

Fathers

Intro:

1. Fatherhood is assailed as unnecessary; attacked as outdated, unhealthy male authoritarian figure that has held women back and terrorized children. In vogue to adopt into single-parent situations.
2. On the other hand, social scientists have studied sub-cultures where fathers are absent and found them key to the health, stability, well-being of the family.
3. What does **God** say? In short, fathers are crucial to the nurturing of children. Fatherhood is both an **honor** and a **responsibility**.

1. The Father: Head of the Family

- A. Much to the chagrin – even the anger and animosity – of feminism, God has made the male head of the household – Eph 5:23-24. A balancing caveat: exercise leadership in *love* – 5:25-27; as own bodies – 5:28-29.
- B. Such relationship with wife prepares husband to be a conscientious, benevolent father. See qualification of elder: *“having his children in submission with all reverence (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?)”* (1 Tim 3:4-5).
- C. **The divine pattern:** Jesus is husband of the bride (2 Cor 11:2); head of church (Eph 1:22-23), shepherd of the flock (1 Pet 5:4; Heb 13:20). **The Lord’s church needs fathers who are willing to stand up and lead!**

2. The Father: Supplier of Good Things

- A. Mt 7:7-9 – Fathers are cited as willing suppliers of children’s needs. When sick – medicine; when hungry – food; when fearful – comfort.
- B. Confusion on what children *need*:
 1. They do not need “quality time”; actually they need “quality time in quantity.” They need conversation, play, interest in activities. Where do children fall in your schedule?
 2. They do not need constant activity: sports, crafts, music, school extra curriculars, jobs *to a fault*. These things are not wrong within themselves, but they can undermine family unity, spiritual involvement.

3. Our children do not need *things* as much as they need teaching, companionship.

C. **The divine pattern:** Mt 7:11; Jas 1:17. When God can profit and nurture our souls through giving, He gives – generously (Jas 1:5). It is only when we are stubborn, self-willed and hard-hearted that He resorts to other means.

3. The Father: The Source of Discipline

A. Heb 12:9a – Human fathers give correction:

1. A universal expectation: “*for what son is there whom a father does not chasten?*” (Heb 12:7b).

2. Fathers chasten “*for a few days ... as seemed best to them*” (12:10a).

3. We can all appreciate the efforts of our parents to train, nurture and correct us *after the fact* – Heb 12:11.

B. The basic principle of correction/punishment is to impress upon the child the negative consequences of disobedience and the advantage of submitting to authority.

1. This takes **courage, energy, toughness, wisdom**. Too many parents fail to discipline as they should because they lack the character to stand up to their children.

2. Some have been brainwashed by psychologists into believing that punishment will damage self-esteem.

3. Others react to their own past mistakes (guilt), possible abusive treatment by own parents (reactionary). We must get past all this and trust in God’s teaching and expectations. ***We only get one chance to raise our children!***

C. **The divine pattern:** The whole context of Heb 12 compares God’s discipline with that of man:

1. 12:5-7a – “*For whom the Lord loves He chastens.*”

2. 12:9 – Subjection to God and acceptance of His correction leads to life.

3. 12:10 – The profit of correction is to become a partaker of His holiness.

Conclusion: We do not have to be **perfect** fathers/mothers. Children will forgive our mistakes if we deal with them honestly and lovingly. And God will help us with wisdom to be good fathers.