

The Godly Father's Responsibility

Ephesians 6:4 *Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.* (NIV) I am going to paraphrase this verse, in order to (hopefully) bring out the contrast in the verse.

1. Fathers, do not bring wrath out of your children.

rather:

2. Fathers, bring out of them the things of the Lord through discipline and by putting into their minds the things of the Lord.

It is just as important to not do the wrong things as it is to do the right things. One father said, "Do as I say, not as I do." We all realize how faulty this statement is. Yet how often do we follow this in our everyday life? Some think they have no responsibility when they say they are free to express their own desires. A godly father will realize that his freedoms are limited by the responsibility he took on when he chose to be a father.

Godly fathers understand their responsibility toward their families. President Truman said, "The buck stops here." So does the father. The godly father will not pawn off his responsibilities to his wife. That would be cowardice. The godly father does not blame his faults on others. That is denial. The godly father seeks out his responsibility and fulfills it. That is a hero.

A professional animal trainer tells the following story, "I was disturbed when my own dog developed a bad habit. Every time I hung my wash out on the clothesline, she would yank it down. Drastic action was called for. I put a white kitchen towel on the line and waited. Each time she pulled it off, I scolded her. After two weeks the towel was untouched. Then I hung out a large wash and left to do some errands. When I came home, my clean clothes were scattered all over the yard. On the line was the white kitchen towel."

Sometimes, even the most experienced and wisest of fathers will make mistakes. Poor judgments and missed opportunities will happen for a host of reasons. No one is perfect. Do mistakes cause the godly father to quit? Will the excuse stand before God that, "oops I can't do anything more, because I messed up in the past or that I might mess up again in the future."

I certainly hope not! You can put me right up there with the sons who think their dads are the best. Yet, I must admit. My dad was not perfect. But as long as breath lies in his lungs and the thinking process is allowed to go on in his mind, he knows that he is my dad. He always behaves as a dad. Is he a friend? You betcha! Is he my brother? You betcha! Is he my confidant? You betcha! Is he my playmate? You betcha! Yet, all of these are tempered by his first responsibility. He is my godly father.

Praise God for godly fathers. Won't you be one?