

Husbands And Fathers In The Home

Introduction. From the first time a young man says "I do" and hears his bride respond with the same magnificent answer, his life will never be the same. Other than his use of these words when he confesses his faith in Christ, no other words will be filled with such comprehensive meaning. Before, his chief thoughts may have been built around "I." Now there must be a change of pronouns. It is no longer "I" and "me," but now it is "we" and "us."

The same wonderful and significant feelings occur when a young husband becomes a father. Feelings never before experienced and responsibilities never before felt crowd into the happy heart of a joyful husband. The next 20 years or so can be either majestic or miserable depending upon how well the father conforms to biblical standards.

When a young man was a child it was proper for him to act as a child. When he was immature he was not expected to be mature. However, with the coming of marriage and home responsibilities he is expected to act as a man. Marriage is no place for a man to behave like a child. Leadership demands maturity.

From the beginning God fully intended that a man be a husband before he becomes a father. Marriage is first, and then comes the conception and birth of a child. When boys and girls seek to rearrange this order, trouble of the deepest kind is inevitable. Forgiveness can be attained, but scars can be inflicted upon the emotional framework that a lifetime will not fully erase.

I. ***He Is To Serve As The Head And Spiritual Leader Of The Home***

- A. Marriage forms an institution and establishes an organization. Each institution or organization must have a head if it is to function properly. God could have made the wife, the children, or the in-laws the head of the home, but He did not do so. He chose the husband and father and authorized this leadership to rest on righteous principles.
- B. Man's headship over the wife and home goes back to the very first marriage (Genesis 3:16). It continues through the Old Testament (1 Peter 3:5) and through the New Testament (1 Corinthians 11:3). Man comes into his greatest happiness and projects his greatest usefulness in life when he serves acceptably under Christ. Likewise, women come into their greatest happiness and usefulness when they serve acceptably under man.
- C. Paul establishes the husband's headship over the wife and home in Ephesians 5:22-24. It would be out of place for the spiritual head, Christ, to be submissive to the church. With Jesus at the helm of the home the wife will joyfully respond in the beautiful spirit of submissive reverence, reverence for Jesus, and respect for her husband.

- D. Children must also be in subjection to their fathers (Ephesians 6:1-3). The rulership of the husband and father is not established upon a tyrannical, harsh, or selfish domination. Fathers who through lack of interest or insufficient courage fail to assume this position are falling down in one of the paramount responsibilities of fatherhood. Immeasurable harm will result when parents do not assume their rightful roles of authority in the home.

II. ***He Is To Love His Wife And Children***

- A. The Holy Spirit did not choose Jacob and Rachel, Boaz and Ruth, or Joseph and Mary as His standard of marital affection. He chose a love that transcended all other love as the standard toward which He directed every husband for a sincere imitation. He chose the love of Christ for the church (Ephesians 5:25-27).
- B. Christ "loved" and Christ "gave." These verbs vibrate with deep beauty and real meaning. The two verbs "love" and "gave" are connected with deity's attitude toward fallen humanity (John 3:16; Ephesians 5:2). One may give without loving but it is impossible to love without giving.
- C. Some of the characteristics of this love include:
1. It was a pure love. The husband and father must have a pure love for his wife and children. For them he must seek the best.
 2. It was a sacrificial love. The cruelties of Calvary were not sufficient enough to keep Him from His purpose of redeeming mankind.
 3. It was an undying love. Often it does not take much to quench our love, but this was not the case with Jesus (John 13:1). Even when the apostles forsook Jesus in Gethsemane He still loved them.
 4. It was a forgiving love. Jesus and His Father have never withheld pardon from offending humanity when the necessary stipulations have been met.
- D. Paul also used one more illustration for love in Ephesians 5:28-30. No sane man will mistreat his own body. He will spare no expense in keeping it healthy and seeking to restore it when ailing. A husband and father who would mistreat his wife and children are, in my judgment, one of the cruelest people on earth. Proper love for them will work for harmony in the home. He will deal with them gently.

III. ***He Is To Provide For His Wife And Children***

- A. It is the height of injustice and the epitome of unfairness for a man to take a woman from her parent's home where she has had the security of food, shelter, clothing, and spiritual provisions and place her in a home where there is little or no security. It is equally unjust when a child is created and the husband and father is irresponsible in providing for them.

- B. From the beginning God intended the man to provide for the wife and children. By nature man is better able to battle the elements of the soil or to face the frustrations of the complex business world. Paul stated very plainly in 1 Timothy 5:8 that a person is responsible for those who begat him. If he is responsible for them, surely he is obligated to those whom he has begotten as well as to the wife through whom they were begotten.
- C. Children enter this world as creatures wholly dependent upon someone else. Every day of a child's life will find them in need of food, clothing, and shelter. The child must also be taught about the needs of his soul (Psalm 78:1-8; Ephesians 6:4). He deserves to learn not only how a living may be made but also how to make a life. Fathers cannot provide by proxy the personal attention their sons and daughters deserve and need.

IV. ***He Is To Be An Example***

- A. Words from a father's lips will not mean much to a child if there is a serious gap between what Dad says and what Dad does. Dad cannot impress purity upon a son if he himself is impure. He cannot point a child to Jesus if his own life is contrary to the gospel. He cannot expect the child to use decent speech if his speech is filled with profanity. He cannot teach his children honesty if his own life is built on dishonesty, cheating, and deception. He cannot teach his son to behave when he is with the opposite sex if his father misbehaves with other women.
- B. We need fathers today who are devout Christians (Psalm 101:2; Titus 2:7-8). We need fathers who will be good examples. Such fathers can effectively teach and direct their boys and girls to make an honorable living here and to live a successful life which enriches the present and prepares for the future.

V. ***Some Husbands And Fathers We Don't Need***

- A. Nabal (1 Samuel 25). Abigail was a good woman; he was wicked and worthless. She had good sense; he was a fool. He came to a tragic end; she later became David's wife.
- B. Ahasuerus (Esther 1:11-12). Queen Vashti became known as an ancient example of modesty and chastity. However, her husband wanted her to parade around before the lustful eyes of other men.
- C. David (2 Samuel 11). This man stole the affections of another man's wife. Adultery and murder were the only outcome of these terrible thoughts. Although what David did was totally out of character for an otherwise righteous man, it was still sinful and ungodly.
- D. Lot (Genesis 13:12). Lot pitched his tent toward Sodom of which materialism was the dominant factor and lost a portion of his family

when it was destroyed in Genesis 19. If righteous Lot's soul was bothered daily by the immorality, how likely was it that these serious environmental influences would destroy his family (2 Peter 2:7)?

- E. Eli (1 Samuel 2-3). Eli was a good man himself and did a superb work in the training of Samuel. However, he was a permissive parent with his own children (1 Samuel 3:13). Ours is a permissive age and parents who are permissive are among the greatest enemies of their children.

VI. ***Some Husbands And Fathers We Do Need***

- A. Enoch (Genesis 5:21-24). Methuselah had a father of great faith. Enoch walked with God and was taken and allowed to escape death. He was a courageous prophet who did not fear to set forth God's prophetic will toward ungodly speech and conduct (Jude 14-15).
- B. Noah (Genesis 6:8-9). Other fathers were deeply entrenched in sin and wickedness, but this did not drive Noah into unbelief and despair in seeking salvation both for himself and his family. He instilled fear into the hearts of his three sons.
- C. Joshua (Joshua 24:15). The Israelite leader recognized that service to God begins with a voluntary decision. He would not force them into a godly framework of spiritual service. The choice had to be theirs. Joshua's God is still in heaven and He awaits your decision as a father.
- D. Jacob (Genesis 29:18-20). Jacob loved Rachel so much that he was glad to work seven years for her. It takes love to woo and win, and it requires love to retain and rejoice in a wife all the days of a man's life.
- E. Boaz (Ruth 2:5-23). Boaz treated Ruth with gentleness and tenderness. Beautiful courtships often bud into beautiful and rewarding marriages, and our wives and daughters are kept safe from assault.
- F. Zacharias (Luke 1:5-6). Children with righteous parentage have a rich heritage that defies appraisal. Men need to excel in the keeping of biblical commandments if they want to succeed as fathers.
- G. Joseph (Matthew 1:19). Every portrayal of Joseph in the New Testament shows total obedience to heavenly commandments. He also showed great devotion to God by attending religious feasts with his child.

Conclusion. Husbands and fathers need to lift up the Bible in their homes. They need to extol Christ every day. They need to exalt Him as God's Son, their Savior, and the Redeemer of all their children. When Christ and the Bible are lifted up within the home, God's Son and His holy word will lift up fatherhood to be the role it should consistently assume. No husband and father can afford to ignore these precepts if they want to be the kind of husband and father God envisioned them.