

CHAPTER 1WHY PARENTS?

Every person has or has had parents. Why has God chosen in His infinite wisdom to give each person (except Adam and Eve--Luke 3:38) a mother and father? Are parents given merely to bring children into the world or are there other important reasons why parents are needed?

Parents are needed

FOR MY SOUL

There are at least seven reasons why God has blessed humanity with parents (and parents are meant to be a BLESSING, not a CURSE):

1) PARENTS ARE TO PROVIDE.

Children depend on the provision which comes from their parents. Human children need the care and provision of their parents much longer than the members of the animal kingdom. For example, a kangaroo baby (called a "joey") leaves the mother's pouch after 10 months and after 8 more months leaves the mother. Bear cubs are almost ready to leave mother at age two.

Ducks, chicken and geese can see and walk and care for themselves soon after they hatch. A baby flamingo leaves its nest 3 or 4 hours after it hatches (aren't you glad your parents did not send you out of the home so early!). Most reptile mothers (turtles and snakes) just lay their eggs and leave. Their mothers never see them hatch and as soon as they break through the shell they are on their own.

How long does it take before most human children are ready to leave "the nest"?

What are some of the necessary things of life that your parents provide you with ? 1. _____ 2. _____
3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____

If you were sent out on your own TODAY, how well would you survive?

Who should provide for whom? Should the children provide for the parents or should the parents provide for the children (2 Corinthians 12:14)?

_____ Later when your parents are old and unable to care for themselves, you may have an opportunity to provide for them (see 1 Timothy 5:4--this verse is teaching that the children should care for their own family and thus repay or make return to their parents for all the care they received when young).

2) PARENTS ARE TO PROTECT.

When the 12 year old Jesus was not found in the company of travelers, who was concerned and who really cared (Luke 2:42-45)? _____

When the king of Egypt tried to have all Hebrew boys killed, who protected and cared about baby Moses (Hebrews 11:23)? _____ Who was concerned about Benjamin's safety (Genesis 42:4,36-38)? _____

Have your parents ever saved your life, either directly (push you away from a moving car) or indirectly (warn you about the dangers of moving cars)? Have your parents tried to keep you from physical and mental and spiritual harm?

Note: The one primarily responsible for protecting and providing is the FATHER. Very often in the Bible, the people who are to be the most pitied and the ones whom believers should reach out to in compassion and mercy are the FATHERLESS and WIDOWS (those who have no father and those who have no husband). This shows the important place the man (Father-Husband) has in the family. See James 1:27; Isaiah 1:17; Jeremiah 7:6-7; Zechariah 7:9-10; etc.

3) PARENTS ARE TO DISCIPLINE.

In Ephesians 6:4 the Father is told to bring up his children in the nurture (DISCIPLINE) and admonition of the Lord. The Bible says that we have had fathers of our flesh (earthly fathers) which disciplined, corrected and spanked us (Hebrews 12:9). Who cares enough about you to spank you--your parents or your next-door neighbor (Compare Heb. 12:7-8)? _____

Is discipline and spanking an evidence of the parent's hatred for the child (Proverbs 13:24 and compare Hebrews 12:6)? _____

The parent should love the child so much that he or she cannot and must not allow the child to do what is wrong or to go in a crooked way.

4) PARENTS ARE TO TRAIN AND INSTRUCT.

Who should obey the command found in Proverbs 22:6? the next-door neighbor? the policeman? the local politician? the grocery man? Who should

obey the command found in Deuteronomy 6:7? _____ Notice in Deuteronomy 6:7 that this teaching should take place when you:

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|----------------------------|---|
| 1. _____ sit in your house | A. Bed time |
| 2. _____ walk by the way | B. Morning time when the mind is fresh. |
| 3. _____ lie down | C. Meal time |
| 4. _____ rise up | D. Travel time (such as today when we are in the car) |

In Ephesians 6:4 the father is to bring up his children in the nurture and A _____ of the Lord. This word ADMONITION involves three things which all begin with the letter "C":

1. CHANGE--There is a problem in the child's life that needs to be corrected and changed (example--using bad language).
2. CONFRONTATION--The child must be confronted with what God says about this problem and what his responsibilities are before God (see Ephesians 4:29; Matthew 12:34-37).
3. CONCERN--The parent is motivated by love and is willing to confront and correct and chasten (spank) because he (or she) is concerned for that child's highest and best (the parent loves the child enough not to allow bad language to continue).

5) PARENTS ARE TO SET AN EXAMPLE.

Children are experts at imitating! "Like Father, like son!" Parents set the example (either good or bad) and children usually follow in their steps!

Is this also true in the spiritual realm (Ephesians 5:1--"Be imitators"; John 8:38-44)?

6) PARENTS ARE TO NOURISH THEIR CHILDREN.

In Ephesians 6:4 the Father is told to "BRING UP" his children. This word is also used in Ephesians 5:29 and is translated NOURISH. Just as a person nourishes and cares for his own body, in the same way parents are to nourish and give that tender loving care to their children (whom they consider a real part of them since the child has come from the parents). In Titus 2:4 we learn that the older women are to teach the younger women to _____ their children!

Consider Luke 8:41,42,56. Who really cared about this dying girl?

_____ Consider also the interesting and true story found in 1 Kings 3:16-27. Which one really cared about this baby? _____

7) PARENTS ARE TO SHOW CHILDREN THEIR TWO BASIC DUTIES TOWARDS GOD.

What are the 2 basic duties of children?

1. Ephesians 6:1; Colossians 3:20 _____
2. Ephesians 6:2; Exodus 20:12 _____ (respect)

These are also the two basic duties that God demands from His children. Disobedience and disrespect cannot be allowed or tolerated.

Those who do not learn to obey and respect their parents will have great difficulty in learning to do the same with God. Building an obedient and respectful relationship with our parents prepares the way for the same kind of relationship with God, the heavenly Father!

Parents are needed

FOR MY SOCIETY

Healthy and strong family units are the key to a healthy society. A breakdown of the family will lead to a crumbling and falling away in society. As we observe our nation and world today, we see conditions becoming worse and worse. How does the Bible describe the family situation at the end of the age (Mark 13:12; Luke 21:16; 2 Timothy 3:2; and compare Romans 1:30)? _____

What are some of the things you see in today's society that point to the breakdown of the family unit? 1. _____
2. _____ 3. _____

Parents are needed

FOR THE SAINTS

(FOR THE CHURCH)

Healthy families make for a strong church. God is very concerned about the family and its spiritual needs. Not only did God (through Paul) write to the saints at Colosse (Colossians 1:2) but He also wrote specifically to the WIVES (3:18), HUSBANDS (3:19), CHILDREN (3:20) and FATHERS (3:21). Compare Eph. 5:22-6:4.

In 1 Timothy 3:4-5, what is one of the qualifications for an elder?

Why was this a needed qualification?

If there are problems in the home, there will be problems in the church. The church is no stronger than the families and individuals that make it up.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

1. Should families worship together? How should this be done?
2. Is there anything you can do to strengthen your family? Are there things that you should change?
3. What can you do to build a better relationship with your parents? Where have you failed? Where have they failed?