

# FATHERHOOD

Introduction – We have gone from TV shows of *Father Knows Best* to Homer Simpson as an example of fatherhood in our generation. Our society sometimes treats men as only sperm donors and cash cows when it comes to parenting. Young men are encouraged to be irresponsible players and then mocked for being weak and inept. We need to restore a biblical vision for manhood and fatherhood.

- A. God is described functioning as both father and mother to Israel who are His children in the Old Testament (Isa. 66:13; Deut. 1:31). Jesus is the one that makes “father” a distinctive term for God.

Matthew 6:9

Mark 14:36

Unfortunately many people have had a bad experience with their father, which makes this relationship hard for them to grasp.

- B. In the Greco-Roman and Jewish world of the First Century, fathers had the primary responsibility for the spiritual, moral, and intellectual education of their children. The New Testament offers no advice or direction to mothers about child rearing.

Ephesians 5:21; 6:4

Colossians 3:21

1. Fathers must not have unrealistic expectation for their children that will only discourage and frustrate their children. (*Ages and Stages: A Parent's Guide to Normal Childhood Development*, by Charles E. Schaefer and Theresa Foy DiGeronimo)
  2. Never discipline your child while you are angry.
  3. “Training” is the practice of discipline with the aim of a child becoming self-disciplined.
  4. “Instruction” is verbal encouragement, correction, or insight depending on the circumstances.
  5. This education must be Christ-centered and biblical, “in the Lord.”
- C. The church/congregation is to become the model of a healthy extended family.

1 Corinthians 4:14-16

1. Paul is the “father” of the Corinthian congregation because he planted it by the seed of the word of God (1 Peter 1:23) by which they were born again by water and the Spirit (John 3:5).
2. The immaturity of the congregation at Corinth required warning in order to build them up and not to shame them.
3. “Guardians” were educators of children like our nanny, school teacher, or coach.
4. Successful education requires the father to be worthy of imitation. Our common role model is Jesus (1 Corinthians 11:1).

#### D. Practical Advice to Fathers

1. Research shows that the example of the father is more important than the mother when it comes to religious practice as their children become adults.
2. The best gift you can give your children is to love and respect their mother.
3. When children are young we are the managers of their lives. When they become teenagers they fire us as their manager. But if they respect you, they will use you as a consultant.
4. Children need a balance of affection and discipline.
5. Put reasonable parameters on your work and do not let it dominate your life.

Conclusion – The restoration of biblical fatherhood will bless our children.

Genesis 27:1-4