

The Man's Role in the Home

A Father's Beatitudes

Blessed is the man that receives the Heavenly Father as Lord of his Life. Blessed is the father that will lay down his life for his wife and children. Blessed is the father that offers to wash the dishes and tend to the baby, so mother can have a break, even after his long day at work. Blessed is the father that can attentively and patiently listen when he gets home, to crying children, and an exhausted and frustrated wife. Then be able with a smile, to offer comforting and soothing words, regardless of his feelings and frustrations. Blessed is the father that takes the time to read the Bible to his children and pray with them, teaching them to receive his Heavenly Father as their Lord.

Blessed is the father that disciplines his children with love, making sure his life is a loving example of his Heavenly Father. Blessed is the father that can patiently listen to his teenagers, when they are telling him that he is too old and doesn't understand today's world. Blessed is the father that spends late nights and lonely hours in intercessory prayer for his wife and family, so he will be able to allow his Heavenly Father's love, patience, longsuffering, meekness, temperance, forbearance and forgiveness, to be seen and expressed in demanding and opportune moments.

Blessed is the father that is able to praise the Lord while the house has run amuck, mending his families hurts, frustrations, disciplining, and handling financial disruption, all the while, knowing the right words to say in love. Blessed is the father that teaches and leads his family into becoming a Family of God. Blessed is this humbled father, this unselfish man, who lovingly leads this home, as it has been taught to him by the Heavenly father, through His son Jesus Christ! Amen -- written by Rev. Joseph C. Miller, 1997

Our homes are being destroyed for lack of godly men who know their mission. When the nation of Israel was sinning and God was threatening to take them into captivity, God showed the importance he placed on one dedicated man:

"I looked for a man among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, but I found none. So I will pour out my wrath on them and consume them with my fiery anger, bringing down on their own heads all they have done," declares the Sovereign LORD. (Ezekiel 22:30-31).

The Lord searches for righteous, godly men. The city of Sodom would have been spared for ten righteous men (Genesis 18:32), but God could not find even one righteous man in Sodom. Does a godly man make a difference to a nation or to a city? Absolutely! And a godly man makes a difference to a family too. Are you a holy, courageous man on behalf of your home? What does it mean to be a godly, righteous man to your family? What is required of Christ's man in the home?

The society in which we live has neglected to teach men about their role in the home. The worldly view of a man's role is that he should provide financially for his family, but we shouldn't expect him to be very engaged with home life. In spite of all our talk of feminism, we have left the job of making a home and raising the kids to the female of the household. The role of leadership, of teaching and correcting the kids has fallen to the feminine side of our society. This is both unwise and unbiblical. As a result our homes are very weak and the enemy finds it very easy to destroy our families through divorce, rebellion, addictions, and child abuse. What is God's view of a man's role in the home? There are six Biblical missions for Christ's man in the home. For a man coming from the world's point of view, the Biblical role of the husband/father can at first appear overwhelming. But take courage! God has genetically and spiritually prepared men to fulfill these missions and God never commands us to do something, that He will not also equip us to do. Here is God's job description for the man of the household.

1. The Man of the Household is to Keep the Focus on the Mission

God said this about Abraham, the father of the Jewish nation: *"For I have chosen him, so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is right and just, so that the LORD will bring about for Abraham what he has promised him"* (Genesis 18:19).

For what mission did God chose Abraham? The mission of *directing* his household. Men are to be the directors and managers of their household. In speaking about the requirements for elders in the church, Paul says to Timothy:

He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. (1 Timothy 4:1). Men are uniquely suited for direction. Directing is keeping the "mission" in mind. Your wife and kids will sometimes get lost in the forest and it's your job to keep the focus on the mission. What is the mission? Jewish fathers were taught by the rabbis that their mission involved four goals:

Goal #1: To pass on a living relationship with the Lord God (DEU 6:4-9; JER 9:24; PHI 3:8-10).

Goal #2: To help your children know the joy of obedience and the value of character (GEN 18:19; PHI 2:19-22).

Goal #3: To see your children trained for life, i.e. skills for getting along in the world (PRO 22:29).

Goal #4: To prepare your children for marriage.

Father, it is your job to keep the focus on these goals. In the midst of soccer schedules, ballet performances, and school activities, you may need to be the (sometimes) lone voice in the wilderness, keeping the family focused on what is really important for this life and the one to come.

One of the things that you can do to help you family focus on the mission is to develop a Family Mission Statement.

2. The Man of the Household is to Be Involved as a Teacher

Almost all Scriptures in the Bible about teaching children are addressed to fathers. Proverbs 4:1-5 is an example: *Listen, my sons, to a father's instruction; pay attention and gain understanding. I give you sound learning, so do not forsake my teaching. When I was a boy in my father's house, still tender, and an only child of my mother, he taught me and said, "Lay hold of my words with all your heart; keep my commands and you will live."*

In order to teach your children you will need to:

- Value people over things, i.e. your children over computers, cars, boats, or TV.

- Teach about God. Teach about obedience. Lead in home devotions.
- Your kids will need to see you excited about learning about God.
- Expand your teaching to include a trade for your children and to prepare them for marriage.

The teaching we are speaking of centers more around lifestyle teaching, than classroom instruction. The calling in Deuteronomy 6 is to *"talk about [God's commandments] when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up"* (Deuteronomy 6:7).

Abraham's call included instruction: *"For I have chosen him, so that he will **direct his children** and his household after him to **keep the way of the LORD by doing what is right and just**"* (Genesis 18:19).

The Jewish father always taught his son a trade, so that he would be able to make a living in the world. Even Jesus was taught a trade (carpentry) by Joseph and a trade by His heavenly Father: *Didn't you know I'd be about my Father's business [trade]* (a literal translation of Luke 2:49). Ben Franklin said, "He that hath a trade hath an estate." As far as college is concerned, save early and start late. They can work their way through. Where their treasure is, is where their heart will be.

3. The Man of the Household is to Provide for His Family

If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever (1 Timothy 5:8).

Work hard when you are at work. Choose your occupations and employment wisely. Provide an ample budget to your wife. Don't pinch pennies with her while you buy a \$15,000 bass boat.

4. When present, the Man of the Household is to Take Over the Loving and Disciplining of the Children

For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory (1 Thessalonians 2:11-12).

Fathers are to love their children with encouragement and comfort. One of the ways you can do this is by blessing your children. Jewish fathers gave their children a fatherly blessing on each Sabbath and upon other occasions. The fatherly blessing had 5 elements: touch, spoken words, placing a high value on the child, envisioning a future for the child, and commitment to fulfilling God's call on their life. [For more on this see Gary Smalley's excellent book entitled "The Blessing."] The fatherly blessing shows love for your child.

He who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is careful to discipline him (Proverbs 13:24).

Discipline your son, for in that there is hope; do not be a willing party to his death (Proverbs 19:18).

Correct your children. Use the 5 tools of correction: negative reinforcement, logical consequences, natural consequences, positive reinforcement, ignore the behavior.

5. The Man of the Household is to Minister to the Needs of His Wife

One of the most difficult things for modern men to understand is how they are responsible for their wives. As head of the household we have a responsibility for the household, including the state of our marriage.

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church—for we are members of his body. "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband (Ephesians 5:25-33).

Ask about her day each day. Be sympathetic and encouraging. Provide stress relief. If she is creating a home and caring for the children, then she is making a sacrifice that few women are willing to make.

6. The Man of the Household is to Protect His Wife and Family

The father is a guardian for the family. The fatherless lack a man to defend and protect them (so God serves as their defender). Proverbs 23:10 shows the role of fathers as defenders: *Do not move an ancient boundary stone or encroach on the fields of the fatherless, for their Defender is strong; he will take up their case against you.*

What does a father defend his family from?

- From criticism - particularly opposition from relatives.
- From evil influences. How much social contact will my family have and what form will it take?
- From the dangers of youthful desires. Take the lead in courtship and dating.
- From physical and spiritual calamity. Pray for protection for your family: *When a period of feasting had run its course, Job would send and have his sons and daughters purified. Early in the morning he would sacrifice a burnt offering for each of them, thinking, "Perhaps my children have sinned and cursed God in their hearts." This was Job's regular custom* (Job 1:5).
- From harmful contacts with teachers, counselors, and youth leaders.

One courageous, godly man can do great things: (1 Samuel 14:6-23 NIV)

Jonathan said to his young armor-bearer, *"Come, let's go over to the outpost of those uncircumcised fellows. Perhaps the LORD will act in our behalf. Nothing can hinder the LORD from saving, whether by many or by few." "Do all that you have in mind," his armor-bearer said. "Go ahead; I am with you heart and soul." Jonathan said, "Come, then; we will cross over toward the men and let them see us. If they say to us, 'Wait there until we come to you,' we will stay where we are and not go up to them. But if they say, 'Come up to us,' we will climb up, because that will be our sign that the LORD has given them into our hands." So both of them showed themselves to the Philistine outpost. "Look!" said the Philistines. "The Hebrews are crawling out of the holes they were hiding in." The men of the outpost shouted to Jonathan and his armor-bearer, "Come up to*

us and we'll teach you a lesson." So Jonathan said to his armor-bearer, "Climb up after me; the LORD has given them into the hand of Israel." Jonathan climbed up, using his hands and feet, with his armor-bearer right behind him. The Philistines fell before Jonathan, and his armor-bearer followed and killed behind him. In that first attack Jonathan and his armor-bearer killed some twenty men in an area of about half an acre. Then panic struck the whole army--those in the camp and field, and those in the outposts and raiding parties--and the ground shook. It was a panic sent by God. Saul's lookouts at Gibeah in Benjamin saw the army melting away in all directions. Then Saul said to the men who were with him, "Muster the forces and see who has left us." When they did, it was Jonathan and his armor-bearer who were not there. Saul said to Ahijah, "Bring the ark of God." (At that time it was with the Israelites.) While Saul was talking to the priest, the tumult in the Philistine camp increased more and more. So Saul said to the priest, "Withdraw your hand." Then Saul and all his men assembled and went to the battle. They found the Philistines in total confusion, striking each other with their swords. Those Hebrews who had previously been with the Philistines and had gone up with them to their camp went over to the Israelites who were with Saul and Jonathan. When all the Israelites who had hidden in the hill country of Ephraim heard that the Philistines were on the run, they joined the battle in hot pursuit. So the LORD rescued Israel that day.