

# The Examiner



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## The Role of the Father in the Home (by Irven Lee)

Several years ago I saw a comic strip in which a little boy was asking his mother, "Why did we get daddy?" Some little people even if they had the mature intellect of adults, might feel like asking a similar question because they are ignored by their father. He does not, in some cases seem to be a working member of the team. His time is dedicated to his business, his recreation, and only to those things that interest him. This is unfortunate. He could and should be a very precious and much loved member of the family.

"If any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel" (1 **Tim. 5:8**). A man who adequately provides the things that money can buy for his wife and children must work with diligence. This is no easy task. Food, clothing, shelter, medical needs, and reasonable social affairs are expensive. The able bodied man who is not willing to toil to provide for these things has revolted against God's law and is worse than an infidel. Some seem to prefer to beg or steal rather than to earn these necessary things. There are a few drones that seem not to know what is going on about them. They can have large families, but the wives and children must provide for themselves. This is a repulsive sight.

Some men in our generation amass fortunes and seek to buy the loyalty of

their children. They allow them to have and spend great sums of money. This extreme is dangerous. Such children may develop such drug habits and life styles that even their large money supply is not adequate to fulfill their demands. Crime, immorality, and dishonesty may cause them to become a curse to their families and to society in general.

### A Gift of Time

There is great need for a father's wisdom in providing for the necessities of his children and also providing the love, counsel, and oversight that will help them to learn to properly use what they have. Time is one of the greatest gifts a man could have for his children. A father should be a very good friend to each of his children. Each will delight in early childhood to have his attention as evidence of his love. If he listens to his child and talks to his child of things that interest the little one, a close tie between the two is developed. This close contact can be maintained by the wise father so that the older son or daughter will see no communication or generation gap later. This is the ideal and it is well worth the effort and the cost in time. Children need to be fed and clothed, but they also need to be trained. "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (**Prov. 22:6**). Example is an essential element in the training process. We actually show them how they ought to live. We cannot send our

influence the right way while we go the wrong way in our own lives.

### A Good Example

The alcoholic's family often suffers much because of the irritable nature of the slave of alcohol. Some who drink become very irritable while under the influence. Their children are also sometimes made to suffer for lack of food, clothing, and other things that money can buy because the bread winner buys liquor first and then does not have enough left to provide for those who have a right to look to him for support.

It is difficult for me to understand why a son or daughter of an alcoholic father or of alcoholic parents will follow in the steps of these slaves, but many of them do follow the unfortunate example of their parents. Why do they form the habit that will cause their children to suffer as they have had to do? Example is a powerful force. Fathers should take more thought to the examples they are setting before their families.

The unholy family environment may be such that the only contact the children may have with others will be with the wrong kind of companions. Their associates may tend to be those that tolerate the liquor habit. Each child may start the habit by taking the first drinks with the full confidence that he will not continue in that way. The alcoholic tends to bring forth children after his kind. This is true of addicts of all harmful drugs.

Parents who are vulgar blasphemers may see their children become just as vulgar and irreverent as they are. Dishonest parents are likely to have dishonest children. This is true so often that the public may penalize worthy sons of an unworthy father. The family name may carry a certain stigma with it. We should all be watchful and ready to encourage that young man who is worthy

of a good name.

We have taken several words to say that a father should leave a good example and, therefore, a good name for his children. Money cannot replace that precious right. Some unholy fathers do provide money but not the good example. They are not able to give good, meaningful advice. Good advice is in harmony with the conduct of the one who gives it. We cannot send our influence one way while we go another.

### Teaching God's Word

The tongue is a little member, but it boasts great things. The teaching is not only by example. Many things need to be said in teaching the basic principles or righteousness so that the young can learn to make their own decisions. The gospel is taught by word of mouth. The love of God, the message and example of Christ, the word of the Spirit, and the hope of heaven are taught by word of mouth. Very many fathers fail miserably to bring their children "up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (**Eph. 6:4**). Comparatively few have the great advantage that Timothy had in being associated with his wonderful mother and grandmother (**2 Tim. 1:5; 3:14, 15**). Nothing is said of his father to indicate that he took his part in the training of the child. Too many fathers leave the spiritual training to the mothers, and that is not what the Lord intended. The father is to take his place as head of the home and guide in the training in spiritual things as well as in physical things. Why are there not more fathers who will do so?

For a life to be exemplary the good pattern must be continuing action. There is to be that day by day pattern before the growing children. The instruction is also to be on a continuing basis. Repetition is one of the laws of learning. A point of precious truth should be mentioned over

and over on different occasions. By this means, and only by this means, can it be deeply implanted into the mind of the child. Let every father who is a Christian understand that training his child by word and by example is a very important part of his responsibility. It is also his wonderful privilege.

Let every non-Christian father realize that he is standing in the way of his children's obedience to God. "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad" (**Matt. 12:30**). It seems that some fathers who golf on Sunday or do other things that satisfy themselves have convinced themselves that they can turn all of the religious training of the children over to their wives. They do not forbid their worshipping and they make their transportation available, and then they feel that they have fulfilled their responsibility to the family. Have they forgotten the power of their example? The small children may gladly go with their mother, but as young adults they may demonstrate the power of a father's example. A man should obey God because of his love for God and for his own salvation. As an added motive he should obey God in every way as a proper pattern for his children.

The devout father who spends much time working to provide for the needs of his family and in training his children by word and example is a great man who can and will be happy in the results of his labors. Whether or not he prospers financially or is prominent in the affairs of this life, he can be great in the eyes of God and in the eyes of his children, if he is successful in being a good father and a worthy Christian. The requirements for these things are not fame nor fortune. These things require faithful dedication to the ideals that are most important.

### **Ruling His House**

Evidently a man is not a good example as a father if he is not willing to work to provide for his own. (See **1 Tim. 5:8; 1 Thess. 4:11, 12; 2 Thess. 3:8-12**.) It is also evident that he needs to provide the proper guidance and discipline for his children. (Read **Heb. 12:5-11; Prov. 13:24; 22:6, 15; 29:15-17**.) It is true that there is some "know how" involved in fulfilling these responsibilities. In giving the qualifications of elders Paul listed: "One who ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity: (for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)" (**1 Tim. 3:4, 5**).

Do you know how to rule your own house? If not, you need to learn because there is great need that the job be accomplished. "Correct thy son, and he will give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul" (**Prov. 29:17**). It is possible to discourage and frustrate a child rather than discipline. Discipline is not child abuse, but some fathers do become abusive in what they call discipline. "Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged" (**Col. 3:21**). Of course, a child may cry when properly disciplined, but he is not to be harassed, frustrated, and made sullen by the actions of a tyrant who is called a father. Too much money and discipline that is too harsh and unreasonable may do much harm. Use all the wisdom you have in your effort to be a good and worthy father who will succeed in this very great undertaking.

The Christ taught His disciples to think of God as Father. His disciples are children of God. The father and child relationship is expected to be very close. It is a very unnatural and repulsive thing to learn of men who not only neglect but even abuse their children. We learn of

very small children who have broken bones and other serious injuries received from men who should be worthy to be called fathers. Alcohol and other drugs may be the most common cause of this cruelty from people who were created to be in the image of God. Men who have so completely ignored their role as fathers are more like unreasonable beasts who shall utterly perish in their own corruption. In their destroying they shall surely be destroyed. The role of the father is to provide for, protect, train, and love their children. They are the people to whom the children may turn for security and other special needs.

Very dedicated parents often wonder how they should answer and what they should do on various occasions as their little ones come with their questions and problems. Being filled with a great love for the children and with a great respect for and knowledge of the Bible will help them find the proper answers and make their right decisions in matters that involve these dependent souls. Each has a soul worth more than the world itself, because the spirit goes back to God in death and will not be destroyed when the elements are melted with fervent heat.

Our materialistic America is very well acquainted with the idea of a return on an investment. The matter of sowing and reaping is involved in our relationships in the home and with our neighbors and brethren. "Inasmuch as you have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (**Matt. 25:40**). "Whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he be drowned in the depth of the sea" (**Matt. 18:6**). Physical death is not as bad as that which is to come to a father who is the real stumbling stone of his own children. He must give account for his behavior in his own family, as well as in other aspects of life.

"Give, and it shall be given to you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again" (**Luke 6:38**). This great principle of sowing and reaping certainly applies to a father and his children. The man who has won the respect and love of his children has insurance for times of sickness and in his old age that no insurance company has to offer. He gives when they need him, and they give when he needs them.

Some parents who seem to have tried hard to be what they should be to their children have their hearts broken by the ungodliness and immorality of their children. All of us should try to help them bear their sorrow. There are many influences that are brought to bear on children other than the wholesome influence of parents who are Christians. As children grow up they come to have responsibilities, too. Sin that destroys them also harms those who have loved them and sacrificed for them. Our unbelieving and ungodly world has many broken hearts.

### **Conclusion**

The right kind of a father is a good husband, a good neighbor, a good citizen, and a good member of the church. In his being a good example to his children he proves or demonstrates "that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" in all these relationships. If a man mistreats his wife or is unfaithful to her he is certainly not a good father. Neither he, his wife, nor his children has a good home if he is not a good husband and father.

[via - Guardian of Truth - May 19, 1983]