

## God's Word to Fathers

Ephesians 5:23-29; 6:4

Today is the day that has been set aside to honor our earthly fathers. It is a day to consider the blessings associated with being a father, and also a day of remembrance concerning the role of a father. My dad certainly made his share of mistakes, but I am thankful to have had him in my life. He has gone on to be with the Lord, but I still hold to the values and principles that he shared with me as a child.

On this day we are confronted with the question of what a father is and what his responsibilities are. Speaking from experience, being a father is the most wonderful task a man could have, but it is also the most challenging.

When you think of a father, what comes to mind? Our modern society seems to have misdirected a lot of men when it comes to being a father. The role of a husband and father involves much more than coming home from work and barking out orders. It involves much more than a name being applied to a birth certificate. There are a lot of men who have fathered children, but they have no idea of what being a father really is.

There are countless books written concerning the role of a father. Societies and cultures directly influence what is expected of a father. But, if we really want to be the father we ought to be, we must fulfill our role according to the expectations of our heavenly Father. Society may have a standard that is acceptable, but God has given instruction concerning what He requires. Today I want us to consider: [God's Word to Fathers](#).

**I. The Duty of a Husband** (5: 23-29) – If we are to be an acceptable father, we must first learn to be an acceptable and devoted husband. We have obligations as fathers, but we must also remember our duties as husbands.

**A. He is to Lead** (23) – The Bible is clear that the man is to be the [head](#) of the wife and the home. Most men relish the thought of being head of the home. It goes well with our male egos. This is ordained of God, but many have a distorted view of what God has said. Being the head of the home is not being a dictator in the home. We are not called to lord over our wives, but to lead them.

- God's idea of the husband being the head isn't referring to ability, worth, or advantage; it is dealing with the order and function of the home. Someone has to take the lead and stand responsible for the home, and that is to be the husband. Now men before you get too excited and proud of your God-given role, consider this: with that role comes responsibility. God has placed you in that role and He will hold you accountable for your family.

- One very important aspect of the husband's lead is the spiritual climate of the home. Men, you are responsible for leading the family in the ways of God. This has clearly been reversed in modern times. In many homes, the wife and mother is the spiritual foundation of the home. Men we ought to be ashamed if our wives have to take the lead in regard to spiritual matters. If you want to lead, lead in the ways of God as well.

- You are responsible to set the example in prayer, Bible study, church attendance and worship, thus leading your family into a deeper relationship with the Lord. If your wife is more faithful to the Lord and closer in her relationship with Him, then you are failing in leading the family. I know that this is difficult for us to admit, but it is the word of God!

- Many families are weak spiritually because the husband has failed to take the lead. If you want to ensure a proper spiritual climate in your home, take the lead and make it happen!

**B. He is to Love (25-29)** – Many of us here today have been married for a number of years. I have no doubt that we love our wives, but is that love all that it should be or could be? Think back to the time when you were dating.

- Sadly as time goes on in marriage, we fail to show our love as we should. A wife once asked her husband, "Do you still love me. You never tell me any more." He responded, "I haven't changed my mind and if I do I'll tell you." If you love her, let her know; tell her that you do, show her that you do. We are commanded of God to love our wives. This love is to be a:

**1. Sacrificial Love (25)** – We are to love our wives as Christ loved the church. This is the Greek word *agapao*, referring to God's Agape love, love that isn't selfish or pleasure driven, but a sacrificial love. Have you tried to imagine the love of God for us? He loved us when we were unlovable, even when we had no desire to know Him. He loved us enough to send His only begotten Son to die for our sin.

- [We are to love our wives as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it!](#) Jesus loved us so much that He was willing to take our sin and our shame upon Himself. He bore our reproach, becoming sin for us so that we might be saved. It was that love that took Him to the cross.

- Sacrificial love seeks the good of others above one's personal desires. It is a love that is steadfast and unwavering. It is not dictated by outward circumstances. This love is born of a desire to love, not looking for anything in return.

- Do you possess a sacrificial love for your wife? Sacrificial love will place the needs of the family as the priority. Are you willing to give up your own wants and desires to show her that love?

**2. Supreme Love (28-29)** – [Our love for our wives is to be as the love for ourselves.](#) It is as much concerned with her welfare and desires as it is our own. We have become one flesh in the eyes of God and our love must show no partiality between the two.

- We are to **nourish and cherish our wives as Christ did the church**. We must be committed to **nourish** or “*feed our love and see to it that it continues to grow and mature.*” Our love should be stronger now than ever before.
- We must also **cherish** (*to warm*) that love, *showing the warmth of our affection*. If you love her, show her that love every day! Don’t just say it; show it! She has heard it, but does she know it?

## **I. The Duty of a Husband** (5: 23-29)

**II. The Duty of a Father** (6:4) – In this single verse, God has much to say about the role of a father. If every father in the world would live according it we would see a great difference in our homes and societies. We are to be:

**A. A Man of Integrity** – **Provoke not your children to wrath**. This refers to “*an action or influence that builds up resentment, bitterness, and anger in a child.*” We are to live a life before our children and treat them in such a manner as to generate respect, love, and admiration, rather than resentment and anger. We have a great influence on our children. It is likely that they will live their lives in much the same way as we do. We can’t hold the idea of “do as I say, not as I do.”

- As fathers we are responsible to lead our children in the ways of God, not away from Him through hypocrisy and deceit. How would our children react if they could be with us each moment of the day? It is an awesome responsibility to raise a child and we are expected to live a life of integrity. If our children have no confidence in us, they will have a difficult time placing any reliance in other men.
- We must treat them fairly, but with restraint. Correction must be done out of love rather than anger. We must not allow them to indulge in the ways of the world just to avoid confrontation. They may never admit it, but children need structure in their lives. Love them and let them know that they are a vital part of the home and have much to contribute to the family.

**B. A Man of Involvement** – We are instructed to **bring them up** in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. This has the idea of “nourishing” them, caring for them as we would something fragile and valuable. It takes time and effort to bring up a child, nourishing them in the ways of God.

- We simply cannot do that from a distance. Men we are expected to take an active role in our children’s lives. I think most of us would have to admit that we could do much better in

this regard. I have been guilty of allowing my wife the burden of meeting their needs far too many times. God help us to take an active role and get involved in the lives of our children.

- Do we want them to grow up thinking that we never had time for them? Take a moment to consider where we spend our time. Often men develop a habit of spending more time with hobbies, sports, or their careers than with their families. Surely our children are more important than another tournament win, a trophy on the wall, or working all the time!
- Where do your priorities lie? Are you more concerned with your personal desires than the needs of your children? Make it a point to be involved with them; the day will come when they are gone from home and the opportunity will have vanished from your grasp. I can't go back to those times when they were just learning to walk, or the times when they were learning to ride a bike, but I do want to make memories in the days to come. They only have one father and I am blessed to be that man. I want to be there for them!

**C. A Man of Instruction** – We are to bring up our children in the [nurture and admonition of the Lord](#). Their [nurture](#) involves “*the whole training and education process, in regard to their mental and moral discipline.*” We are to bring our children up in such a way so that when they reach maturity and leave the home, they are ready to face the world and the challenges it brings.

- We are also to bring them up in [the admonition](#) of the Lord. This is a multi-faceted process, involving “counsel, encouragement, and correction.” We must guard against raising them according to our ideals and prejudices. This process requires different attitudes and actions.
- We must [counsel](#) them in the ways of God, teaching them of His deity, His love, His power, His provision, and the undeniable truths of His grace. They need to learn to lean upon Him whatever the circumstance.
- At times we must [encourage](#) them to continue for the Lord, even when others around them are not. I cannot emphasize the need for encouragement enough. Lift them up during the struggles of life and stand by them when their faith is being challenged!
- We must also possess the wisdom to [correct](#) them when necessary. It is often difficult, but we must provide guidance when they have gone astray. I am certainly glad that I was loved enough to be corrected and not allowed to continue in a way that would lead to hardship or ruin. If you love them, you must be willing to correct them at times. Give them room to grow, but not to stray.

**D. A Man of Inspiration** – The key to our responsibilities is based in Christ our Lord. We are to bring our children up in the ways [of the Lord](#). We could share all of the worldly knowledge that we possess and fail miserably as a parent if we fail to point them to Christ. We are responsible to be a witness to our children. We must live our lives according to the will of God if we expect to see them come to know Christ in the free pardon of sin.

- If we are unwilling to live submitted to Christ and follow Him, we need not expect our children to be any different. Often parents deal with wayward children because they have not set a godly example before them. This isn't always the case, but I want to live a life that I would be proud of my children to imitate.
- Fathers be committed to keeping your children in the house of God, hearing the Word of God. Get them here in time to make it to Sunday school. Wouldn't it be awful to one day realize that you had failed in exposing them to the grace of God? Live for the Lord each day, wherever you are and wherever you go! Build your home upon the Lord!

Men I will have to admit that I have been challenged by these verses. I trust you have as well. The fact is we are more responsible for the welfare of our families than we like to admit. Are there areas that you need to seek the Lord's help and guidance in being a better husband and father? If so why not come and ask Him to provide the strength and wisdom you need?