

Parenting - It's Not Easy! But God.....

This month, the focus is on mothers and next month, on June 21st, the emphasis is on fathers. As I meditated on this today, the thought occurred to me – why not have one day called “Parents’ Day?”

One very good reason to the commercial world is that there would not be enough money in the whole idea! Somehow it seems to me that the fathers get the short end of the stick in this because apart from the ads etc, not so much fuss is made over fathers. Could it be because everyone knows they have a mother, and in most cases mother is always there but in many cases – where is the father?

It is often said that mothers are givers. What about fathers? I know of fathers who are the givers while the mothers are the opposite! Generally speaking, however, the inclination is for mothers to be the burden bearer of the family. This is not how God ordained it. Both male and female were created in the image of God – but she was taken out of man – flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone. Man was formed from the dust of the ground; woman was made from the side of the man. Throughout the Bible, references are made to the role of mothers. The most important and the first reference is in connection to the redemption plan when God told Eve that her seed would deal with the serpent (Genesis 3:15).

As we look at Eve’s role in the whole Eden episode, we are told that she was deceived, while the man, Adam, acted in willful disobedience! (2 Corinthians 11:3; 1 Timothy 2:14) The whole drama brought about drastic changes, not only in humanity’s standing with God, but in Adam and Eve’s relationship with each other. Now we have Adam, shifting the blame to Eve, who he was to love and protect. How then could Eve respect and maintain the same trusting relationship with Adam? God’s commandment on this was clear to Eve. In my words God basically said: “Now, Eve, you do not want to submit to Adam any longer, you do not want to be at his side because you feel he betrayed you. However, he is still the authority. I put him in charge and, in spite of his sin, you must continue to submit to him.”

The submission thing has been an issue with women from the beginning, and the men, as we study most cultures, have strongly exercised their dominion, in many instances reducing womanhood to a status of less value than that of an animal. In modern western culture, women have taken hold of the women’s liberation movement to such an extent that men no longer have any idea who they are and what their role is! This has all been to the detriment of modern society.

God’s plan for the woman never changed. Even after the Fall, she was to continue her role as man’s helpmeet, the other half that completed him, and he the other half that completed her. This is why it is so important for us to allow God to bring our mate instead of going looking for him/her!

The feminine tendency is that of nurturer and protector of her offspring and no matter how evil a child is, most mothers continue to love that child when the father is quite prepared to disown him/her. Throughout the Bible we see many mighty men, but seldom is there any mention of their mothers. Yet, in order for these men to be mighty, there must have been a mother to nurture and care for that child! There are wonderful mothers like Hannah, mother of Samuel, Jochebed, Moses' mother, Samson's un-named mother and Mary, mother of Jesus; but there are also a few terrible ones like Herodias who actually connived and manipulated her own daughter to get what she wanted – not that Salome was totally innocent of the crime of murdering John the Baptist, but her mother was the instigator!

In the modern world we have all classes of mothers - married mothers, single mothers, working mothers both married and single, teen mothers as well as the traditional stay-at-home mothers. We also have single fathers who are forced to take on the role of mother!

The life of a newborn baby (let's call him Jacob) is like a canvas, and it is in the home, that Jacob is quickly molded by the environment and others to discover who he is, what he can do, and what is expected of him. He also builds a sense of security and confidence or insecurity and fear by what he sees in the other individuals surrounding him.

Jacob looks at others in the family to get a sense of worth. Does he see and feel love? Love in the family makes a child feel special. Jacob's entire concept of life will be built from his home-experiences. Enforced boundaries, disciplines and rules, teach Jacob that he is not a law unto himself.

In a Christian home Jacob learns about God. Teaching children about God is not the job of the church. The Church reinforces the home. There are areas where there is no church but home! If Godliness and commitment to God are not demonstrated in the home then Jacob's concept of God will be false and his commitment to Him lukewarm.

Joshua 24:15 says, *"And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."*

In whatever category we find ourselves as mothers God has given us one task – to train up our children in His way! Parenting today is not easy. There is the issue of “political correctness” which decrees that spanking is outmoded, the child has rights in some countries - including the right to report the parents to the police for spanking them!

God's Word says in Proverbs 22:15, *"Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of correction will drive it far from him."* The Bible says in Hebrews 13:4, *"Marriage is honorable and the bed undefiled, but adulterers and whoremongers, God will judge."*

Society advocates handing out all sorts of methods of birth control to facilitate safe sex in many cases without parental consent. Teachers cannot give headache medicine without parental consent, but in some places they can allow children to have abortions without the parent even knowing their daughter is pregnant!

Political correctness dictates allowing children to choose their own sexual preference, and textbooks are teaching infants that having the prince and princess live happily ever after is O.K. God tells us in Leviticus 18:22, *“Thou shalt not lie with mankind as with womankind. It is abomination.”*

Is it society or is it you training your children?

We can influence the destiny of our children in that we can influence their thought processes. We look at Proverbs 22:6 again that says, *“Train up a child in the way that he should go and when he is old, he will not depart from it.”* Children are like arrows and have a particular bent or inclination but we have to gently straighten that bent until it is fit for use and can be released from the bow to hit the target of God’s destiny for that child.

Children are not like clothing or shoes that come in standard sizes. God has put gifts into children which make each individual a unique person. For many of us, God was not in the equation when our children were born, neither was He on our list of priorities as they were growing up. We must not fall into condemnation over this – just hand them over to God and intercede for them. Sometimes children are reared in a Godly home from birth and still turn out wrong!

God has given our children wills to make choices (just as adults do) that will affect their destiny. Yes, the book of Proverbs does say ‘Train up a child in the way that he shall go and when he is old he will not depart from it.’ A proverb is not a guarantee - other factors will influence the outcome of that equation – the greatest one being human will.

What we have to do is to take the promise in the Word of God (which is our hope) that we can attach our faith to. We can take for instance Isaiah 54:13 (CEV) which says *“I will teach your children and make them successful”*.

or *“my household shall be saved!”* (Acts 11:14)

Parents can put themselves under great stress because they have a child who went wrong and they say, “What did I do wrong?”

Remember two things:

- 1) Cain and Abel had the same parents yet --- one of them turned out to be a murderer. God Almighty placed Adam and Eve, His children in the Garden of Eden in a perfect environment and we all know what happened! Just like Adam and Eve, God gave our children a will to choose right from wrong, to be obedient or to be disobedient.
- 2) When you were not a Christian, you did what you knew to do. Now that you are a Christian, do what God says to do.