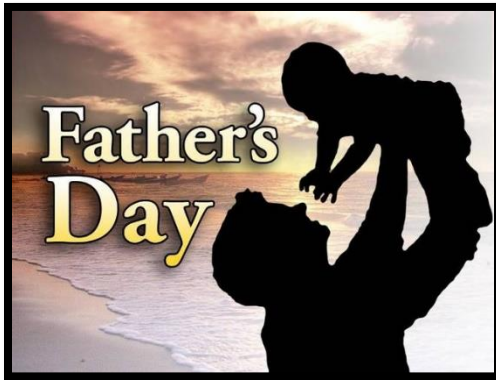


Learning a Legacy from Biblical Fathers

Online Sermon:

http://www.mckeesfamily.com/?page_id=3567

What makes a person a good dad? When we think about the ideal father, we think of a person who is loving, kind, and filled with empathy and compassion. The person who is consistently available to show us he cares not only by his words “I love you” but also by willfully and joyfully getting



involved in our lives. It is in the walks in the parks, the singing songs by a campfire, fishing trips, musical jamborees, and the family decorating the Christmas tree that results in us having found of memories of the

person we call dad. Is it not the man who picked us up, bandaged our scraped knees, and reassured us that yes, we would soon be able to ride our bikes safely and effortlessly that we with great pride and joy, call our father? Are not the men who goes to countless hockey, basketball, football games, dance, and music recitals that makes their love for their

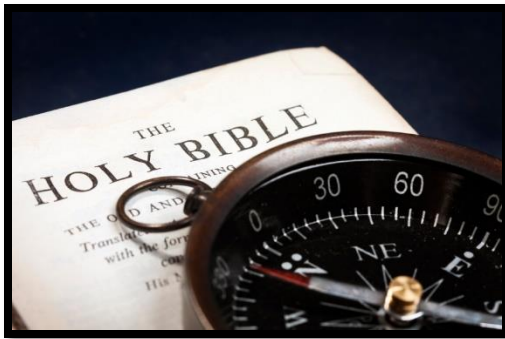
children the most apparent to them? Surely the man who treats his wife with respect, kindness and love goes a long way towards creating an environment that enables our children to feel safe to explore this strange world that can be at times quite challenging and frightening. A great dad is strong, filled with wisdom, compassion, and empathy for he too knows what it is like to think that failure is one's inevitable destination when it is but a mere steppingstone of learning and success. While many people say that since every child is different none of them ever comes with a handbook; I would disagree for the Bible is a beautiful love letter from our Creator explaining His expectations on how we are to rightly raise the children that He has entrusted to our care! The following sermon is not going to review all the attributes of being a great dad but will review six fathers mentioned in the Bible to outline six do's and don't lessons of raising children rightly in the eyes of our heavenly Father.

Lesson 1: The Compass (Noah)

If one is to successfully navigate through the challenges that comes from raising our children to be righteous while living in a fallen world, then one will need the right compass! One almost gets whip lash to read at the end of Genesis chapter one that “God said all He made was very good” (31) and then just seven to ten genealogies later¹ to read that “the Lord saw how great the wickedness of humans had become on the earth and He regretted making human beings (6:5-6)! You think it is

¹ Isaac M. Kikawada, [“Noah and the Ark: The Hero of the Flood.”](#) ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 1123.

hard to live in this “ME” generation and think about whatever is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, excellent, or praiseworthy (Philippians 4:8), imagine what it must have been like for Noah to raise his three sons Shem, Ham, and Japheth in the ways of the Lord that all others had rejected! There would have been great pressure for Noah to conform the ways of this world for in “not belonging” to this world he invited great ridicule (John 15:19) upon himself and his children! Anyone can handle



momentary criticism but it likely took Noah about 55 to 80 years to build the ark ... that is a lot of years of harsh criticism!² Dad it is impossible to raise your children to be right in God’s

sight based on your own strength and definition of what is right but with the Bible, Holy Spirit and prayer as your compass the narrow path God wants both you and your children to take (Matthew 7:13-14) is not only clear but easily traversed. Like Noah, show your children how much God means to you by living His word and rejoicing in His blessings not only in the good but bad times as well. And when you do not know what is the “right” path to take may your children see you on your knees looking up to the Lord who gives you wisdom, strength, truth, and courage to follow in His footsteps ...for where He leads you will follow!

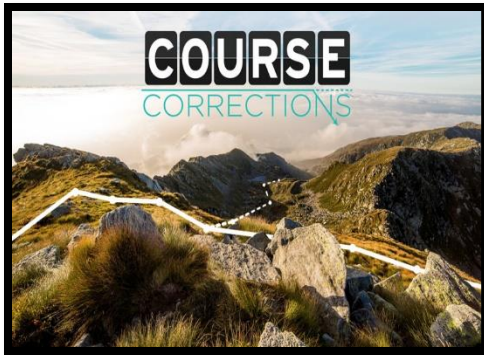
² Taken from the following website:
<https://www.compellingtruth.org/Noahs-ark-questions.html>

Dad may your children never see you conforming to the patterns of this world (Romans 12:1-2) but instead see you inviting the Potter to transform your mind into the image in which you were fearfully and wonderfully made (Psalms 139:13-14)!

Lesson 2: Course Corrections (Manasseh)

Dad no matter how badly you fall short of God’s glory, and we all do from time to time, show your children how important it is to offer your Creator a contrite and broken heart to be forgiven! When Manasseh was just twelve years old, he became king of Jerusalem (2 Chronicles 33:1). His dad, Hezekiah, was a good role model who “did what was good and right and faithful before the Lord his God” (31:20). Even when pride was found in his heart he repented, and God’s wrath did not fall upon him (32:26). In thinking it was not worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, His son, Manasseh however chose to be like those in Noah’s time for every inclination of his heart was pure evil! He rebuilt the high places his Father Hezekiah had demolished, erected altars to the Baals, made Asherah poles, bowed to the stary hosts and worshipped them (33:3), sacrificed his children in the fire in the Valley of Gen Hinnom, practiced divination and witchcraft, sought omens, consulted mediums and spiritists (33:6), and even had a foreign

image placed in the Lord's very own temple (33:7)! So, what could we ever possibly learn about being a good dad from such an evil king ... plenty! First Dad be very careful to always obey the Lord. The mighty arm of God's wrath of discipline is to be greatly feared. Just ask Manasseh who was defeated by



the king of Assyria, had a hook placed in his nose, bound with bronze shackles, and taken to Babylon to a dungy prison (33:10-11)! Second, there is no sin that cannot be forgiven by He who is filled with grace and mercy (1 John

1:9)! Thankfully this story has a happy ending. Manasseh greatly humbled himself and sought the favor of the Lord and as a result was not only forgiven but allowed to return to Jerusalem to reign again (33:12-13). And lastly, it is never too late to pick up God's compass and make even 180-degree course corrections in your life.

If you did not begin well in your walk with God and in fathering His children, don't give up, seek, and draw nearer to the Lord (James 4:8), ask for forgiveness and in crying out to Him Abba, Father you shall find peace and wisdom that surpasses all understanding (Philippians 4:6-7).

With God's help you can show your children what it means to be holy as God is holy (1 Peter 1:16)!

Lesson 3: Trusting God with the Unknown Future (Abraham)

To be a good father one must trust the Lord with the unknown events in your life. Dad we often face decisions concerning our children that are impossible to ensure a good outcome because there simply is no way of knowing all the complexities of the current situation or what the future might bring! In moments like these the Bible tells us to "trust in the



Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all ways submit to Him, and He will make your paths straight" (Proverbs 3:5). While this sounds simple it is often very difficult to surrender our desire to have

control over what is impossible to know or tame, the unknown future ... even to our God whom we know is in control over all things seen and unseen (Colossians 1:16). But if we are to become good dads then let us learn to trust in God like Abram did. When the Lord called Abram to leave his country and go to an unknown land he took a giant leap of faith, packed up all his belongings and went on the journey (12:1). Because Abram believed that God would come good on His promise, "I will

make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing” (Genesis 12:2), Abram took out his knife and was willing to slay his only son Isaac (22:9-10) because he knew God would raise him from the dead (Hebrews 11:19). Abram on that day demonstrated to his son that his trust in the Lord would not falter no matter what might be asked of him!

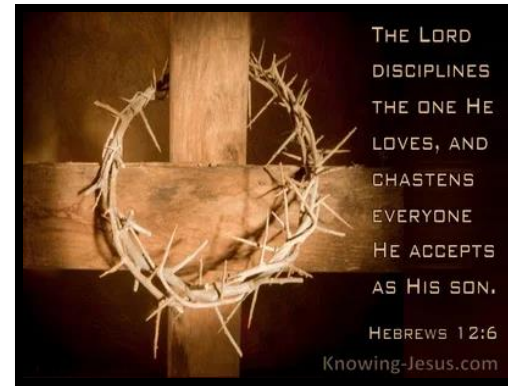
Dad, in the face of the most difficult decisions and especially in the valleys of the greatest turmoil show your children your faith by asking, listening, and obeying whatever the Lord wants you to do!

It is ok to tell the Lord that you often do not know how to rightly love, nurture, train, and protect the children He has placed in your care. It is ok to cry out to God for when you do, He will tell you His perfect and pleasing will for your children and give you the strength, courage, and ability to show them the narrow path that leads to righteousness through your faithful example of trust and holiness in the Him!

³ Ronald Youngblood, [“Eli \(Person\).”](#) ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 456.

Lesson 4: Don’t Overlook Your Child’s Wanderings (Eli)

Dad when your children wander away from the Lord do not stand idly by but instead remind and discipline them, if



need be, to help them understand how grievous it is to disobey the Lord! Let me tell you what happened to Eli the high priest³ when he ignored his son’s wanderings. Eli had two sons both of which he gave Egyptian

names, Hophni and Phinehas (1 Samuel 1:3). They greatly angered God for having “no regard for Him (2:12), treating with contempt offerings made unto Him (2:17) as well as the Israelites that came to Shiloh (2:14), and for laying with women who served at the entrance to the tent of the meeting” (2:22)!⁴ And get this both of Eli’s sons were priests! Even though Eli rebuked both his sons for their wickedness he refused to either discipline them and/or remove them from their priestly duties (2:22-25). What Eli refused to do God did by striking down both of his children in the prime of their lives (2:33-34). Dad, even though it is not popular in today’s self-

⁴ Ronald Youngblood, [“Eli \(Person\).”](#) ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 456.

indulged, anything goes culture to impose one's will upon another, refusing to discipline your children fails to set proper boundaries in their lives that reflect the will of their Creator! Remember, "God disciplines the one He loves, and He chastens everyone he accepts as a son" (Hebrews 12:6).

Dad, in disciplining your children do not "embitter" (Colossians 3:21), or "exasperate" them (Ephesians 6:4) but instead with great humbleness, gentleness, and with a constant willingness to forgive with open arms choose whatever a loving, merciful and gracious God tells you to do to try and correct their wayward behavior.

And Dad if discipline does not work don't give up but instead pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:16) that what you cannot do, mold and re-shape their stony heart, you can be rest assured that He who knit them in their mother's wombs (Psalms 139) will never stop inviting them to be transformed and have their minds renewed (Romans 12:1-2) by their Master. Just one final word on this fatherly lesson: despite how wayward your child becomes always let them know how much you love them and how desperately you want them to accept the ways of the Lord who is their portion forever (Lamentations 3:24)!

Lesson 5: The Dangers of Favouritism (Jacob)

Dad love the children God has given you equally, without favoring one over the other. We have all heard the expression "mommas" or "daddy's" girl or boy. When one of our children more closely resemble our talents, dreams, and goals or are exceptional at doing things that make us proud,



dad, there is the temptation to either love them more or at least in our actions appear to do so. Jacob lived in the land of Canaan and had twelve sons (Genesis 35:23-26). Because one of his sons, Joseph, was born in his old age

the Bible states he "loved Joseph more than his other sons" and openly showed his favoritism by making him a robe of many colors (37:3). When Jacob's other sons "saw that their father loved him more than any of them, they hated him (Joseph) and could not speak a kind word to him" (37:4). So enraged with hatred for Joseph that they initially plotted to kill him but later changed their minds and chose to sell him as a slave to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver (37:28). They then dipped Joseph's robe in goats' blood and presented it to their father as proof his favored son was dead (37:31). Even though God used Joseph's bleak circumstances to prepare him the way to become second in command of Egypt and save many lives (41:41-43, 45:5), Jacob did much damage to his family for many years all because he favored one son over another. Dad,

your children are fearfully and wonderfully made in the image of their Creator (Psalms 139:14; Genesis 1:27). They all have all been purchased at the price of the blood of Christ (John 3:16) and can be saved and receive the spiritual gifting needed to fulfill whatever divine role God assigns them (1 Corinthians 12).

Your role is to show them the eyes of Christ in the way you live your life and to instruct them in the ways of the Lord (Deuteronomy 6:4-9). You are to love your sons and daughters equally and to never stop helping them to grow in their faith. Your love for them should not be based on what they do but on what God through Christ has already done for you!

Lesson 6: Our Heavenly Father as a Role Model (God)

And finally, dad if you are looking for a role model to emulate in raising your children then look up to your heavenly Father! I was fortunate to have a God-fearing dad who trained me in the ways I should go (Proverbs 22:6) and loved all my siblings equally but I realize many of you don't have this kind of role model to look up to. Unfortunately, there are many dads out here that are abusive, non loving, unkind, and a "God-haters" (Romans 1:28). If you happen to have such a dad to

whom to you look to as a role model in raising your children? While you should certainly look up to other God-fearing dads as role models do so with caution that not all their ways are to be emulated. Scripture states we all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23) and if any of us say



we don't sin then God says otherwise (1 John 1:10)! Dad none of us are perfect or even close! If we are to aspire to become like any dad in the Bible, then we ought to always choose to emulate God the Father in heaven!

He who knit our children in their mother's womb is the only one who truly knows what His divine plan is for their lives. Only God is sinless (1 John 1:5), all powerful (Colossians 1:16; Jeremiah 32:17), all knowing (1 John 3:20) and filled with truth and justice for all (Psalms 50:6; John 14:6). He is our alone is our Creator and wants us as dads to succeed in raising the children He has given us with a servant's heart that truly wants to please Him. I want to finish with this prayer for all the dads who read this sermon:

May the Lord, His word and Spirit be your guiding compass in raising the children God has entrusted to your care. When you sin against God may you confess and get back onto the narrow path of righteousness. When you do not know how to raise your children rightly then may you turn not to the world for

advice but to the known God of Israel and seek and obey His council. May you discipline your children not to embitter or exasperate them but in great humbleness, gentleness, and with a constant willingness to forgive open your arms and choose whatever a loving, merciful and gracious form of discipline God tells to do to try and correct their wayward behavior. May you not show favoritism but instead love all your children equally and above all my God the Father always be the role model of the perfect dad you want to emulate. And dad even if in following this advise your children still don't grow up to love the Lord, never stop showing them your intimacy and obedience to the One who is your portion forever for in doing so you fulfill your obligation to a holy God to raise your children to the best of your abilities!