

God's Design for Family, Part 5

Introduction

Within the family unit God has given us certain responsibilities. Parents have responsibility to children and children to parents. *The family should reflect what sacrificial love looks like.* Parents are to teach and serve as a primary example to their children what sacrificial love looks like and children are to imitate that example.

5. Family is A Place to Learn Sacrificial Love

It is hard to express the love a parent has for their child. Everything about life changes when you have children. I honestly cannot remember my life before children... I know there was life before them and I have memories but it is hard to remember what life looked like before they came along. They have changed everything. We have talked about the need to teach our children, but I want to focus in on instructing them in sacrificial love.

Parents often make decisions with their children's future in mind.

- ❖ Proverbs 13:22: Planning for future
- ❖ Ecclesiastes 7:11-12: Inheritance + Wisdom

Problems

- ❖ Genesis 27

Obviously, there are a lot of problems in Genesis 27 but nowhere in this story is there a picture of sacrificial love. Everybody is trying to manipulate the situation to get the outcome they want. They (especially Rebekah) are teaching their children to focus on self. Isaac wants to bless his favorite son while Rebekah wants to steal the blessing for her favorite child. Jacob is only concerned he will get a curse and Esau is focused on revenge. Thankfully, that is not how the story of Jacob and Esau ends in Genesis 32-36.

- ❖ 2 Samuel 13

The whole tragic story line between David and Absalom begins because another one of David's sons (Amnon) acts in an incredibly sinful and selfish way. Throughout the story most of David's children are only focused on self. *Horrors occur when families live for self instead of sacrificially.*

a) Positive: Husband, Father

- ❖ 2 Sam 18:33: David's sacrificial love for Absalom

We talked about this story a few weeks ago (God's Design for Marriage, Part 3: A Place where Reconciliation and Love are on display) so we will not belabor it here but we get a taste of the love a father has for his children and how much he is willing to sacrifice for them.

- ❖ Eph 5:25-30: Sacrificial love of a husband

In this passage of scripture, Paul talks about the husband and wife relationship and connects it to relationship between Christ and the Church. He addresses husbands (5:25, 28) and calls them to imitate Christ's sacrificial love for the church. The husband is to love and care for his wife just as he would his own body.

Father shows sacrificial love to the wife and children. He should serve as an example to imitate.

b) Positive: Wife

❖ Prov 31:11-31: The Excellent wife

i) Husband

- 31:11-12: Husband trusts; does husband good not evil ALL days of life
 - Opposite of adulterous woman
- 31:23: Wife adds value to Husband: know in gate (i.e. respected)
- 31:28-29: Poem closes with praise from husband

ii) Household

- 31:15: Neglects sleep to care for household
- 31:21 (2x): No fear for household, because of preparation
 - Clothes for the household first, then clothes for herself!
- 31:27: Looks after ways of the household

iii) Children

- 31:28: Children bless her

They praise her; they are happy for her actions; they are thankful for her

- The Husband knows the type of person she is
- The city knows of her deeds (31:31)
- This is not lost on her children
 - ❖ Children might not realize or appreciate the example of their parents early on but

c) Children

Parents love and care for their children. They have a lot of sleepless nights caring for their needs. They have a lot of sleepless nights worried about their future and decisions they will make. Children are called to learn from this example and to return the care their parents gave them (1 Tim 5:3-8).

Notice the type of widow being described here is one who has lived her life in service to others. She has given them a great example of a service oriented life and they need to imitate that and serve her. I have watched many take care of their aging parents and seen the toll that takes on them. They are examples of servitude and selflessness.

d) Positive: Ruth

- Urged to Return: 1:8, 14-15
- Ruth's declaration: 1:16-18

- Returned with Naomi: 2:6
- Boaz's praise: 2:11-12
- People know Ruth's character: 3:11
- People about Ruth: 4:15

Ruth does all this for her mother-in-law! Her husband is dead and everyone, including Naomi, realizes she has no obligation to Naomi anymore, but she continues to serve. It is because of Ruth that Naomi is taken care of, blessed, and rejoices.

e) Positive: A place to learn hospitality

- ❖ 1 Tim 5:10
 - Discussing Widow church can support
 - Servant (see 1 Tim 2:10)

She has brought up children (she knows that season of life) and probably the idea of faithful children (just like the elder in 1 Tim 3). Notice after raising children it emphasizes she showed hospitality. Certainly, the text is highlighting how she is a servant but I think one lesson we can pull from this is that the children learn service through watching the hospitality of their parents.

Conclusion

The family should reflect what sacrificial love looks like. Every member of the family is to reflect sacrificial love. Let us remind our families and the world what sacrificial love looks like. Let us reflect and point toward to ultimate sacrificial love which God displays to us. Remember we began today by speaking of the husband and father's example of sacrificial love... it was a reflection of Jesus's love for us. Jesus came to live (and die) sacrificially!