

# Family Matters



## **Instant Parenthood:** ("Honey, I'm pregnant...")

- No instructions on how to be a parent (no guidebook to perfect parenting in hospital stuff).
- We learn by trial and error in the school of hard knocks.
- No one has the perfect family - we are all co-laborers striving to be more Christ-like. We all feel like failures at some point in the process.
- Mixed feelings - children are a joy/love of our life -v- drain/frustration  
Feel the enormous weight of responsibility that comes with parenthood.

**SHARE:** Share one aspect of parenting that brings you joy and one that is really frustrating at times.

## **The Bitter Reality In Many Homes:**

Proverbs 11:29 "He who brings trouble on his family will inherit only wind."

Proverbs 17:21,25 "To have a fool for a son brings grief; there is no joy for the father of a fool." "A foolish son brings grief to his father and bitterness to the one who bore him."

Proverbs 19:26 "He who robs his father and drives out his mother is a son who brings shame and disgrace." (11:29; 17:24,25; 28:24)

Psalms 101:7 "He who works deceit shall not dwell within my house; he who tells lies shall not continue in my presence."

Question: What may be the causes behind these troubled homes?

## **Our Response To Children And Parenting:**

### **1. Children Should Be Seen As A Blessing, Not A Hardship From The Lord.**

Genesis 1:28 - "Be fruitful and multiply"

Genesis 4:1,25 - The child was a gift from God.

The children Eve bore embodied the hope that fallen sinners could be redeemed/God's gracious gift.

Genesis 17:20 - A gift to unbelievers as well/descendants

Proverbs 17:6

God is the One who opens the womb.

Genesis 29:31-33; 30:2,23

### **2. Parenting Should Be A Joy, Not A Burden.**

- Children are not a yoke to bear, but a privilege to enjoy.
- One sure way to fill your life with misery is to abdicate the responsibility God has given you as a parent and a steward of the child He has graciously placed in your



hands. Yet, nothing will bring more joy than bringing up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. (Ephesians 6:4)

**Psalms 127:3-5** "Children are a heritage from the LORD, the fruit of the womb is a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, so are the children of one's youth. Happy is the man who has his quiver full of them. They shall not be ashamed..."

**Proverbs 23:24,25** "The father of a righteous man has great joy; he who has a wise son delights in him. May your father & mother be glad; may she who gave you birth rejoice."

**Proverbs 10:1** "A wise son brings joy to his father, but a foolish son grief to his mother."

**Proverbs 27:11** "Be wise, my son, and bring joy to my heart; then I can answer anyone who treats me with contempt."

**Proverbs 29:3** "A man who loves wisdom brings joy to his father..."

**Proverbs 29:17** "Correct your son, and he will give you rest; yes he will give delight to your soul." (The discipline process is hard at times, but rewarding in the end - Heb. 12:7-11)

**Question:** How have we communicated to our kids that they are a burden and hardship?  
How can we communicate to them that they are a great joy and blessing from God to us?

### **3. Success In Parenting Is Measured By What Parents Do, No By What The Child Does:**

- There is not absolute guarantee of perfect children/perfect parenting.
  - bad parents can raise children who turn out good (through coming to Christ).
  - seemingly godly parents can have a rebellious unbelieving child within the home.
- However, there is a definite connection to godly parents producing godly kids.
- As a general rule: Parents who follow Biblical principles in bringing up their children will see a positive effect on the character of their children.
- God uses faithful parents as instruments in the salvation of their children.

**Question:** How many of you were introduced to Christ through your parents?

**Contrast Eli and Hannah:**

**1 Samuel 3:13** "For I told him that I would judge his family forever because of the sin he knew about; his sons made themselves contemptible, and he failed to restrain them."  
(Eli, Hophni, Phinehas) (3:1,17,22-25,29; 3:1)

**1 Samuel 1:11,28; 2:2,3,26,35; 3:19,21** "... do not forget your servant but give her a son, then I will give him to the LORD all the days of his life..." (Hannah) "The boy Samuel continued to grow in stature and in favor with the LORD and with men."

### **4. It Is Important To Be A Godly Parent To Raise Godly Children**

**Genesis 18:19** "He (Abraham) will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is right and just, so that the LORD will bring about for Abraham what he has promised him." (obedience brings blessing)

**2 Timothy 1:5** "I have been reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois, and in your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded now lives in you also."

**2 Timothy 3:14,15** "Continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus."

**Malachi 2:15** "Has not the LORD made them one? In flesh and spirit they are his, And why one? Because he was seeing godly offspring, so guard yourself in your spirit and do not break faith with the wife of your youth. I hate divorce."

- Only when both parents remain faithful to their marriage vows can the children be given the security which provides the basis for godly living.

**Proverbs 14:26** "In the fear of the LORD, there is strong confidence, and his children will have a place of refuge."

**Luke 6:40** "Everyone, after he has been fully trained, will be like his teacher."

**Proverbs 22:6** "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it." (General rule: How a person is trained determines what he becomes)

**Psalms 127:1** "Unless the LORD builds the house, they labor in vain who built it..."

**1 Timothy 2:15** "She will be saved in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness with self-control." (Mac Arthur: "Even though a woman bears the stigma of being the initial instrument who led the race into sin, it is women through childbearing who may be preserved or freed from that stigma by raising a generation of godly children. Because mothers have a unique bond and intimacy with their children, and spend far more time with them than do fathers, they have far greater influence in their lives and thus a unique responsibility and opportunity for rearing godly children. While a woman may have led the human race into sin, women have the privilege of leading many out of sin to godliness.")

**1 Timothy 4:7,15,16** "Train yourself to be godly... Be diligent in these matters, give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress. Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers."

**1 Thessalonians 2:11,12** "For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, encouraging, comforting, and urging you to live lives worthy of God..."

**Titus 2:1-8** The older is called to set an example to the younger in godliness.

- The child's most important influence comes from parents. Parents must insure that no other influence takes precedence. Parents must never abdicate their God-given parental role. Character is neither inbred by genetics nor picked up by osmosis. Children are taught to be what they become. As parents, we will be held accountable if we have turned our children over to other influences that shape their character in ungodly ways. Parenting is an issue of stewardship. Good parenting involves both quality and quantity time.

### **The Question Of Example:**

**1 Corinthians 11:1** "Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ."

**Philippians 4:9** "Whatever you have learned or received, or heard from me, or seen in me - put it into practice."

- Can you say this to your children?
- What are you modeling before your kids?  
(Philippians 3:7; 2 Thessalonians 3:9)

## **Challenge To Parents: Dewey Bertollini, Back To The Heart Of Youth Work**

**"How can we exert a godly influence if we ourselves are not godly? Answer: "We can't."  
How can we set a godly standard if we ourselves are not godly? Answer: "We can't."  
How can we communicate a godly message if we ourselves are not godly? Answer: "we can't." "The young people whom God has committed to our spiritual oversight will never develop such a heart if we do not possess one ourselves."**

**Question: Who or what are the significant influences in your child's life?**

**How is your time with your children overcoming those other secular voices and instead presenting a lasting, Christ-centered, Biblical worldview?**

- **What about children in an unbelieving household?**

**1 Corinthians 7:13,14 "For the unbelieving husband has been sanctified through his (believing) wife, and the unbelieving wife has been sanctified through her believing husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy."**

- **The presence of one believer in a family brings blessing and protection and may be an avenue for the children to come to Christ.**

## **5. Exemplary Godly Leadership In The Church Is A Reflection From A Godly Home**

**1 Timothy 3:1-5 "An overseer (pastor/elder) must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife... he must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?"**

**1 Timothy 3:12 "A deacon must be the husband of but one wife and must manage his children and his household well."**

**Titus 1:6 "An elder must be blameless, the husband of but one wife, a man whose children believe (faithful) and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient."  
(The word "believe" is translated "faithful" or trustworthy." It is never used in Scripture of an unbeliever. Faithful to who or what? It can not mean externally obedient but internally rebellious. The spiritual condition of a leader's child is at the center of his qualification.)**

**Hebrews 13:7,17 "Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith."**

## **A Father's Confession:**

***"My family's all grown and the kids are all gone. But if I had to do it all over again, this is what I would do. I would love my wife more in front of my children. I would laugh with my children more - at our mistakes and our joys. I would listen more, even to the littlest child. I would be more honest about my own weaknesses, never pretending perfection. I would pray differently for my family; instead of focusing on them, I'd focus on me. I would do more things together with my children. I would encourage them more and bestow more praise. I would pay more attention to little things, like deeds and words of thoughtfulness. And then, finally, if I had to do it all over again, I would share God more intimately with my family; even ordinary things that happen in every ordinary day I would use to direct them to God."***

**EKG: Self-Examination Of The Heart**

**Regardless of the time frame you have had with your kids, looking back, what would you do differently? How could you personally improve in your view of parenting, your attitude toward parenting, and what you model every day to your kids? Do you personally have a heart for God?**