

Week 27: "Father Love"

Day One: "Do Not Exasperate"

Read: Ephesians 6:4

Reflect: How did your father treat you and how did that affect you?

Dig: How does this command in verse 4 relate to the three previous verses (Ephesians 6:1-3)?

A parallel passage is Colossians 3:21. How is this passage different?

According to Colossians 3:21, what happens to children who have harsh fathers?

How does the initial command in Ephesians 5:21 help give the context for this command? (Hint: who are fathers supposed to honor and revere?)

Since Paul puts the command this way, what might have been going on in Ephesians between fathers and their children?

Apply: If you are a father, confess to God the instances where you have "lost it" with your children.

Choose at least two children to pray for by name.

Week Twenty-Seven: "Father Love"

Day Two: "Bring Them Up"

Read: Ephesians 6:4

Reflect: Describe, in a few sentences, the ideal father.

Dig: Read Genesis 18:18-19. How does this passage describe how Abraham was to "bring up" his children?

According to Genesis 18:18-19, what was the main way that Abraham was supposed to teach his children?

Even though fathers have the lead role here in verse 4, are both parents to be involved in bringing up their children? (See verse 1.)

Read Psalm 103:13. According to this teaching, how should a father teach his children?

Apply: Pray for at least two fathers by name, that they would have hearts of compassion for their children.

Week Twenty-Seven: "Father Love"
Day Three: "Training and Instruction"

Read: Ephesians 6:4

Reflect: What are the main life lessons your father (or father figure) taught you?

Dig: What two words are used at the end of Ephesians 6:4 to describe what fathers are to do for their children?

In your mind, what is the difference between these two words?

According to Proverbs 22:6, what is the long-term benefit of this kind of training?

Take a look at the last three words of Eph. 6:4. Taking these words into account, what should fathers be teaching beyond how to play a sport or work around the house?

Read Ephesians 4:20-21. What does this tell you about what a father ought to teach his children?

Apply: Again, by name, pray for at least two fathers to instruct their children in the Lord.

Week Twenty-Seven: "Father Love"
Day Four: "Along the Way"

Read: Deuteronomy 6:6-9

Reflect: What habits of home life do we have in our culture that interfere with our ability to pass down the faith to our children?

Dig: Read Deuteronomy 6:6-9 and answer these questions:

- 1) What is supposed to be in the parents' hearts?
- 2) How urgent are they to be about teaching the faith?

What word is used to express the level of urgency?

- 3) How often during the day are we to be in conversation with our children?

4) What would be a present-day application of "write them on the door frames of your houses?"

Read Hebrews 12:8-10. According to this passage, why do fathers discipline their children?

Apply: Again, pray for at least two fathers (by name) that they would take the time and have the courage to be disciplinarians for their children.

Week Twenty-Seven: "Father Love"

Day Five: "Lectio Divina"

Read: Ephesians 6:4 "Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord."

Lectio divina (a Latin expression which means Sacred reading) is done in three stages:

-- **reading:** you read the passage slowly and reverentially, allowing the words to sink into your consciousness: after you have memorized the text, write down one word which strikes you and draws your attention and note why you chose that word.

-- **meditation:** you allow the passage to stir up memories within you, so that you recognize in it your own experience or that of people who have touched your life: write down memories of events or conversations or other scripture passages.

-- **prayer:** you allow the meditation to lead you to prayer -- thanksgiving, humility and petition. Write out a prayer based on the passage.