

The Thirsty Child

It had taken the frazzled father half the night to put his young son to bed and turn out the light. But just a few minutes later the boy called out, "Dad, I'm thirsty. Can you bring me a glass of water?"

"No, you had your chance before lights out." There was a brief silence.

"Dad, I really need a drink of water. Can't I have some?"

"No. It's already way past your bedtime. Now go to sleep." An even briefer silence followed.

"Daddy, I'm really thirsty!"

"If you say another word, I'm going to come in there and take away all your video games!"

The briefest of pauses was broken when the son called out, "Dad, when you come in to take away my video games, can you bring a glass of water with you?"

Being a parent isn't easy, but then again neither is being a child. And yet the Bible gives great weight to the ways in which we live out these roles. This week we will learn what the Bible has to say about these roles and how God is our eternal, and eternally loving, Father.

Monday – Obey and Respect Your Parents

"One act of obedience is better than one hundred sermons." Dietrich Bonhoeffer, 20th c. German theologian

1. Please read Exodus 20:1-12 (focusing on verse 12). Now read Ephesians 6:1-3, Paul's commentary on Exodus 20:12. What strikes you about these two passages? Why do you think this command includes a promise?
2. What do you think it means to "honor your father and mother?"
3. How can following Deuteronomy 4:1-9 help fulfill the command and achieve the promise in Exodus 20:12?

Case Study - In 1 Samuel 19:1-7, we observe Jonathan seeking to honor his father while obeying God and being loyal to his friend David? As it turns out, this is no easy task for Jonathan. How does he navigate this situation?

Tuesday – Accept Your Parents

"There never was a child so lovely but his mother was glad to get him asleep." Ralph Waldo Emerson

1. Today we turn to the wisdom of Proverbs to learn more about what's behind Exodus 20:12. Please read Proverbs 23:22. Describe the attitude that is being affirmed. How does this show acceptance of a parent?
2. Now look at Proverbs 20:20. Why is such an action so hard on parents? How is it hard on the child?
3. Read Luke 15:11-32. How does each son show acceptance and rejection of the father's way of doing things?

Matter of Prayer - How accepting are you of your parents' ways? Ask the Lord to guide you in honoring your parents in this area.

Wednesday – Affirm Your Parents

"Raising kids is part joy and part guerilla warfare." Ed Asner, American actor

1. Please read Proverbs 3:27 and 1 Timothy 5:3-8. How do these passages reveal practical ways to affirm your parents, in keeping with Proverbs 23:25?
2. What problem does Jesus address in Matthew 15:3-6?

Text Insight - In a completely ineffective and mistaken effort to honor God first, the Pharisees had come up with many ways people could make excuses for disregarding their obligations to others.

Case Study - In 2 Samuel 1:17-27, how does David's lament over Saul and Jonathan's deaths (particularly verse 23) reveal Jonathan's efforts to affirm his father Saul's role in his life? What efforts can you take this week to show your affirmation of your parents?

Thursday – Raising Children

"Train up a fig tree in the way it should go, and when you are old sit under the shade of it." Charles Dickens

1. Please read Ephesians 6:4. What advice is there for parents regarding their children? Why do you think this is important in a family relationship?
2. What does Psalm 127:3-5 say about children? In what way is this consistent or not with your own views?
3. Now look at Proverbs 22:6. What is the responsibility a parent has to a child?

Case Study – What might Proverbs 22:6 look like applied in one's life? Let's consider the life of Timothy in the New Testament. Please read 2 Timothy 3:14-15. How does Timothy's life reflect the truth of Proverbs 22:6?

Friday – Our Faithful and Eternal Father

"We never know the love of the parent till we become parents ourselves."

Henry Ward Beecher, 19th c. American pastor

1. Please read Psalm 27:10 and Malachi 2:10a. What hope is there for people who have not been blessed with good parents?
2. Now look at Matthew 6:8-9 and John 20:17. How does Jesus, the only begotten Son of God, show us that we also are God's children?
3. According to Hebrews 12:7-11 and 1 John 3:1-3, what are some benefits of having God as our Father?

Making it Personal: Ask our Heavenly Father to show you how you can honor him as he lavishes his love upon you, his beloved child.

For the Weekend: This weekend, consider some of the following verses: Rom. 1:7, 1 Cor. 1:3, 2 Cor. 1:2, Gal. 1:4 & 4:6-7, Eph. 1:2, Phi. 1:2 & 4:20, Col. 1:2, 1 Thess. 3:11-13, 2 Thess. 1:1 & 2:16, Phil. 3 and Ex. 20:12. How does knowing you are in a parent-child relationship with God affect the way you live?