

The Difference a Dad Makes

By Mark N. Posey

Being a father is not easy, but it is worth it! The Bible gives instructions about how to do it right. For example, notice Ephesians 6:4, “And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.” How do you bring up a child in the training and admonition of the Lord? Notice what fathers can do for their children.

Pray for them. There are many biblical examples of fathers praying for their children: Jairus (Mark 5); the father with the demoniac son (Mark 9); Job (1:5) and David. Toward the end of his life, as David prepared to pass leadership to his son Solomon, he prayed a special prayer: “give my son Solomon a loyal heart to keep Your commandments and Your testimonies and Your statutes, to do all these things, and to build the temple for which I have made provision”(1 Chronicles 29:19). Pray for them and with them. Let them hear your prayers to God. One of the greatest gifts you can give your children is prayer.

Spend time with them. A recent survey revealed: The average five-year-old spends only 25 minutes per week with his father, and most children spend 35 hours per week with some type of digital device. No wonder we have difficulty influencing our children. Notice God’s Word: “And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up” (Deuteronomy 6:6-7). Moses stressed the importance of spiritual growth. Spending time with your children is an investment. When you give your children your time, you are giving them your heart.

Give them responsibility. In Matthew 21, Jesus told of a father with two sons. He sent both to work. One son told his father he would work, but did not. The other told that he would not work, but changed his mind and did. By giving his sons responsibility, the father learned which son was obedient and which one was not. Our children need responsibility. Giving them responsibility means letting go of the reins and allowing them to make their journey into maturity. It will strengthen their confidence.

Give them a sense of identity. It is important that your children hear about heroes in your family. The best are heroes of faith who made an impact on the history of the church. My dad regularly read Hebrews 11 in our home and emphasized the greatness of faithful obedience. He also made sure that I spent time with great preaching heroes like Gus Nichols, Franklin Camp, Guy N. Woods, William Woodson, V.P. Black and others. I was able to identify with faithful fathers. It gave me roots that have proven beneficial throughout life. This is why the Lord said to Moses, “tell in the hearing of your son and your son’s son the mighty things I have done in Egypt, and My signs which I have done among them, that you may know that I [am] the LORD”(Exodus 10:2). Identity strengthens our knowledge and wisdom.

A father that gives his heart to his children will pass the test of fatherhood. It has nothing to do with money, power or success. The thing children want most from their dads is their time.