

Notes for the Ekklesia Meeting

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Just Like Daddy!

by Dan Trygg

“And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of a one-and-only Son from a Father, full of grace and truth.”

John 1:14

“I speak the things which I have seen with My Father; therefore you also do the things which you heard from your father.”

John 8:38

“Do all things without grumbling or disputing; ¹⁵ that you may demonstrate yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world...”

Philippians 2:14-15

The Bible has a lot to say about the role of a father in the life of his children. The culture of people in Bible times was soundly patriarchic. Families were built around the husband/father. The man would take a wife as his bride, and they would raise the family together. The identity of the children would always be wrapped up in who his father was. The father was responsible for providing for the family. **Though everybody in the family worked, the ultimate responsibility fell upon the man to provide.** Because the economy was mostly built around farms, or caring for flocks and herds, families worked together, and **the father was actively involved in the oversight, instruction and discipline of the children every day.** In Israel, **the father was responsible for the training of his children in preparation for life.** That doesn't mean that the mother was not involved. She was very actively involved. *Both parents worked together as a team.* In Israel, however, **the man was supposed to take charge and be the example.**

God used the example of a father's relationship with his children to help us understand the type of relationship He desires to have with us. Consider the following passages that describe the responsibility of fathers. They are applicable to God's relationship with us, as well. **A father:**

Provides nourishment and training – “Children I have nourished and brought up...” -- Isaiah 1:2.

Teaches his children basic skills – “It was I who taught Ephraim how to walk, taking him by the arms...” -- Hosea 11:3.

Gives his children what they need – “For everyone asking receives, and the one seeking finds, and to the one knocking it will be opened. ⁹ Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰ Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? ¹¹ If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!” -- Matthew 7:8-11.

Teaches his children practical wisdom for living – “Hear, my son, your father's instruction, and forsake not your mother's teaching,” -- Proverbs 1:8.

Instructs his children about God – “You shall love Yahweh your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. ⁶ And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. ⁷ You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. ⁸ You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. ⁹ You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.” -- Deuteronomy 6:5-9.

Reproves and corrects his children – “My son, keep your father's commandment, and forsake not your mother's teaching. ²¹ Bind them on your heart always; tie them around your neck. ²² When you walk, they will lead you; when you lie down, they will watch over you; and when you awake, they will talk with you. ²³ For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching a light, and the reproofs of discipline are the way of life, ²⁴ to preserve you...” -- Proverbs 6:20-24.

Disciplines his children for their good – “And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? “My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by Him. ⁶ For the Lord disciplines the one He loves, and chastises every son whom He receives.” ⁷ It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? ⁸ If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. ⁹ Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? ¹⁰ For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, that we may share His holiness. ¹¹ For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.” -- Hebrews 12:5-11.

Encourages, comforts and keeps his children focused on what is important – “...you know how, like a father with his children, ¹² we encouraged each one of you and consoled you and testified to you to walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.” -- 1 Thessalonians 2:11-12.

Fathers were highly respected, and they set the tone and standards for their family. This often established their family identity, something that they were proud of. God sent Jeremiah to a well-known family in Israel, the Rechabites (Jer. 35). They were unique in that their forefather, Jonadab the son of Rechab had been a very godly man. He had charged his sons and their descendants to never drink wine, build a house, or work a farm. They were to only live in tents, tending their flocks and herds. This charge had been handed down and kept for over 250 years! If you met a Rechabite, you knew what to expect. You knew not to offer him wine, and you knew he would likely not be tilling the soil, or living in a house. If you didn't know, you would quickly find out. Why? Because he was a Rechabite. It was his identity. It had become what their entire family stood for, and was known for. God pointed out that the Rechabites had kept their forefather's single admonition faithfully all these years, but Israel had not respected God enough to keep His commandments, though He had repeatedly spoken to them again and again.

John used a similar word picture to help us understand the purpose of the Word coming to live among us as a human being. **It was a well understood fact that if you met someone's special son, you would quickly learn a great deal about his father.** As you spent time with the son, you would take note of his speech, and be able to recognize what was accepted talk and conversation at home. You would watch his table manners, and quickly be able to discern if he came from a respectable family with good training, or a family who was slovenly or crude. As you watched the young man work, you quickly would recognize if the example and training of his father built into him a good work ethic, honesty and integrity, ...or whether the young man learned to cut corners, cheat or be lazy. If the boy was smart, able to read, and well educated, then you would conclude that these were values of the family he came from. If he was crude, coarse or insensitive to the appropriateness of certain words or phrases, then you knew his family was probably like that. **Bottom line, the kid was probably just like his daddy. So what you saw in the kid, told you a lot about what went on at home, ...which meant it revealed what his father was like.** When John wrote, “and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory (radiance, representation, reputation), glory as of *an* only son of *a* father, full of grace and truth,” what he was saying was that **we can learn a great deal about God by watching Jesus.**

In a similar way, **Jesus used the same principle to point out to the Jewish religious leaders that they were acting like the devil, so they must be sons of the devil** (John 8:30-44). They were trying to kill Him, a man who only had told them the truth about God. They thought of themselves as children of Abraham, but they didn't act like him. They were acting consistent with the devil's nature, not Abraham's. They were just like their daddy.

Whose son or daughter do we look more like? Do we look like we are from the family of God? There was a time when people believed that you couldn't help but live out what your family set you up for. The truth is that even though we learned a lot of things from our fathers, or our families, we are not helpless to simply repeat what we have learned. God deals with this in Ezekiel 18. He gives several examples of father-son relationships where the son “flipped the script” given to him by his father. His father may have been good, but he chose to be bad. Or his father may have been evil, but the son overcame all that and chose to be righteous. **We are *not* condemned to repeat our parents' mistakes. We may have that old programming in us, but we can choose to learn to live differently.** We can “consider” and “turn away from” unhealthy, sinful behavior (vs. 28).

We now have a new Father, a Father in heaven. All those things that earthly fathers were *supposed* to do, our true heavenly Father *will fulfill* in a greater, more perfect way. **What is important is that we *begin to identify with Him as our Father.*** We are *His* children. **We can learn from Him and, by His grace and training, we will grow to be like Him.** As that happens, *we will begin to faithfully represent Him to the world around us.*

How did the special son become *equipped* to represent his father? You know, he probably didn't think about it that way too much. **There was a two-part responsibility at work there. The father did his part to nourish, nurture, instruct, correct, train and encourage his child.** We can expect our heavenly Father to do the same for us, on a spiritual level. **There were also responsibilities on the part of the child, however. He needed to cooperate with the father's provision and instruction.** If not, he would not benefit from the father's provision and training. Don't think it is any different spiritually. Israel refused the Father's instruction and admonitions, and they became corrupted. The prophet Amos observed, **“Can two men walk together, unless they are agreed?”** (3:3) Disagreement in choices, goals, values and behaviors will eventually cause any relationship to grow distant. **The key is the relationship! The relationship will draw us to follow, and as we follow we become shaped and trained as we walk with Him. Children who are in love with their father will imitate his actions, his attitudes and his values. Our part is to stay close to God, develop the relationship, and imitate what we see as our Father's heart – “Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ loved you”** (Eph. 5:1,2).