a vital part of family life...
1. Children should see that their parents love one another...
 2. Children should see that their parents love them...

IV. Faithful Example To Follow...

- A. I lament the loss of role models in our society.
1. On the silver screen you used to see the Lone Ranger, Roy Rogers, and Gene Autry. And the good guys always wore white hats, the line between right and wrong was always clear; and the side of right and virtue always won.
 2. But now the names of role models are Stallone, Swartzneggar, and Van Dam. Might makes right is the philosophy they preach and violence is their method of choice. Further, the line between right and wrong is intentionally blurred.
- B. God calls for all, especially parents, to be examples... 1 Tim. 4:12; Matt. 5:16

- C. Our children need to see examples of...
 1. Moral purity...
 2. Faithful worship...
 3. Personal righteousness...
 4. Active service...

V. Consistent Discipline To Correct...

- A. As parents, we are commanded to discipline our children... Eph. 6:4; Heb. 12:7-8
 1. "Discipline" (GR *paideia*) means... the whole training and education of children (which relates to the cultivation of mind and morals, and employs for this purpose both commands and admonitions, as well as reproof and punishment)
 2. It includes two concepts...
 - a. Instruction in right ways...
 - b. Correction, even punitive discipline...
- B. Corrective discipline works. God says it does! (Despite modern pop-psychologists).

Prov. 13:24 *"He who spares his rod hates his son, But he who loves him disciplines him diligently."*
 [Speaks to those who say "I love my child too much to spank him.]

Prov. 22:15 *"Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; the rod of discipline will remove it far from him."*
 [Speaks to those who say, "Let them alone, children will be children]

Prov. 23:13-14 *"Do not hold back discipline from the child, although you beat him with the rod, he will not die. 14 You shall strike him with a rod and rescue his soul from Sheol."*
 [Speaks to those who say, "I don't want to hurt or inhibit my child.]

Prov. 29:15 *"The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child who gets his own way brings shame to his mother."*
 [Speaks to those who say, "Let your son sow his wild oats, they'll grow out of it and be OK.]

VI. Quantity AND Quality Time To Mature...

- A. The Bible, in no place, commands that you must spend "X" amount of time with your children. However, given everything we are commanded to do as parents, both *quantity* and *quality* time is *necessarily implied!*
 1. We live in a fast-paced society of over-crowded schedules. We eat our meals at "fast" food places and cook in microwaves.
 2. One thing we can't do if we want to have strong marriages and faithful children is short-change our families.
- B. Listen carefully fathers. Steve Farrar, in his book *Point Man*, makes an excellent point when he says that the #1 problem in our families today is absentee fathers. (He tells of how the family started disintegrating, not with the woman in the workplace, but with the industrial revolution when men went to the factories).
- C. Listen carefully mothers. God commands you to love your husbands, your children, and to be "*workers at home*" (Tit. 2:3-5).
- D. The point is this: There is no such thing as microwave families! If you short-change your family your risk unbearable grief and the wrath of an Almighty God!

VII. Hope To Live For...

- A. We need to teach our children an eternal perspective... Heb. 9:27; 2 Cor. 4:16-5:1
- B. We can't teach our children the value of fighting the good fight of faith without keeping before them the rewards... 2 Tim. 4:6-8
- C. This hope will...
 1. Purify them in obedience... 1 Jn. 3:1-3
 2. Motivates them to service...
 3. Sustain them in trials...
 4. Anchor them to Jesus... Heb. 6:18,19
- D. We have a divine obligation to impart to our children the hope that is in Christ Jesus!

Conclusion...

- I. I want to close my lesson by simply saying this: Every parent should see their responsibility of directing their children toward heaven as the most important challenge of their lives. I have always felt that, if I failed as a Father to my children, I will have failed in the greatest undertaking God has ever given me.
- II. My feelings were well worded by author Clifton Rogers:

That Little Fellow's Dad

I may never be as clever as my neighbor down the street;
I may never be as wealthy as some other men I meet;
I may never have the glory that some other men have had;
But I've got to be successful as a little fellow's Dad.

There are certain dreams I cherish that I'd like to see come true;
There are things I would accomplish ere my working time is through;
But the task my heart is set on is to guide a little lad,
And to make myself successful as a little fellow's Dad.

I may never come to glory; I may never gather gold;
Men may count me as a failure when my business life is told;
But if he who follows after shall be manly, I'll be glad,
For I know I've been successful as a little fellow's Dad.

It's the one job I dream of; it's the task I think of most;
If I'd fail that growing youngster, I'd have nothing else to boast;
For through wealth and fame I'd gather, all my future would be sad,
If I failed to be successful as that little fellow's Dad.