

Fathers as Family Leaders

“Then came he to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father was a Greek” (Acts 16:1).

“...We entered into the house of Philip, the evangelist, which was one of the seven; and abode with him. And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy”
(Acts 21:8, 9).

Men With A Mission

The Book of Acts is the story of “Men With A Mission.” As you read through this story you quickly see how men with a mission to reach the world accomplished their vision. In the midst of mass evangelism, miracles, and the Word of God spreading to the known world, it is easy to overlook an important point. Hidden within the pages of the twenty-eight chapters of Acts, there is also the hint of “men with a mission” that did their part to be Fathers; family leaders.

Timothy, My Son

As you read of the Apostle Paul finding Timothy, it is easy to pass over the fact that his mother was a believer “...but his father was a Greek” (Acts 16:1). There was something that attracted Paul to Timothy. It is true that Timothy was “well reported of by the brethren” (Acts 16:2). But there seems to be something more that caused Paul to ask Timothy “...to go forth with him” (Acts 16:3). Later it becomes clear that Timothy became like a son to Paul. Paul recognized the importance of a father, a family leader, and understood that this was lacking in the life of Timothy. Therefore, he adopted Timothy as his own son. Deep within the heart of Paul was a passion to reach, not only the world, but to also make an impact on one young man looking for spiritual fatherly leadership. It seems that it is with a sense of fatherly pride that Paul writes:

“Unto Timothy, my own son in the faith...” (1 Timothy 1:2).

“This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare” (1 Timothy 1:18).

“To Timothy, my dearly beloved son...” (2 Timothy 1:2).

Two books in the New Testament were written to Paul’s son, Timothy, to provide fatherly guidance, instruction, and leadership. These books are called 1 and 2 Timothy. These are not the only books in the Bible written to son(s). The first nine chapters of Proverbs gives thirteen lessons like a father would give his son when reaching the early teenage years. Each one begins

with “my son” or “my sons.” Proverbs in the Bible and in many cultures are used to pass wisdom and truth from one generation to another. When you closely examine it, the entire Bible was written by a loving Father who wanted to provide leadership to His earthly children; both sons and daughters.

Philip’s Daughters

As Paul journeyed toward Jerusalem, the Bible unwinds for us the vivid account of the Holy Spirit testifying that Paul was going to encounter troubles in Jerusalem.

We find that Paul visited Philip and stayed with him at Caesarea. Philip had four daughters.

The Bible says that they were “...virgins, which did prophesy” (Acts 21:9). Philip was a great man of God whom the Lord transported supernaturally to witness to an Ethiopian by the roadside. At that time, he was having an outstanding revival in Samaria (Acts 8). He was also used in miracles and casting out demons (Acts 8:6-7). He was a man with a mission to reach the world BUT also was a father, a family leader. It would be unusual to have four daughters used in spiritual gifts without proper parental leadership training. Philip must have brought these young ladies up correctly. Our story also says emphatically that they were “virgins.” It appears that Philip had his house under control and provided family leadership. He produced and raised four young ladies who had maintained their purity and were being used by the Lord.

“One that 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 Timothy 3:4-5; See also 1 Timothy 3:11).

The Bible makes it clear that we must be leaders at home if we expect to be leaders in the church. We must first be able to rule (lead) our own family if we expect to become truly qualified for ministry. We must be effective at reaching our families before we will be effective in reaching our world. Our number one responsibility in evangelizing the world is the evangelism of our own children. This is our priority.

“For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Matthew 16:26).

As a family leader we could say, “What shall it profit a father if he gain the whole world and lose his own children? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his children?”

Fathers - Guides on the Road of Life

“Fathers are so special...
Sometimes, we just don’t know;
How dear they are,

How blessed we are,
Until they help us grow.
And fathers are our leaders,
We need them to impart,
The truth,
That God will lead us on
And dwell within our hearts.”
(Linda Poitras)

John Maxwell constantly reminds us that “leadership is influence.” Much time and effort is spent today developing leadership skills to be used in the business world. However, one of the best places to develop leadership skills is right in the home. Fathers should be the number one influencers in their families. They can learn how to be effective leaders by leading small groups at home. It has been said that leaders “know the way, go the way, and show the way.”

Ed Roebert in his book, *Mastering Management in the Church* defines the word “lead” as “to go before; guide; direct; precede.” It has been said, “a leader who leads must precede.”

You cannot lead someone to a place that you have
never been before.

Daddy, Your Child is Saying

“...Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God” (Ruth 1:16).

The role of spiritual leadership in the home has not been given to wives.

“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife...” (Ephesians 5: 22-23).

The husband is the head of the wife and therefore the leader of the family. The entire family must submit to the family head or family leader. However, if “Father” is not leading, the wife and children adopt the policy, “lead, follow, or get out of the way.” Someone else will become the leader and that is not the will of God. It is common today for fathers to give their leadership role over to someone else.

They often step down from their place of leadership to pursue business, money, and success in the world. They are committed to their work but not to their families. One thing is for sure; someone is going to influence the family. When the father is not a Christian or refuses to lead

his family, of necessity, the mother will have to step in and provide spiritual leadership and instruction. However, this is not the preferred plan of God for the family.

In the Jewish nation, the father was responsible for the direction and spiritual guidance of the family.

A Father Knows the Way

“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day shall be in thine heart” (Deuteronomy 6:4-6).

A Father Goes the Way

Is this written to the pastor or the father; the family leader? “...Keep all the statutes and his commandments, which I command thee... (Deuteronomy 6:2).

Abraham Lincoln said, “There is just one way to train up a child in the way he should go and that is to travel the way yourself.”

If your child walks in your footsteps,
Where will he be led?

A father does not say, “Get going!” But instead he says, “Let’s go!” He leads by walking. Man was made to lead especially in the home. The largest percentage of most congregations are ladies. Where are

the men? There is no more valuable possession in life than your children. They are a heritage from the Lord (Psalm 127:3).

The Psalmist David describes a godly man as “He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart” (Ps. 15:2).

A Father Shows the Way

“And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children...” (Deuteronomy 6: 7).

As you read this Scripture you may be thinking that it is the responsibility of the pastor, the church, or the Sunday School to lead the children. Does your pastor sit down in your house or sleep there?

“...And shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up...and thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates” (Deuteronomy 6:7-9).

“Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it” (Proverbs 22:6).

A Father’s Prayer

“My son, keep thy father’s commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother: Bind them continually upon thine heart, and tie them about thy neck. When thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; and when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee” (Proverbs 6:20-22).

Proverbs 17:6 says, “Children’s children are the crown of old men; and the glory of children are their fathers.”

Study Questions

1. Which two books were written to Paul’s son in the faith, Timothy? _____

2. Why is it said that the Book of Proverbs is another book written to sons? _____

3. What was unique about Philip’s four daughters? _____

4. What is the qualification for a pastor, elder, or deacon according to 1 Timothy 3:4-5 and 1 Timothy 3:11? _____

5. As fathers, what is our number one responsibility in evangelizing the world? _____

6. How does John Maxwell define “leadership?” _____

7. How does Ed Roebert define “lead?” _____

8. If Father is not leading the wife, children adopt which policy? _____

9. A Father does not say, “Get going” but? _____

10. How did David describe a godly man? _____

11. In the Jewish nation, whose responsibility was it to give guidance and spiritual direction? _____

12. Who are the glory of the children? _____

13. According to Deuteronomy 6:7-9 when and where should we teach our children “The Lord our God is one Lord?” _____

14. Quote Deuteronomy 6:4: _____

15. Why did Paul write two books to Timothy? _____

16. What has been said concerning leaders and the “way?” _____

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| The Little Boy Who Follows Me |
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A careful man I want to be,
A little boy follows me;
I do not dare to go astray
For fear he'll go the self-same way.

I cannot once escape his eyes.
Whatever he sees me do he tries.
Like ME he says he's going to be-
That little boy who follows me.

I must remember as I go
Through sun, and rain and when the winds blow
I am building for the years to be-
That little boy who follows me.

Author Unknown (Adapted)
Original Title: “The Little Chap Who Follows Me.”