

“Called as Fathers & Mothers”

Introduction

From the first chapters of Scripture, the birthing and rearing of children has been central to the unfolding of God's plans and purposes in the world (Gen. 1:28; Gen. 3:15). Although sin has introduced frustration into the experience of giving birth to and then parenting children, Scripture recognizes that children are ultimately a blessing from God.

Psa. 127:3-5a—³ Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb a reward. ⁴ Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children of one's youth. ⁵ Blessed is the man who fills his quiver with them!

Key Point: Because of the importance of children, the call to serve as _____ and _____ is the call to care for others in a way that reflects God's own love and providential care.

Parenting in a Fallen World

The Reality of Brokenness

Ecc. 1:13-14—¹³ And I applied my heart to seek and to search out by wisdom all that is done under heaven. It is an unhappy business that God has given to the children of man to be busy with. ¹⁴ I have seen everything that is done under the sun, and behold, all is vanity and a striving after wind.

Exhortations to Parents

Deut. 6:4-7—⁴ “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. ⁵ You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. ⁶ And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. ⁷ You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.

Observations

1. Parents are to be worshipers of the Lord who are continually shaped by His _____.
2. Parents are to _____ their children to worship the Lord and to be continually shaped by His Word.
“diligently”— שָׁנַן (*shanan*) — Lit. to sharpen or whet, to pierce; Fig. to sharpen or teach incisively.

Eph. 6:4— Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

Observations

1. Fathers are uniquely positioned to _____ their children.
“provoke...to anger”—παροργίζω (*parorgizō*) — Lit. ‘to anger alongside.’ To rouse to wrath, to provoke, exasperate, anger.
2. Fathers are uniquely positioned to help their children _____.
“bring...up”— ἐκτρέφω (*ektrepō*) to rear up to maturity; to cherish or train, to bring up.

Prov. 29:15—The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child left to himself brings shame to his mother.

Observations

1. Mothers are uniquely positioned to _____ their children.
“the rod” _____ “reproof”
2. Mothers are the ones who tend to feel the _____ of having undisciplined children.

Key Point: God has called fathers and mothers to both _____ for and teach their children what it means to love the Lord and to be shepherded by Him through life.

Living as Believing Fathers & Mothers

- **Love for our Heavenly Father should take precedence over our love for our children.**

Matt. 6:30-33—³⁰ *But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?* ³¹ *Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'* ³² *For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all.* ³³ *But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.*

Matt. 10:37b—*...and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.*

- **We serve our children by caring for their physical needs.**

1 Tim. 5:8—*But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.*

Luke 11:11-12—¹¹ *What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; ¹² or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion?*

- **We serve our children by raising them to know the Lord and live with Him in the world He has made.**

Prov. 22:6—*Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.*

“train”—חָנַךְ (*chanak*)—To taste (metaphor for understanding); to initiate or discipline:—dedicate, train up.

We train up our children so that they might know the _____ of God. (Psa. 34:8)

Eph. 6:4b—*...bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.*

“discipline”—παιδεία (*paideia*)—The whole training and education of children (which relates to the cultivation of mind and morals, and the body).

We discipline our children so that they might know that they are _____ of God. (Heb. 12:7-11)

“instruction”—νουθεσία (*nouthesia*)—calling attention to; (by implication) mild rebuke or warning:—admonition.

We admonish our children so that they might be warned of the _____ of sin. (Heb. 3:13)

Key Point: In the difficulties of raising our children, the Lord teaches us _____ upon Him as our Father.

Concluding Thoughts

1. **Although parenting is a primary calling for fathers and mothers, it is not essential for a _____ life.**

Isa. 56:3-5—³ *Let not the foreigner who has joined himself to the Lord say, "The Lord will surely separate me from his people"; and let not the eunuch say, "Behold, I am a dry tree."* ⁴ *For thus says the Lord: "To the eunuchs who keep my Sabbaths, who choose the things that please me and hold fast my covenant, ⁵ I will give in my house and within my walls a monument and a name better than sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name that shall not be cut off.*

2. **Because the church is the household of God, we have a chance to serve as _____ fathers and mothers to others.**

1 Cor. 4:15—*For though you have countless guides in Christ, you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel.*

Rom. 16:13—*Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord; also his mother, who has been a mother to me as well.*