

# So That You May Know

## An Expository Study of the Epistle of **1 John**

### Chapter 8- Fathers, Children, and Young Men

#### 61. Part 2

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WAOY Wednesday 08/01/07; WOSM Monday 12/26/22

Welcome again, my beloved in Jesus Christ. We're continuing our verse by verse "journey" through the Epistle of **1 John**, and today I want to continue to explore what John taught about fathers, children, and young men. So, let's turn in our Bibles to **1 John 2:12-14** and read those verses again together:

**12 I am writing to you, little children, because your sins have been forgiven you for His name's sake.**

**13 I am writing to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. I have written to you, children, because you know the Father.**

**14 I have written to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one.**

Now we can clearly see here that John was addressing three separate groups of people in the Church- Fathers; Children; and Young Men. Now we need to notice several things about how John did this. Normally- we would say, Children; Young Men and Fathers- and put the Young Men in the center of the three groups- but John didn't do that- and I think that this has some significance.

The first group that John addresses here are the Fathers; the second group are the Children and last group are the Young Men. Again, I think that this means something.

In the Middle East at the time that John wrote this Epistle- great emphasis was placed upon the "young man" of the house. To the Jew, a young man represented all that was good and right about family. In the Jewish household- the young man- more than any other person in the home- represented strength; vitality; and a continuation of the family business.

Great comfort existed in the home which had a young man in it who was able and responsible enough to carry on the family business from his father and who could help defend and protect his mother and his sisters and the babies of the home.

And great shame was in the home where the young man was irresponsible and unwilling to protect the family security and the family name.

All throughout Scripture, a young man was the symbol of power and might and glory and progeny that made the Jewish families to be able to go on through great hardship and godly correction that they endured.

During this time- women were not viewed as being the equal of men. Women were not given many of the privileges that they are afforded today. Women were seldom formally educated; they were not usually trained to provide financially for their homes; they were not involved in business matter, and they were not involved in social and political affairs. And because this was true- women were not counted as part of the family inheritance.

But the young man- especially the first born young man- he was the one who as the heir apparent and he was the one who would carry on the family business and protect the family and uphold the dignity and the honor of the family reputation and name. So, to the Jew- nothing was more desired that a strong vibrant, godly young man who was heir to all that the father had built.

Very soon after birth- the young man was tutored and mentored by the father to learn the trade that the father had. The father would take the young man as soon as he was weaned and began to teach him the ways of farming or carpentry or commerce or whatever trade the father was engaged in.

Because the average lifespan of the average man in the Middle east at the time was around 57 years- the father wanted to make sure that by the time he was ready to go to his eternal reward- his son; the first born young man of the house- was fully prepared to carry on his business matters.

And part of this training in a Jewish home- was not just in the tricks of the father's trade – but was also his understanding of God and the Ways of God as revealed in the Old Testament and the young man's

willingness to be a man of godly integrity and his dependability and reliability and his trustworthiness.

Nothing was more shameful in that culture than lazy young man. Nothing was more detestable to a family than a young man in the family who “partied hardy” and who stayed out late and who was a whore monger and who was irresponsible with money and who was unreliable, untrustworthy, and who had no interest in God or the things of God.

This kind of young man brought great shame upon the father and stained the family name and in most cases- such a young man who lived like this was not given any inheritance at all- even if he *was* the first born.

You see, back then- there was no such thing as the father going to work while the young man laid around at home watching TV and playing video games. If the young man did not work and take on his responsibilities- he was severely disciplined and if that didn't work- he was rejected by his family and even by the community at large.

In that culture- the mother and sisters and daughters and wives and little babies and those with mental or physical handicaps were totally dependent upon the father and the young men to provide income, food, security and shelter. The Government didn't provide *any* of these things in those days because it was viewed by society at large through the teachings of inspired Old Testament Scriptures that what the men *could* provide- they *should* provide- no matter how long he had to work or how hard the work was. Love for God and love for his family and a desire to be honorable motivated the males to do whatever needed to be done so that the family was taken care of.

In that day- it was viewed as shameful for Government or even other people to bail out an irresponsible man who would not support his own family.

For example- to recover from God ordained natural disasters was not viewed by society at that time as being the responsibility of the Government. There was no FEMA; no welfare; no food stamps; no assistance at all for anyone except for widows, orphans, the mentally impaired, and those who were sick and injured. All healthy young men were required by the standard of Almighty God to work hard for what they had.

Now it is interesting to note here that not only did the Government *not* assist families with things that the males were required by God to provide- but there was practically no unemployment back then either. You see, there was this marvelous program that God has instituted back then that encouraged everybody to work. It was called hunger. If you did not work- you did not eat- and while there may have been many who did not *want* to work; and there may have been many who did not like their jobs or who were dissatisfied with their bosses or who felt unappreciated at their place of employment or who did not like their pay- their unwillingness to labor was overruled by their unwillingness to starve to death and so they worked anyway.

Now before you say that all of what I have been talking about here is cruel and barbaric- I want to remind you that this Old Testament concept worked, and it was carried over into the New Testament and is inspired by God. Read with me in **1Timothy 5:8**

**But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.**

**2Thessalonians 3:10**

**For even when we were with you, we used to give you this order: if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either.**

Now keep in mind that these verses and the concept behind these verses are New Testament Truths that are under the Grace of Jesus Christ and *not* under the Law of Moses. So floods, famines, pestilence, earthquakes, fire raining down from Heaven to destroy sexually perverted people; war; murder; even invasion by another country- all of these things were viewed correctly as being “Acts of God” and were seen as just and proper Divine Vengeance from an angry God toward some or all of those in a particular area who rebelled against God and who continued to sin and who would not repent and turn to serve God.

The catastrophes proved that God was obviously displeased, and He had obviously judged a town or a city and a region or even a nation because of their sin and their unwillingness to repent- so it was stressed upon that city or region or nation to humbly repent of any known sin so that God’s good Favor would visit them again.

For example, back then- the last thing that a city would have done immediately after a devastating hurricane had wiped them out would be to build back the ungodly Casinos bigger than ever out of some cop out issue of providing jobs.

So, because the father by himself could not always provide all that his family required- the young man labored *beside* his father in the trade in order to meet the needs of the family. And a son who would not do that was a scorn and a heartache to a good father.

Now one of the most valuable characteristics that a father looked for in his young son was the son's ability and willingness to be able to grasp the Ways of God and to be able to teach them and uphold them and defend them to the family at large and others after the death of the father.

So, things like faithfulness; ingenuity; a willingness to work hard without complaining; trustworthiness; reliability; dependability; godly integrity; were sought after and such things were highly valued in a young son.

Now around the age of 30- the young man was in his prime and the father was on the decline- physically. So after spending many years laboring beside the father and learning the trade of the father and after the father had proved the young man in his initiative and his wisdom and his trustworthiness and his reliability and his dependability and his godly integrity- there came a time for the passing of the torch- a public ceremony- whereby the father would gather the family together; and he would gather together the leaders of the Church and the community; and he would gather the other businessmen together and the father would present the young man to these people and say, "*This is my son*".

Now in reality- the boy had been the father's son all the time- but now that the son is equipped to carry on the business of the father; now that the son has proved that he is willing and capable- and because the father is soon to pass from the scene- the young man is "adopted" by his own father in this public ceremony and presented to the Community *publicly* and then publicly declared to be His "son".

And this public "adoption" caused the leaders of the community; and the other members of the family; and the businessmen of the community to know that this young man is the father's personal choice who has proved himself to be the one to carry on the work of the father.

He is the one in whom the father has invested his time to mentor and train him; and he is the one to whom the family and the leaders and the community should now look to.

You see, after this public adoption- this young man and this young man alone is now authorized to speak in the father's "name," and he alone is authorized to enter into business arrangements, and he alone is authorized to be the public face of the family to the world.

From this time on- the father is in the background. No one can bypass the young man and go straight to the father- that would be to dishonor the young man. After this public adoption- all that the world sees and hears is the young man.

And this is precisely what happened when Jesus walked down into the Jordan River at age 30 to be baptized by John. Prior to Jesus' coming- God had told the Baptist that when he saw with his own physical eyes the Spirit of God descending on a particular man like a dove – the Spirit was not a dove but the Spirit descended in the same way that a dove descends from flying- and when John saw the Spirit *remain* on this man and not lift off him- that John should know that this particular man was Messiah.

So, Jesus went down into the water and John baptized Him and when Jesus came up out of the water the Scripture says in **Matthew 3:16&17:**

**16** After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove *and* lighting on Him,

**17** and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased."

Here God the Father "adopted" His Own Son in this public ceremony and from that time on- Jesus was authorized to carry on the Work of His Father and from that time on- no one can come to the Father except through Jesus.

And the Apostle John had all this in mind when he wrote about the value of young men. And as we continue in our journey in **1 John**- you will see the great value of young men in the House of God. Well, I'm out of time right now- but please join me on the next broadcast as

we continue our journey through the Epistle of **1John**. May God help us all.

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