

A Father's Duty
Selected Scriptures
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INTRODUCTION

1. In honor of Father's day, I want to take the time to address an issue related to fatherhood.
2. Since we have many new fathers and a few seasoned fathers, what we will look at today will both encourage and rebuke as we look at what the Scripture says regarding *the duties of fathers*.
3. But before we can look at what is required of fathers as they relate to their children, we need to first look at their relationship with their wives.
4. A question that I ask when I am counseling is "What makes a good Christian marriage?"
5. The answer is "two good Christians."
6. What makes "two good Christians?"
7. Both love the Lord Jesus Christ with all their heart and He is the priority in their life, and that they, faithfully, together, pursue a path of obedience to Jesus Christ.
8. Marriage is a commitment.
9. It is the second greatest commitment—the first being a commitment to Jesus Christ.
10. Since it is a commitment, there are things that both the

husband and wife are to do in order for it to function as God intended.

11. Let's begin this morning by looking at the father's duty to his wife and then to his children.
12. In order to have a healthy relationship to his children, the father must have a right relationship to his wife.

I. The Father's Duty To His Wife

A. Love Her

1. We all are familiar with Ephesians 5:25, which says, "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her."

In this passage, the husband is not only commanded to love his wife, but to love her in the same manner that Christ loved the church.

How did He love the church? He laid down His life for her.

Husbands, you are no longer single and have only the care for yourself. Now you are caring for your wife. You are to put her before yourself.

2. Ephesians 5:28-29 illustrates what Paul is saying when he says husbands are to love their wife as Christ loved the church. He says, "So husbands ought also to love their own wives ***as their own bodies***. He who loves his own wife loves himself; 29 for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church."

Everything that I say from this point will illustrate *how* you are to love your wife—*how* you are to lay down your life for her.

B. Lead Her

1. God created a woman to be led

That is why they are not to lead their husbands or the church.

Adam and Eve fell into sin because Adam stopped leading and Eve stopped following.

2. God ordained the woman's subordinate role in the order of creation

According to 1 Corinthians 11:8-9, "For man does not originate from woman, but woman from man; 9 for indeed man was not created for the woman's sake, but woman for the man's sake."

She was made to be his helper (Gen.2:18). "She was to follow his lead, live on his provisions, and find safety in his strength and protection through his courage. The tendency to follow was built into Eve, but with the Fall came conflict.

The subordinate role of women is not a cultural issue. It cannot be explained as mere bias on Paul's part, because it is based on the order of creation. Adam was formed first, then Eve.

C. Pray for Her

In Ephesians 5:26-27, Paul talks about a purifying love that husbands are to have toward their wives.

Christ gave "Himself up for" the church "so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless."

In order to “sanctify her” you must pray for her.

1. We are all commanded to pray (1 Thess.5:17)
2. Our prayers are to include “entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings” (1 Tim.2:1)
 - a) “Entreaties” is translated “supplications” in the AV. It refers to praying with a sense of need. This word (deesis) “comes from a verb root that refers to lacking or being deprived of something” (Barclay).
 - b) “Prayers” (proseuche) refers to prayers that honor God. This is a general word for prayer that is used only in addressing God. It covers every form of reverent prayer addressed to deity.
 - c) “Petitions” (enteuxis) is translated “intercession” in the AV. It is praying out of concern for others. It suggests praying on behalf of someone else.
 - d) “Thanksgivings” refers to praying with a thankful heart.
3. As a husband prays, he is to pray in this manner for his wife

In Genesis 25:21 it tells us that Isaac prayed for Rebekah that God would open her womb.

It says, “Isaac prayed to the Lord on behalf of his wife, because she was barren; and the Lord answered him and Rebekah his wife conceived.”

D. Talk with Her

As you do this,

1. Understand the power of words

- a) Prov.12:18 says, “There is one who speaks rashly like the thrusts of a sword, But the tongue of the wise brings healing.”
- b) Prov.18:21 says, “Death and life are in the power of the tongue, And those who love it will eat its fruit.”
- c) James 3:6 tells us that “the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell” (NJKV).

If you don't understand the power of your words, you can verbally destroy your wife, not to mention your children and anyone else in the path of your words. Therefore you need to think before you speak. Choose your words carefully. Know what words will tear down or build up.

2. Understand the value of words

- a) Prov.20:15 says that “the lips of knowledge are a precious jewel” (NKJV).
- b) Prov.25:11 says, “A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver” (NKJV).

To understand the power and value of words we must

first:

3. Understand the source of words

It comes from the heart. Jesus said “out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks” (Mat.12:34, NKJV). Therefore you must study how to answer.

- a) Prov.15:28 says, “The heart of the righteous studies how to answer, But the mouth of the wicked pours forth evil” (NKJV).
- b) Prov.16:23-24 says, “The heart of the wise teaches his mouth, And adds learning to his lips. 24 Pleasant words are like a honeycomb, Sweetness to the soul and health to the bones.”

4. As you study how to answer and add learning to your lips, let me give you a few Scriptural guidelines:

- a) Listen - Prov.18:13 says, “He who gives an answer before he hears, It is folly and shame to him.”
- b) Do not talk too much
 - (1) Prov.10:19 says, “When there are many words, transgression is unavoidable, But he who restrains his lips is wise.”
 - (2) Prov.17:27 says, “He who has knowledge spares his words, And a man of understanding is of a calm spirit” (NKJV).

- c) Be wise in when you speak—right timing - Prov.15:23 says, “A man has joy in an apt answer, And how delightful is a timely word!”
- d) Admit wrongs - Jas.5:16 says, “Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.”

This also means that you forgive her when she wrongs you. Prov.10:12 says that “love covers all sins” (NKJV). 1 Pet.4:8 says, “love covers a multitude of sins.”

- e) Do not lie - Ps.34:13 says, “Keep your tongue from evil And your lips from speaking deceit.”
- f) Do not respond in anger - Prov.15:1 says, “ A gentle answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger.”
- g) Avoid quarrels - Prov.17:14 says, “The beginning of strife is like letting out water, So abandon the quarrel before it breaks out.”
- h) Speak words that build up and not tear down - Eph.4:29 says, “ Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear.”

E. Listen to Her

Listen to what she has to say—value her words. When

you don't listen to what she has to say you devalue her.

James 1:19 says, "This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be *quick to hear*, slow to speak and slow to anger."

I guarantee if you *love her, lead her, pray for her, talk with her, and listen to her* you will not only fulfill your duty to her as her husband and have a God-blessed marriage but you will also lay the proper foundation for your children—not just in how you relate to them but also how they will relate to their spouse in the future.

With that in mind, let's now look at:

II. The Father's Duty to His Children

I want to begin the same way that I did with the father's duty to his wife because this is to be the attitude and sacrifice that governs his life.

Not only is he to love his wife but he is to love his children.

A. Love Them

1. Having children today is viewed differently than it was in Bible times

Today, children are many times seen as an intrusion, but in the Bible they are always seen as a blessing! Psalm 127:3-5 says, "Behold, children are a gift of the Lord, The fruit of the womb is a reward. 4 Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, So are the children of one's youth. 5 How blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them; They will not be ashamed When they speak with their enemies in the gate."

You bore a reproach if you didn't have any children. In fact "Barrenness was considered a curse in the ancient world (see Gen. 18:11-12). A childless woman lived with shame and disgrace (Is. 54:4) and the sense that God Himself had abandoned her (54:6)" (What Does the Bible Say About...).

A family *wanted* to have children! It is no surprise then that the Bible would speak specifically in how a father relates to them.

A father's love was demonstrated by his provision and protection—much in the same way it was demonstrated to his wife but his love was to go deeper—he was also to love them:

2. You are also to love your children sacrificially

If a Hebrew master gave his slave that he purchased a wife and they bore children, when he was released In the seventh year, he was to go out alone. "But if the slave plainly says, 'I love my master, my wife and my children; I will not go out as a free man,' then his master shall bring him to God, then he shall bring him to the door or the doorpost. And his master shall pierce his ear with an awl; and he shall serve him permanently" (Ex.21:5-6).

How was his love demonstrated to his wife and children? By the loss of his freedom. He was free to leave his master on the seventh year but he could not take his family with him but if he loved his master and family then he could stay but that was at the loss of his freedom.

Sacrificial love can be demonstrated in many ways. Listen to a few of them:

B. Bring Them Up in Christ

1. Prov.22:15 says that we are to “train up a child in the way that he should go.”
2. All parents should be leading their children to Christ

That means we teach and live the gospel in the home. That also means we bring them to church where the gospel is taught. If the parents don't want to come to church, we shouldn't expect the children to want to either.

3. Jesus told the disciples to “let the children come to Me” in Matthew 19:13-14

Notice who was bringing them to Jesus—the parents!

Matthew records, “Then some children were brought to Him so that He might lay His hands on them and pray; and the disciples rebuked them. 14 But Jesus said, "Let the children alone, and do not hinder them from coming to Me; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." 15 After laying His hands on them, He departed from there.”

So, a father's has the duty of loving his children by bringing them to Christ. He is also to love them by:

C. Pray for Them

Just as he is to pray for his wife, he is to pray for his children. He is to pray with all kinds of prayer.

1. Abraham prayed for Ishmael in Genesis 17:18 that he would “live before You [God].”
2. In 1 Chronicles 29:19 David prayed for Solomon that God would give him “a perfect heart to keep Your commandments, Your testimonies and Your statutes, and to do them all, and to build the temple, for which I have made provision.”
3. In Job 1:4-5, Job prayed that God would forgive his children’s sin

“His sons used to go and hold a feast in the house of each one on his day, and they would send and invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them. 5 When the days of feasting had completed their cycle, Job would send and consecrate them, rising up early in the morning and offering burnt offerings according to the number of them all; for Job said, "Perhaps my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts." Thus Job did continually.”

4. David prayed for his son born to Bathsheeba that God would spare his life

2 Sam.12:16 says, “David therefore inquired of God for the child; and David fasted and went and lay all night on the ground.”

From the examples I have just given, we are to pray for our children’s relationship with God—that they would obey Him and keep His commandments. We are to pray for the forgiveness of their sin and their physical health.

That leads us to a fourth way in which we are to love our children. We are to:

D. Instruct Them

1. Deut.4:9 says, “ Only give heed to yourself and keep your soul diligently, so that you do not forget the things which your eyes have seen and they do not depart from your heart all the days of your life; but make them known to your sons and your grandsons.”
2. Deut.11:18-20 says, “You shall therefore impress these words of mine on your heart and on your soul; and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. 19 "You shall teach them to your *sons, talking of them* when you sit in your house and when you walk along the road and when you lie down and when you rise up. 20 "You shall *write them* on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”
3. Deut.31:12-13 says, “Assemble the people, the men and the women and *children* and the alien who is in your town, *so that they may hear and learn and fear the Lord your God, and be careful to observe all the words of this law.* 13 "Their children, who have not known, will hear and learn to fear the Lord your God, as long as you live on the land which you are about to cross the Jordan to possess.”
4. Eph.6:4 says that fathers are to their children up “in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.”

E. Spank Them

There are many today that believe spanking should be against the law. Right now there are laws “in countries like Norway, Germany, and Israel. Laws against spanking exist in 15 nations with two others, Belgium and Italy, close to joining those ranks” (Mark Bergin, *World Magazine*, August 5, 2006, *Rod Rules*, <http://www.worldmag.com/articles/12096>).

In *World Magazine* dated August 5, 2006, an article called “Rod Rules” by Mark Bergin states: “In June, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child adopted new standards against corporal punishment, requiring that member nations take immediate legislative action against "any punishment in which physical force is used and intended to cause some degree of pain or discomfort, however light." The committee declared that spanking is "invariably degrading" and a "form of violence."

That directive cannot bind the United States, which has refrained from adopting the UN definitions of human rights for children and continues to uphold the parental right to spank in every state. But such mounting international fervor is overflowing into U.S. courtrooms and child protection agencies, effectively tightening the standard for legally acceptable discipline.

In December of last year, the South Dakota Supreme Court upheld a determination from the state's Department of Social Services (DSS) that six spanks with a belt, which left no marks or bruises, constituted child abuse and neglect. The undisputed facts of the case, as outlined in the court's decision, reveal that an unnamed 10-year-old girl had stolen a CD from a local

Kmart, lied to her parents about breaking the rules of her subsequent grounding, and thrown a fit when asked to clean off the green marker scribbles on the walls and carpet of her room. According to the decision, her mother's spanking, which immediately halted the fit and produced the desired behavior, amounted to abuse and neglect because the "mother did not attempt any other form of discipline before administering the six strikes with a belt."

Such rulings are not new. In a late 1990s case that made national headlines, a Superior Court judge upheld a DSS charge of child abuse against a Massachusetts minister who used the soft end of a belt to discipline his 9-year-old son. The boy testified that the spankings left his skin a pink color "that would last about 10 minutes and then fade." No marks or bruises were ever reported in connection with the discipline, which occurred roughly once or twice a month and was always accompanied by Scripture reading, hugs, and assurances of love.

Nonetheless, the judge agreed that the potential for escalation justified DSS action. Two years later, the Massachusetts Supreme Court unanimously overruled that decision, small vindication for the significant legal and emotional costs. Such prominent court cases, and the accompanying damage to parental authority for the parties involved, leave many parents wary of spanking their children-or at least of admitting it. But recent studies indicate more than half of parents nationwide still use spanking as a form of regular corrective discipline, as many as 90 percent reporting they have done so at least once. An ABC News poll from late 2004 found that 65 percent of Americans approve of spanking-a number reflecting little to no difference in

attitudes from 15 years before.”

In a January 17, 2007 article appearing on Topix website says, “The state Legislature is about to weigh in on a question that stirs impassioned debate among moms and dads: Should parents spank their children?

Assemblywoman Sally Lieber, D-Mountain View, wants to outlaw spanking children up to 3 years old. If she succeeds, California would become the first state in the nation to explicitly ban parents from smacking their kids.

Making a swat on the behind a misdemeanor might seem a bit much for some -- and the chances of the idea becoming law appear slim, at best -- but Lieber begs to differ.

'I think it's pretty hard to argue you need to beat a child 3 years old or younger,' Lieber said. 'Is it OK to whip a 1-year-old or a six-month-old or a newborn?'

The bill, which is still being drafted, will be written broadly, she added, prohibiting 'any striking of a child, any corporal punishment, smacking, hitting, punching, any of that.' Lieber said it would be a misdemeanor, punishable by up to a year in jail or a fine up to \$1,000, although a legal expert advising her on the proposal said first-time offenders likely only would have to attend parenting classes”

(<http://www.topix.net/content/kri/2092187567376755467014232424771979211612>).

But what does the Bible say?

1. Proverbs 13:24 says, “He who withholds his rod

hates his son, But he who loves him disciplines him diligently.”

2. Proverbs 19:18 says, “Discipline your son while there is hope, And do not desire his death.”
3. Proverbs 23:13-14 says, “Do not hold back discipline from the child, Although you strike him with the rod, he will not die. 14 You shall strike him with the rod And rescue his soul from Sheol.”
4. Proverbs 29:17 says, “Correct your son, and he will give you comfort; He will also delight your soul.”
5. Ephesians 6:4 says, “Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, **but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.**”
6. Colossians 3:21 says, “Fathers, do not exasperate your children, so that they will not lose heart.”

The word that Paul uses for “Provoke” is *parorgizo*, and it means “to rouse to wrath, to provoke, exasperate, anger” (Wuest).

When Paul calls for the parents not to provoke he is suggesting “a repeated, ongoing pattern of treatment that gradually builds up a deep-seated anger and resentment that boils over in outward hostility” (John MacArthur, Ephesians).

Harvard University sociologists Sheldon and Eleanor Glueck developed a test (that proved to be 90 percent accurate) to determine whether or not five- and six-year-olds would become delinquent. They discovered that the four primary factors necessary to

prevent delinquency are: the father's firm, fair, and consistent discipline; the mother's supervision and companionship during the day; the parent's demonstrated affection for each other and for the children; and the family's spending time together in activities where all participated (Unraveling Juvenile Delinquency [Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1950], pp. 257-71).

The Christian psychiatrist Dr. Paul Meier gives a similar list of factors that produce right parent-child relations: genuine love of the parents for each other and for the children; firm, consistent discipline; consistency of standards for parents and children; the right example by parents; and the father as true head of the home. He also comments that the vast majority of neurotics have grown up in homes where there was no father or where he was dominated by the mother (Christian Child-Rearing and Personality Development [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980], pp. 81-82).

The last area that I want to mention is to:

F. Speak Well of Them

Yesterday, Theresa was telling me that when she was at Food Lion, she overheard a mother screaming at the top of her lungs at her three small kids. It was so loud that the mother was in the back of the store and she heard her.

Verbal abuse is so common and so sinful. It is easy to unload our anger on our children. If you're guilty of that, first I would say, is "repent" by asking God, your children and spouse for forgiveness and purpose even more to walk in the Spirit and then start "speaking well

of your children.”

There are many ways to do this but I will major on one: verbally acknowledge when they do what is right!

Reward their acts of righteousness. If they tell the truth, commend them for that because that is right, especially in a world that promotes lying.

Many times we hear that so and so “blessed” their children. That’s what we need to do. They are such a blessing to us and we need to be a blessing to them.

CONCLUSION

1. So fathers how is your relationship with your wife?
2. Are you loving her, leading her, praying for her, talking with her, and listening to her?
3. What about your kids?
4. Are you loving them, bringing them up in Christ, praying for them, instructing them, spanking them, and speaking well of them?
5. This is your duty!
6. You are not only called to provide and protect but also to nurture and what I have shared with you today encompasses nurturing.
7. Before I close, let me say, that none of this is possible apart from a relationship with Jesus Christ.

8. I hate to think where I would be without Him in this world.
9. I certainly would not have been able to marry a godly women and raise three kids that love Jesus!
10. If you're here today without Christ, I beg you to repent and give your life to Him.
11. Let's pray.