

YOU ARE THE MAN: Fathers, You are the Very Best Teachers for Your Children

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When we challenge men to be the CPU (Central Processing Unit) behind the teaching of their children spiritual truth, we hit a wall. First of all, there are precious few role models for this kind of approach. Second, men have been taught all their lives that they are inadequate for the job. So the wall is formed by the assumption that there are certainly better teachers out there for our children. The logical conclusion is quickly formed:

"I must find the very best teachers for my children".

This is a noble statement. Who could possibly disagree with this desire? And we must acknowledge that, "yes", there is a range of giftedness. Some teachers are better than others. Some fathers are better teachers than others. Most fathers that I know, feel most ungifted for this task. They feel insecure as teachers. They feel inadequate, by education and giftedness and time.

Unfortunately, none of these noble statements or logical conclusions exempts men from the responsibility that God has given to all fathers. Never in the Bible, do we find encouragement for fathers to find better teachers for their children. On the contrary, we find clear commands for them to personally fulfill the roles of personal teacher and trainer to their children. We also find them being called to engage their families in the teaching of the apostles doctrine.

God has revealed his methodology for ministry to youth in Deuteronomy 6. This practice is the God ordained practice.

How Should Men Provide Spiritual Leadership and Instruction in God's Word

At our church, we are not asking our fathers to give three point sermons with a pithy story for each point, a moving conclusion and an altar call to conclude the time of family worship. We are not asking them to use a host of study guides, worksheets or commentaries to aid them in their spiritual leadership. We are asking them simplify their lives enough so that they have time to read the Bible in their homes daily with a hunger and joy for the "honey of the honeycomb," (Ps 19). We are asking them to pray for one another and pray for the lost and sing the great worship songs of the faith.

Our formula is simple: Read, Pray and Sing. And, if you want to forget the singing, no problem – it won't be the end of the world. But, if you neglect the Word and Prayer, it will be the end of the world.

Equippers Are Required

We realize that leaders have a lot of work to do to make these fathers better theologians. They need training in areas of theology like human depravity, justification by faith alone, apologetics, evangelism, soteriology, bibliology, ecclesiology and eschatology. We need to train them how to study and interpret and follow the Bible, how to evangelize and how to teach their children. So the church must have good structure to make the head of the household the teacher he is called to be.

But, we never hear the apostles calling for structure to train children. The "structure" is clearly the father.

Adequacy grows with experience

As a father reads the Bible to his children, questions will arise in the minds of his children that he won't be able to answer immediately. This will throw that father into a cycle of personal inquiry of the truth and will cause him to grow in the Word. It will reveal his relative inadequacy and ignorance and drive him to seek the Lord more than ever.

But, if he says: "I don't know enough to do this" he himself will never grow to the heights possible unless he takes on the mantle of Bible teacher and theologian. In this sense, I believe that one reason God gives children to adults, and commands the fathers to teach them scripture, is to cause the growth of the father as much as the children.

A Tool for Sanctification

The very act of reading the Bible in his home will often expose a father's hypocrisy and disobedience. He will inevitably read something that will expose his impatience, duplicity, laziness... For this reason, fathers need to read the Bible to their families, so that they will be held more accountable to God for their actions and attitudes.

When Men Look for a Church

We can see how far fathers have slipped in their understanding of the Word of God, when we observe their technique in their search for a new church. Commonly, three of their highest priority questions are: "How is the preaching", "does the church have a good youth group?" and "how is the Sunday school?"

In the Bible, men are never called to look for good youth groups and Sunday schools. This is not a Biblical question. This is not a Biblical activity. These questions betray his ignorance of Biblical ecclesiology. They expose his disobedience to the scripture. They illustrate how far he has fallen away in his understanding of the order of authority of the church and the family. He proudly states his criteria for finding a good church, but he does not realize that he is not even asking an appropriate question. His question only

betrays his abdication and reveals his PMS affliction. Unfortunately, he is misguided, searching for something God has not inspired.

Fathers who take on the role of the teacher of spiritual truth to the household find many glorious effects. Children experience heightened love for their fathers. Wives glow with satisfaction and delight. And the men themselves grow more than ever.

Men, stop looking for "the best teachers" for your children. Look in the mirror. YOU ARE THE MAN.