

Every father should want his children to think highly of him, but what really makes a good father?

Fatherhood requires more than a mere biological relationship. By the Biblical definition of the word, a father is to be a nourisher, protector, and upholder.

A true father is a man who takes responsibility for raising a child. For example, consider Joseph, who was a father to Jesus in every way even though he did not conceive Jesus (Matt. 13:55; Mark 6:3; Luke 2:33, 39-52; John 6:42). Indeed, it is responsibility and not biology that makes a father.

God has set many responsibilities on a father. A father is to be a godly leader in his home. Both his words and his deeds should set examples for his children. Proverbs 20:7 says,

A righteous man who walks in his integrity – how blessed are his sons after him.

A father is to be a godly teacher and trainer of his children in his home. Ephesians 6:4 says,

And, fathers, do not provoke your children to anger; but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

The phrase “bring them up” means to nourish them, so a father must feed his children’s souls on the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

Fathers, discipline is your job. According to Hebrews 12:8, undisciplined children “are illegitimate children and not sons.” In other words, without discipline from a father, it is as if a child has no father at all. Furthermore, Proverbs 13:24 says,

He who withholds his rod hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines him diligently.

Instruction is also your job, for you must teach your children the word of God. Consider Deuteronomy 6:7-9 as a model for teaching God’s words to your children. It says,

⁷“You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up.

⁸You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. ⁹You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”

A father is also to be a provider for his home. This provision is to include both the spiritual nourishment for his children and the physical necessities. Consider 1 Timothy 5:8:

But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

Execution of these responsibilities by a father is crucial to a child both physically and spiritually. Obviously, a child needs a father’s physical sustenance to live and grow as he should. More importantly, the relationship between a father and his child is a model for the child of the

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child's future relationship with God. By representing authority and providence, the father represents to his young child a figure of God Himself, our heavenly Father.

What more needs to be said to show how important a father is to his child?

“Choose for yourselves today whom you will serve...but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD” (Joshua 24:15).