

The Ministry of Fatherhood

How do we know what it is to be a father? The “gold standard” of fatherhood is that of God Himself. We see it in 1 Jn 3:16 and elsewhere in the Word.

1. Probably the best description of God is the one that He gives us Himself. Exd 34:6-7
God is:

- a. Compassionate
- b. Gracious
- c. Slow to anger
- d. Abounding in love and faithfulness
- e. Maintaining love to thousands
- f. Forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin.
- g. Yet He does not leave the guilty unpunished.

2. In Scripture there are many examples of fatherhood. Today we will look at a few. But in doing so, there are some things we will do well to remember.

- a. No one does it “perfect.” And kids don’t need that either. Power in our lives and witness, even to those we are closest to, comes from we as imperfect people walking with God despite our brokenness. Our kids need to see the reality of God in us, displayed in day to day living. This is the truth we see in 2 Cor 4:7.

- b. It is a God-ordained task. Eph 6:1-4.

3. So, three examples from the Word: Eli, Jehonadab, and Manasseh.

- a. **Eli** - He was the high priest and judge (leader) of Israel. But he was apparently so preoccupied with his ministry that he let things go regarding his sons. Although he was the leader and chief arbiter of a nation, he did not discipline his own family.
 - His sons used their position as priests to gratify themselves. (1 Sam 2:12-17, 22-25). It happened at other times in Israel’s history (e.g., Isa 56:9-12).
 - Eli verbally rebuked them but did not act to hold them accountable. And it cost him and his family dearly going forward. (1 Sam 2:29-36).

***Dad’s need to be consistent in obedience to God
Godly dads seek to “lead from the front”***

- b. **Jehonadab son of Rekab** - He was a Kenite, a descendant of Moses’ father in law. The Kenites were absorbed by Israel and Jehonadab and his descendants were godly.
 - Jehonadab was zealous for the Lord. He made a decision when he saw the direction Israel was going and foresaw their future. (2 King 10:15-31; Jer 35:1-19)
 - * His descendants were not to drink wine.
 - * His descendants were not to dwell in towns but to become nomads. He saw judgment coming and wanted his descendants to survive.
 - He must have been a powerful example. It affected his clan for the next 200 years.
 - He has an enduring legacy.

The legacy of a godly life endures

c. Manasseh was the son of King Hezekiah. An ungodly man, he led Judah into idolatry and killed his opponents at will, likely including the prophet Isaiah. (2 Kings 21:11; 23:3-4, 26; Jer 15:4)

- He reigned 55 years - and led Judah astray - 2 Chr 33:1-9
- God allowed him to be defeated, captured and imprisoned by Assyria.
 - * In his distress he sought the Lord and repented.
 - * God restored him to his country and throne.
 - * He rebuilt the defenses of Jerusalem and strengthened Judah's defenses.
 - * Most importantly, he restored the worship of God and sought Him.
- It was too late for his son Amon but...his grandson Josiah was one of Judah's most godly leaders. It is deductive reasoning, but while he lived he appears to have had a good influence and impact on his grandson.

Even in the ashes of wasted opportunity and years, God can and will use the willing and obedient. Never give up!